

Witold Mucha

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Budrich UniPress Ltd.

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**For Sophie**



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# 1 Introduction

The question of why people take up arms against each other has dominated peace and conflict studies for years. However, the angle has only seldom been reversed to investigate why people would *not* wage war against each other despite conditions seemingly ripe for violence. Instead of taking an either or perspective, this book will merge these two perspectives into one comprehensive escalation analysis. Against the backdrop of two equal empirical contexts, it is the goal to understand why some civil wars do happen while others do not. Applying a most-similar-systems design (MSSD), conflict escalation processes in Peru (1980-1995) and Bolivia (2000-2008) will constitute the empirical basis.

The selection of Peru and Bolivia is because of two circumstances: Pursuant to prominent theories on the causation of civil war both countries exhibited similarly high levels of structural violent conflict propensity along very similar dimensions. By taking these structural dimensions into consideration one might have expected similar outcomes. However, while Peru has experienced civil war from 1980 to 1995, no such large-scale escalation has occurred in Bolivia during its 25-year-long democratization process since 1985; a phase that had been accompanied by minor conflictive episodes.<sup>1</sup> This leads to the question of where this variance derives from. The overarching research question is twofold:

I. What have been the conflict-fueling and conflict-inhibiting factors that determined violence escalation intensity in Peru (i.e. high intensity)?

II. What have been the conflict-fueling and conflict-inhibiting factors that determined violence escalation intensity in Bolivia (i.e. low intensity)?

In terms of methodology, the analysis will be based on quantitative and qualitative data. While econometric information will be used to indicate the structural commonalities between Peru and Bolivia (e.g. change of socioeconomic grievances over time), expert interviews and secondary literature will give insights into the dynamics of escalation processes on the ground.

1 While the death toll in Peru (1980-1995) amounted for between 25.000 and 70.000 people, the violent episodes in Bolivia (2000-2008) did not go beyond the annual battle-related death threshold of 1.000 casualties. See Masterson 2010: p. 51; Perreault 2006: p. 164.

## 1.1 Peace and Conflict Studies

Civil war is a salient issue on the international politics and development agenda. Besides the immediate outcome such as fatalities, policymakers and aid workers have struggled with indirect consequences such as mass dislocation, epidemics, famines, and state erosion. Economic decline and in many cases economic reversion reckon among the more long-term effects in this respect.<sup>2</sup> As such, the interest by policymakers, development agencies, and scholars in causes of civil war is based on different motivations. These range from global, regional, and local security concerns to questions of underdevelopment and poverty perpetuation.<sup>3</sup>

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), 32 armed conflicts were active in 26 locations throughout the world in 2012.<sup>4</sup> From a post-World War II perspective, this number was at a relatively low level. THEMNÉR/ WALLENSTEEN found: “In 1973 the number of conflicts started increasing steadily, passing 32 in 1976. And during the following 36 years, the number of active conflicts was at this relatively low level only five times, with its lowest – 31 – recorded in 2003. All these five years are in the 2000s.”<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, 31 of the 32 active armed conflicts fought in 2012 were waged within states (i.e. intrastate conflict). In contrast, only one interstate armed conflict was identified in the very same year: South Sudan vs. Sudan.<sup>6</sup>

These figures support past findings on the increasing share of civil wars from 1945 up to 1991. Since the end of World War II, civil war has been the most frequent, deadly and persistent form of military conflict. In accordance with the Correlates of War Project (COW), out of 127 post-World War II armed conflicts more than 72 percent exhibited civil war characteristics, accounting for 63 percent of total battle-related deaths and 82 percent of months of war between 1945 and 1992.<sup>7</sup>

Being the most prevalent form of armed conflict in the contemporary international system, the research field devoted to causes of civil war has widened, particularly since the end of the Cold War. Today, a variety of theoretical approaches deal with one respective question: “What makes countrymen start killing each other?”<sup>8</sup> While some scholars explain the occurrence of civil war by grievances driving rebels’ motivations, others identify greed as conflict-fueling factors when the abundance of natural resources offers lootable income

2 Kalyvas 2007: p. 416; Bang/ Mitra 2010: pp. 6-12; Iqbal/ Starr 2008: pp. 315-331.

3 Murshed/ Tadjoeeddin 2009: p. 87.

4 Themnér/ Wallensteen 2013: p. 509.

5 Themnér/ Wallensteen 2013: p. 510.

6 Themnér/ Wallensteen 2013: p. 510.

7 Mason/ Fett 1996: p. 546. See also Gat 2013: pp. 149-157.

8 Ohlson 2008: p. 133.

opportunities over which to fight.<sup>9</sup> Unlike this rationalist perspective, comparativists emphasize the repressive state's capacity to deprive the insurgents from motivation and opportunity.<sup>10</sup> Other models deal with categories which focus less on endogenous country characteristics but transnational dynamics: foremost, these are environmental scarcity and so-called bad neighborhood effects.<sup>11</sup>

Besides the scholars' overwhelming interest in the causes of civil war, on the one hand the absence of the Cold War pattern complicates the attribution of underlying causes of civil wars. LACINA argues: "Wars in nations such as Angola, Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Mozambique and throughout a chain of states in Central America [are] no longer useful as fields in which to wage the contest between the communist and western spheres of influence."<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, the exemption of that Manichean template (i.e. Iron Curtain) allows for the analysis of violent conflict causes and archetypes along more objective criteria such as regional distribution, intensity, type or number.<sup>13</sup>

However still, academia is not immune to following certain trends either. A major regional focus by the predominantly Anglo-American peace and conflict studies community has been on the Middle East. While research on security issues related to Iraq and Afghanistan dominated the debates in the early 2000s, the so-called Arab Spring furthered this disproportionate analytical focus – not to forget the permanent Israel/ Palestine question.<sup>14</sup>

Unlike this regional emphasis in peace and conflict studies, this book will give attention to violent conflicts in the Americas, more precisely, the Andean region. Against the backdrop of an abundant variety of natural resources, the five Andean countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela) are characterized by a multitude of governance problems. Varying from country to country, these include political instability, frequent constitutional reforms, presidential crises, volatility of democratic institutions and violence.<sup>15</sup> As far as SIPRI datasets are concerned, solely Colombia and Peru have met the analytical criteria to be considered as countries affected by major armed intrastate conflict. While the most intense phase of civil war in Peru ceased in the mid-1990s, despite improvements over recent years, two guerilla organizations continue to operate in the Colombian state: the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional*

9 Gleditsch 2007: p. 294.

10 Kalyvas 2007: p. 421.

11 Collier et al. 2003: p. 33-44.

12 Lacina 2004: p. 191.

13 Harbom/ Wallensteen 2007: pp. 79-82.

14 Norton 2013: pp. 63-64; Miller 2012: pp. 346-347.

15 Solimano 2004: pp.7-8. See also Gutiérrez Sanín 2005: pp. 125-139.

(National Liberation Army – ELN) and the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces – FARC).<sup>16</sup>

Over the last two decades a large amount of studies have elaborated the root causes of civil wars in the world. Given the lack of one hegemonic and the existence of a variety of different and often competing explanatory approaches, an additional analysis of root causes would not contribute significantly to the academic debate. In order to add some empirical value to the research field this book will pursue a different path: First, the perspective of root causes will be expanded by adding proximate causes and trigger events. Second, this temporal layer of analysis will be substantiated by looking into the specific agency of violent conflict.

## 1.2 Escalation Reconceptualized

This chapter will introduce the understanding of escalation and de-escalation as it is used in this book. As the notion of de-escalation is normatively biased in everyday language and practice, a differentiated understanding will demonstrate what the empirical analysis aims at revealing and what it does not. Moreover, this chapter will present the synthesis of two major analytical categories: timing and agency. While timing means the analysis of the change of causes of violent conflict over time, agency refers to the actors involved. This conceptual merger will complement the overly structural argumentation in contemporary peace and conflict studies.

KRIESBERG's theory of social conflict is most often quoted when it comes to the analysis of ways in which conflicts can become destructive or constructive.<sup>17</sup> He finds that “[conflict] escalation generally refers to increases in the severity of the coercive inducements used and increases in the scope of participation within a conflict”.<sup>18</sup> Based on findings by psychology (e.g. selective perception) and organizational sociology (e.g. leadership competition), KRIESBERG argues that escalation processes are most often destructive. The longer the contest remains unresolved the more likely the fueling by third parties becomes that may view the conflict as opportunity to benefit.<sup>19</sup>

16 DeRouen/ Bercovitch 2008: pp. 55-56. On the prospects of the formal peace talks that were initiated between the Colombian government and FARC in November 2012 see Johnson/ Jonsson 2013; Ince 2013; Gomez-Suarez/ Newman 2013.

17 Kriesberg 1998. See also Rasler 2000: pp. 699-720; Coleman et al. 2007: pp. 1454-1475; Zartman/ Faure 2005: pp. 295-308; Vallacher et al. 2013: pp. 77-101.

18 Kriesberg 1998: p. 151.

19 Conflicts over vital interests, multiparty disputes, and homogenous groups are most likely to cause destructive types of escalation. Likewise the response by the adversary determines to what extent the conflict becomes destructive. However, all these factors depend on empirical context. See Kriesberg 2007: pp. 363-365.

In light with this understanding of escalation, the notion of de-escalation refers to a decrease in the severity of (violent) conflict. Psychological as well as organizational dynamics can inhibit the intensity of dispute. For instance, conciliatory gestures can contribute to de-escalation as can costs of (violent) conflict favor alternative leadership figures in the competition for group leadership. Likewise third party intermediaries can play an important role in promoting de-escalation. Mediation activities are stressed in this regard (e.g. by providing neutral places to meet; information transfer etc.).<sup>20</sup>KRIESBERG summarizes: “Processes fostering de-escalation occur within each adversary, in the relations between the adversaries, and also among other parties in the social environment. (...) [Generally] the effects of these various processes must converge and reinforce each other for de-escalation to proceed.”<sup>21</sup>

Applying KRIESBERG’s terminology, this thesis will analyze path dependencies that allow for identifying variances between the causal mechanisms that either fueled or inhibited violent conflict in Peru and Bolivia:

*Conflict-fueling (or escalatory) factors will be comprehended as factors that increase the intensity of a conflict and the severity of tactics used in pursuing it.*

*Conflict-inhibiting (or de-escalatory) factors will be understood as factors that decrease the severity of coercive means used in the wake of conflict.*<sup>22</sup>

This broad understanding of escalation and de-escalation is useful in three regards. First, it encompasses both the decision-making processes of political, social, and/or cultural leaders (i.e. agency) as well as changes in the conditions that underlay a violent conflict (i.e. timing). Second, by looking into the increase or decrease of violent conflict, normative argumentation can be avoided: for instance, if violent repression by the state leads to the defeat of an armed rebel group, this can be identified as conflict-inhibiting factor – regardless of the violent means applied by the state forces in the first place. Closely related, third, this broad understanding of escalation and de-escalation allows for the analysis of escalatory and de-escalatory factors over time. For instance, instead of deciding to what extent a leader’s decision or a government’s policy has led to the escalation or de-escalation at a specific point of time, more in-depth knowledge lies in the analysis of change of the factors. In other words, a conflict-inhibiting factor may appease adversaries in the short term. However, at the same time it may create resentments in the long run and vice versa.

Basically, in this book escalation is understood as a moving continuum. It is constantly affected by both conflict-fueling and conflict-inhibiting factors.

20 Kriesberg 2007: pp. 365-368.

21 Kriesberg 2007: p. 188.

22 Kriesberg 1998: pp. 152, 210.

These factors may reverse their impact on the adversaries over time. The ambivalent nature of escalation and de-escalation will be discussed further below. Besides this ambivalence, escalation and de-escalation processes are complex and context-sensitive.<sup>23</sup> As such, a conflict-fueling factor may escalate the onset in Peru, while the same factor may de-escalate the setting in Bolivia. Despite these challenges, the book will analyze major escalatory and de-escalatory factors in the two cases. While the genesis and course of internal violent conflict will be dealt with exclusively, the formal termination of hostilities will be only of secondary relevance.<sup>24</sup>

*Table 1: Timing and Escalation I*

Analysis	Structure	Proximate	Triggers
Focus	Root Cause	Proximate Cause	Catalytic Events
Time	Long-term	Middle-term	Weeks/ months
Metaphor	Logs	Kindling	Matches

Source: Own illustration based on Hales/ Miller (2010); Carment (2003).

Each of these temporal levels overlaps with each other (see table 1). Empirically, these cannot be strictly isolated according to structural and/ or proximate causes, and trigger events. For the sake of validity, two issues need to be taken into consideration: First, the distinction between three time horizons enables the researcher to analyze the empirical contexts in different time phases. Specific differences can be identified and argued more easily. Second, by taking a look into the middle-term and sudden changes the causal mechanisms responsible for the alteration of the perceived structure can be better traced.

There are three reasons why a differentiated look into the agency of internal violent conflict is necessary. First, the analysis of the underlying conditions of violent conflict alone has failed to explain the case of Bolivia. Apparently, people chose not to take up arms against the state despite similar structural grievances as seen in Peru. Second, the different onsets in Peru and Bolivia require an all-encompassing framework that can be applied to both cases. For instance, while *Sendero Luminoso* (SL) crucially drove the onset in Peru, there was no irregular armed force opposing the state in Bolivia. Third, by including

23 Kriesberg 2007: p. 144.

24 A huge amount of studies dealing with the duration of civil wars has produced disputing results due to different theoretical methods, actor foci, or de-escalation concepts. For instance, see Regan 2002: pp. 55-73; DeRouen Jr./ Sobek 2004: pp. 303-320. On the concept of "Enduring Internal Rivalries" (EIR) applied to civil wars see DeRouen/ Bercovitch 2008: pp. 55-74. Famous work on the so-called "conflict trap" has been published by Collier et al. 2003: pp. 79-91. Most recent hazard models are applied by Mason et al. 2011: pp. 171-189. On formal de-escalation processes see Matthies 1997: pp. 13-43. On peace (causes) see also Boulding 1978; Galtung 1996; Hampson 1996; Kriesberg 2005; Matthies 1994, 1995, 1996; Randle 1973; Singer/ Wildafsky 1993; Ugglas 1994.

a variety of different actors their roles during escalation and de-escalation are more likely to be identified. Even the case of Peru cannot be analyzed without giving attention to other non-state actors such as self-defense militias.

In order to meet these analytical requirements, agency will be reconceptualized on the basis of BAKONYI/ BLIESEMANN DE GUEVARA and OHLSON.<sup>25</sup> While the first justifies the distinction between political entrepreneurs on the one hand and specialists of violence on the other, the latter provides a model that allows for the identification of people's motives, resources, and leadership in joining armed struggle against the state. The section below will introduce the agency concept as used in this analysis.

Political science defines actors as persons (i.e. individual actor) or organizations (i.e. collective actor) that are engaged in a political decision-making process.<sup>26</sup> More specifically, a stakeholder is understood as actor with some concern or interest in something.<sup>27</sup> FREEMAN's definition goes: "[Any] group or individual who can affect, or is affected by the achievement of a corporation's purpose."<sup>28</sup> According to CROISSANT ET AL., every actor, be it state or individual, represents a closed entity by itself. Generally, there are three major actor groups that can be sub-divided according to descriptive attributes and variables. These are states, international organizations, and non-state actors. These actor groups are differentiated with regard to their involvement in the specific conflict system. There are three types of actor shareholding in any conflict system: direct actors; supporters; third-party intervention.<sup>29</sup>

In order to avoid the deficiencies of meta-level approaches, some studies attempt to disaggregate and reconceptualize causes of intra-state violent conflict by introducing a systematic agency perspective. SIPRI's OHLSON argues in favor of the Triple-R-Concept:

"We may imagine a conflict actor contemplating the dangerous option of transforming a situation of intra-state tension and latent conflict into large-scale, manifest violence. There are risks involved, including the ultimate risk of loss of life. What is required for that actor to actually take such a decisive step? It is argued here that the answer 'Yes' to three fundamental questions is required: (1) Do we want to do it? (2) Can we do it? (3) Do we dare to do it? The questions and the answers to them translate into three concepts: Reasons, Resources and Resolve, constituting three distinct and interacting clusters of variables that explain changes in behaviour and attitudes of conflicting parties."<sup>30</sup>

25 Bakonyi/ Bliesemann de Guevara 2009: pp. 397-413; Ohlson 2008: pp. 133-160.

26 Schubert 2004: p. 8.

27 Ramírez 1999: p. 102.

28 Freeman 1984: p. vi. See also Checkland 1981; Long 1992; Hindess 1986; Mitchell et al. 1997. The terms actor, agent, and stakeholder are used synonymously in this thesis.

29 Croissant et al. 2009: p. 69.

30 Ohlson 2008: p. 135. (Emphasis by author)

People willing to fight will first consider their reasons – i.e. “background” and “proximate reasons” – and second their resources – i.e. “military, organizational capabilities” and “opportunity structure”.<sup>31</sup> Yet reasons and resources alone do not sufficiently explain the onset of war. Moreover, the question of “resolve” proves crucial: “The [decision-making unit] is left with one or more perceived alternatives concerning whether or not to go to war.”<sup>32</sup>

Notwithstanding its limited notoriety among the academic community, the Triple-R concept is more adequate to assess motivations, opportunities, and capabilities of violent oppositional actors than more frequently cited studies such as WEINSTEIN or KALYVAS.<sup>33</sup> While the first is capable of explaining why the level of violence against civilians varies between rebel groups, the latter is useful in understanding how indiscriminate violence compensates for the lack of military resources. WEINSTEIN’s research helps to understand why violence is applied by non-state armed groups while KALYVAS’ studies reveal how it is done.

However, given these authors’ focus on civil warfare, onsets on the verge of such high violent conflict intensity are unlikely to be grasped by their approaches. Classic violent conflict dyads based on the state fighting a rebel group can be hardly applied to large-scale violence erupting from clashes between police forces on the one hand and protesters on the other. Although the Libyan (2011) and the Syrian example (2011-ongoing) have shown that protest movements are capable of militarizing their efforts against the state, such a step is a rather large leap. In contrast to narrow analysis lenses, which are useful for WEINSTEIN’s and KALYVAS’ purpose, OHLSON’s broad continuum allows for comparing very diverse actors with each other.

These range from well-equipped rebel groups to non-violent protest movements. In short, contrary to meta-level concepts, OHLSON captures conflictivity beyond a solely structural perspective. Although a society’s structural preconditions determine whether or not it is conflict-prone, it does not indicate when and how a violent conflict might escalate.<sup>34</sup> In order to understand these specifics, OHLSON covers the dynamic character of civil war outbreak by adding proximate causes and triggers as well as the resource and resolve question.<sup>35</sup>

31 Ohlson 2008: p. 142.

32 Ohlson 2008: p. 141. A systematic overview is presented in chapter 3.3.

33 Weinstein 2005, 2007; Kalyvas 2005, 2006; Humphreys/ Weinstein 2008; Kalyvas/ Kocher 2007.

34 Hirshleifer distinguishes between preferences, opportunities, and misperceptions. See Hirshleifer 2001: pp. 13-15.

35 Lujala et al. distinguish causes of rebellion by motivation, opportunity, and identity. First, rebels need a motive (e.g. grievances against the state), second, they are capable of obtaining their purpose (e.g. financial means), and third, they share a common identity in order to sustain the group’s cohesion (e.g. ethnically defined kinship). See Lujala/ Gleditsch/ Gilmore 2005: pp. 539-540.



With merging the dimensions of timing and agency into one comprehensive escalation model, the aforementioned shortcomings of overly structural argumentations are avoided. Any violent conflict analysis framework has to take into account background, proximate, and trigger issues as well as the role of different conflict actors. Instead of focusing on one of these aspects alone, the impact on escalation and de-escalation can only be explained on the basis of each of these layers in relation to each other.

The empirical analysis will be based on the dynamic escalation model presented above: Why did civil war happen in Peru and not in Bolivia despite similar structural conditions (e.g. socio-ethnic inequalities, coca abundance)? Beginning with Peru, the historical background will be presented in the attempt to identify structural causes of violent conflict (see 2.1.1.). Afterwards, five violent conflict episodes will be traced (see 2.1.2.). The intra-case analysis will end with a discussion on conflict-fueling and conflict-inhibiting factors (see 2.1.3.). The case of Bolivia will be then analyzed using the same logic: beginning with the background, delving into the escalation dynamics, and ending with a synthesis (see 3.2.). At last, the empirical findings will be compared, the theoretical and methodological implications will be discussed, and a number of future research perspectives will be outlined (see 4.).



## 2 Internal Violent Conflict Escalation

The empirical analysis will be divided into two major sections. At first, relevant historical events and developments in Peru and Bolivia will be described. This will shed light on structural differences and path dependencies prominent theorems might have failed to capture. In particular, the focus will be on the ways the countries were ruled and what kind of political and socio-economic changes the rulers set in motion. The latter aspect will cover reforms in the agrarian sector (see 2.1.1. and 3.2.1.). The second part of the case studies will constitute the empirical core of the book. The escalation episodes in both countries will be analyzed by making use of process tracing. Each inter-case study will end with a set of conflict-fueling and conflict-inhibiting factors (see 2.1.2. and 3.2.2.).

The criteria for identifying conflict-fueling and conflict-inhibiting factors will be based on two interdependent precautions: First, following GOERTZ/LEVY's metaphor of historical chains, causality will be traced along the differentiation of necessary and sufficient conditions. Which causal links led to the specific outcome of escalation, de-escalation or both (i.e. necessary conditions)? And, what relevance was attributed to the specific link(s) in terms of sustaining the causal chain of events (i.e. sufficient conditions). Second, a deliberate look into alternative explanations of escalation and de-escalation will test the validity and reliability of preliminary findings. In addition to searching for alternative factors, this attempt to avoid omitted variable bias will be substantiated by exchanging the time periods of the two cases. The relevant alternative explanatory factors in Peru (1980-1995) will be analyzed on the basis of the time period between 2000 and 2008, while the Bolivian case (2000-2008) will be accordingly assessed between 1980 and 1995. With the help of these two empirical-analytical safeguards, it will be the goal to minimize the risks of arbitrarily identifying explanations for escalation and de-escalation of internal violent conflict in Peru and Bolivia.

### 2.1 Republic of Peru

Peruvian independence from the Spanish *conquistadores* was declared in 1821. The remaining Spanish forces were defeated in 1824. Similar to other Latin American countries, the early years of the Republic were shaped by struggles for power between military leaders. This led to endemic political instability. However, between the 1840s and 1860s president Ramón Castilla managed to stabilize the country by fostering state revenues from guano exports. After those resources were spent, the indebted country was again confronted with

constant political struggle between economic and political elites and military leaders.<sup>36</sup> After two decades of relative stability, Peru was defeated by Chile in the War of the Pacific (1879-1883). As direct consequence, the Republic lost the provinces of Arica and Tarapacá.<sup>37</sup> Internal rivalry between different factions was followed by a stable phase under the conservative Civilista Party (1899-1920).<sup>38</sup> That period lasted until the inauguration of Leguía who installed an authoritarian regime (1919-1930).<sup>39</sup> The worldwide economic depression in the early 1930s caused Leguía's downfall and new political instability. The emergence of the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) has been identified as important outcome for the political system given the defining rivalry between the APRA on the one hand and a coalition of former elites and the military on the other for three decades to come.<sup>40</sup>

In 1968, President Fernando Belaúnde Terry was brought down in a military coup led by General Juan Velasco Alvarado.<sup>41</sup> Despite the attempt to improve living conditions of the poorer segments of society by undertaking radical reforms (e.g. education system, agrarian reform) the left-leaning Velasco regime failed to gain support of the masses.<sup>42</sup> In 1975, Velasco was ousted by Francisco Morales Bermúdez who took advantage of the deteriorating health of his predecessor by staging a military coup. Stuck into one of the most severe economic crises to that date, Bermúdez failed to implement political and economic reforms.<sup>43</sup> A Constitutional Assembly was installed in 1978 and called for National Elections to be held in 1980.<sup>44</sup> After these National Elections, Bermúdez turned power over to a legally established civilian government. That government was confronted with a significant external debt and an ever-growing inflation.<sup>45</sup> In 1986, PALMER described in accordance:

"Peru is a nation of sharp contrasts and great complexity marked by rapid change over the past thirty years. Total population has increased at close to 3 percent per year in recent decades, from 9.9 million to 17.7 million between the 1961 and 1981 censuses. Urbanization has advanced apace; the capital city of Lima increased from less than 1.7 million inhabitants in 1961 to over 5.5 million just twenty years later. Gross national product per capita was \$526 in 1960 and \$1294 in 1981. Literacy levels have gone from less than 50 percent to over 75 percent. Labor unions grew from just 849 in 1961 to over 4,700 by 1981. Barriers to voting included both sex and literacy requirements well into the twentieth century; only in

36 Vizcarra 2009: pp. 358-387; Gonzales 1987: p. 8.

37 Bonilla 1978: pp. 92-118; Sater 1973: pp. 133-158.

38 Chavarría 1970: pp. 257-278; Davies Jr. 1973: pp. 184-208.

39 Atwood 2001: pp. 155-176.

40 Graham 1992; Pike 1967; Hilliker 1971.

41 Malloy 1972: pp. 437-454; Crabtree 1985: pp. 75-83.

42 Mauceri 1995: pp. 7-37; Wise 1994: pp. 75-125; Philip 1976: pp. 29-51.

43 Angell/ Thorp 1980: pp. 865-886; Bourque/ Warren 1989: pp. 7-34; Thorp 1987: pp. 355-374.

44 Bermeo 1997: pp. 305-322; Kenney 2003: pp. 1210-1239.

45 Pastor Jr./ Wise 1992: pp. 83-117; Brown/ Hunter 1999: pp. 779-790; Pásara/ Parodi 1988: pp. 23-27; Palmer 1986: p. 130.

the 1980s was the literacy restriction abolished. As a result, voting levels increased from less than 5 percent of the population in 1939 to almost 25 percent in 1980. (...) The major effect of the changes within Peru over the past forty years (...) was to bring into the national system a much larger proportion of the total population. This means that the vast majority of Peruvian citizens are now in a position to make demands on the system – and do so. A government's staying in power is thus increasingly dependent on its ability to respond to the concerns of the citizenry."<sup>46</sup>

The early 1980s posed huge challenges to the civilian government that was eyed by a suspicious society tired of military leadership yet not less of the socioeconomic decline. PALMER described that period as follows:

"With the exception of the 1979-1981 period, [since 1971] net economic growth has been negative, wage settlements have fallen behind the cost of living, and inflation rates have increased from a 20-30 percent range to a 75-125 percent range. (...) While income does not appear to have become more concentrated, the lower strata of society have clearly lost their incremental gains with the shrinking of the economic pie."<sup>47</sup>

In order to better understand historically rooted grievances during that period, the following section will focus on two subjects: First, the effects of the Agrarian Reforms in the 1960s will be presented. Second, the particular relevance of the Ayacucho region, which had been isolated and marginalized by the centre-state for centuries, will be subsumed as breeding ground for the *Sendero Luminoso*.

### 2.1.1 Historical Background

The variance regarding the number of people killed in Peru (1980-1995: between 25.000 and 70.000) and Bolivia (1999-2008: less than 200) raises the question of military capacity. One assumption might be that SL in Peru has been better equipped and trained than any equivalent violent conflict actor in Bolivia. As such, the guerilla would have been able to sustain an armed struggle against the government forces for more than a decade.

The following section will deal with people's reasons to join, support or at least acquiesce in their activities. If the organizational resources of the guerilla can be identified as crucial factor of escalation in the early 1980s, then there will be need to explain the circumstances enabling its formation (e.g. retreat area, recruitment). What factors permitted an anti-state force such as SL to grow without being detected nor fought by the authorities in Lima? The first subchapter will discuss major land reforms of the 1960s. There will be need to understand to what extent the well-intentioned reforms paradoxically disrupted the patron-client system in a way that made some classes of cultivators more vulnerable to subsistence crises than before and thus more susceptible to

46 Palmer 1986: p. 130. See also Cam 1999: pp. 50-56; Zirakzadeh 2002: p. 70.

47 Palmer 1986: p. 130.

*Sendero Luminoso*'s dogma (see 2.1.1.1.). The second subchapter will deal with the south-central highland department of Ayacucho where *Sendero Luminoso* originated. Economically, politically, and culturally neglected for centuries by the state, the department presented a promising haven for the guerilla's founders (see 2.1.1.2.).

#### 2.1.1.1. Agrarian Reform 1964/1969

Heralded as one of the broadest and most extensive land reform programs in Latin American history, between 1968 and 1975 a massive land distribution was implemented by the military governments in Peru; over 8.6 million hectares of land was redistributed to over 370,000 families.<sup>48</sup> However, the peasant grass-roots support of the *Sendero Luminoso* achieved its critical mass only *after* the policies had been initiated: starting as an isolated band of 500 revolutionaries it grew to a broad-based insurgency involving up to 15,000 combatants including hundreds of thousands of civilian supporters.<sup>49</sup> In order to understand this paradox, the following section will attempt to resolve the puzzle along three steps: At first, the pre-reform agrarian status quo will be described. Second, the motivation and expectations of the governments as well as the design of the agrarian reforms in 1964 and 1969 will be presented. Most important at last, the actual effects of these reforms on the affected communities' susceptibility to *Sendero Luminoso*'s appeal will be discussed. The overview of the agrarian reforms will focus on the most important aspects rather than the legislative details of the reform programs.<sup>50</sup>

The pre-reform agrarian status quo in Peru was linked with the geographic and topographic nature of the country that determined land use and land tenure patterns; mutually, the ethnic composition of the respective areas went hand in hand with. FORD describes Peru as two separate nations when it comes to the agrarian structure: "[The] concentration of land ownership on the coast represents the expansiveness of capitalist enterprise, that of the sierra represents the survival of colonial latifundism."<sup>51</sup> On the one hand, there was the Quechua speaking sierra populace bound to the authority of the local landlord within a pre-modern patron-client relationship (i.e. traditional hacienda system) while

48 Alberts 1983: pp. 141-142; Kay 2003: p. 225; Melgar Bao 1986: p. 174.

49 Mason/ Swartzfeger 1989: p. 517; Mason 2004: pp. 230-231. See also Interview Oporto, 4 June 2010; Interview M. Urioste, 24 May 2010; Interview Lansa, 10 May 2010; Interview Backhaus, 20 July 2009.

50 Thorough analyzes are provided by Eguren 2006: pp. 13-28; Figueroa Arevalo/ Portocarrero Maisch 1986; Beck Furnish 1965: pp. 526-551; Kay 1982: pp. 141-170; Hopkins 1985: pp. 18-32; Valderrama 1978: pp. 103-113.

51 Ford 1962: p. 66. See also King 1977: p. 173; Handelman 1975: p. 15; Cam1999: pp. 54-56.

peasants on coastal plantations largely worked as wage laborers on commercial enterprises.<sup>52</sup>

The Coast: The capital- and land-intensive agricultural production on the coast has traditionally been directed towards international markets (i.e. export agriculture). Production depended on irrigation and mechanization.<sup>53</sup> Given the shift to commercial agriculture in the early 1920s caused by a massive increase in sugar cultivation, wage labor became the primary tenancy form rather than smallholding, sharecropping or other.<sup>54</sup> The disadvantaged peasant smallholders and tenants were systematically squeezed out of the market:

“The large haciendas of the region controlled access to irrigation sources that were vital to peasant farmers in the largely desert environment of the coastal plain. By manipulating access to water and other forms of clientelist dependency, the *hacendados* [i.e. landlords] were able to displace *minifundistas* [i.e. smallholders] from their land, shift that land to sugar or cotton production, and convert the peasants from subsistence farmers to wage laborers on the estates.”<sup>55</sup>

Given the benefits the landlords enjoyed from their dominant status, they would also employ migrant workers from the sierra regions in order to weaken the efforts of unions trying to unionize sugar workers in the 1950s and 1960s. The status quo on the coast remained either way: in case the (often less skilled and less reliable) sierra migrants returned home for harvesting in their own villages, the *hacendados* would employ other migrants interested in the higher coastal wages. As long as wages remained high and employment steady, workers on the sugar estates on the coastal plain were not eager to change their situation; not by the means of a revolution, the nationalization of estates, nor land reforms.<sup>56</sup> The situation of cotton laborers on the coast was less favorable resembling the clientelist economy structure of the traditional subsistence economy.<sup>57</sup>

The Sierra: In contrast to the wage labor defined coastal region, the clientelist system of the southern sierra constituted two distinct agrarian forms: the feudal hacienda and the peasant indigenous community. With estates of more than 500 hectares claiming a majority of livestock land and crop in Ayacucho, Huancavelica, Puno, and Apurímac, the sierra haciendas reckoned among the largest in Peru. In contrast to the export-oriented coastal estates, sierra haciendas concentrated their products on local or urban markets of Lima. Given the

52 Given that the selva (jungle) region is sparsely populated and of minor economic relevance to the nation, it will not be dealt with particularly. Further below however, its remote nature will be touched upon when discussing areas of illicit coca production (see 4.1.2.). Mason/Swartzfeger 1989: p. 518. An excellent overview of differences is provided by Mason 2004: pp. 234-239. See also Cam1999: pp. 54-56; Melgar Bao 1986: pp. 174-178.

53 Paige 1975: p. 175.

54 McClintock 1981: pp. 72-83.

55 Mason 2004: p. 234. (Emphasis by author)

56 Paige 1975: pp. 145-147; McClintock 1981: p. 74.

57 Paige 1975: p. 150.

lower labor required for livestock herding, the sierra haciendas maintained a small permanent work force despite their large size.<sup>58</sup> In-between the large sierra haciendas, there were thousands of peasant indigenous communities managing land ownership on communal basis. Subsistence plots were allocated by the community to member households while grazing lands standing open for use by all members of the community.<sup>59</sup> Usually, the land claimed by the communities was of less quality than the rich inter-Andean valleys controlled by the haciendas. Tensions between landlords and communities occurred repeatedly given encroachment efforts by the *hacendados* on the communities' land. Peasant land invasions and uprisings were a frequently applied means to oppose that.

However, given the perforating dominance of the hacienda system, the peasantry was effectively divided into two classes: permanent workers on the haciendas (*trabajadores*) and residents of the surrounding indigenous communities (*comuneros*). Formally bound to the landlord by clientelist dependency, the terms of trade and the risks differed. While the *trabajadores* were dependent upon the *hacendado* for security from subsistence crisis, *comuneros*' dependence was of different quality.<sup>60</sup> In contrast to *trabajadores*, they were endowed with a wider array of options. For instance, although constrained by language and cultural barriers, they were free to migrate to the coast in search of seasonal wage labor. Moreover, they were better prepared to respond to injustices by collective action. Given their communal land ownership, they were more experienced in cooperative endeavors (e.g. village institutions in charge of community's physical infrastructure).<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, they were more likely to speak Spanish, to vote, to travel, and most importantly, to market their crops independently of the local *hacendado*. Altogether, a common cultural heritage and identity constituted an important basis for organizing collective action against Hispanic or mestizo estate owners. Not surprisingly, rural unrest would originate in indigenous communities rather than among hacienda *trabajadores*.<sup>62</sup>

58 Handelman 1981: pp. 3-5.

59 Ford 1955: pp. 97-99.

60 Trabajadores were dependent on the hacendado for tools, seeds, loans, political brokerage etc. In return for these services, the trabajadores were forced to provide up to 200 days of free labor to the hacienda thereby exchanging their subsistence plot with limited grazing rights on hacienda pastures. Most critically however, it was up to the hacendado to decide upon what crops would be planted and claimed as much as half the crop in rent. Moreover, trabajadores were prevented from marketing surplus crops. In turn, they were expected to sell their crops to the hacendado who at the same time determined the prices. Given these rules, in reality the trabajadores would always exist close to the margins of subsistence and dependence. Ford 1955: pp. 89-95; Handelman 1981: p. 106; Mason 2004: pp. 236-239.

61 Ford 1955: pp. 96-102; Mason 2004: pp. 238-239.

62 Paige 1975: p. 166; Mason 2004: p. 239. An excellent overview of the pre-agrarian status quo is given by Mason/ Swartzfager 1989: pp. 518-523.



Between 1959 and 1962, at least 51 land invasions took place in the central department of Pasco and the coffee-growing valley of La Convención. While minor insurgencies in Pasco were driven by peasants claiming to recover land from *hacendado*'s earlier encroachments, the invasions in La Convención were driven by hacienda sharecroppers demanding better terms from their *hacendados*.<sup>63</sup> These uprisings were brought under control by the time Belaúnde was elected president in 1962; primarily due to his promises of launching substantial land reforms after his inauguration.<sup>64</sup> However unfortunately, according to peasant communities these promises were not kept at all. Yet another 202 invasions followed during the months between the election and his inauguration in 1963 and lasted until 1964. Given the repressive reaction by the state, in 1965 some of the federated groups organized a short-lived guerilla insurgency which was quickly grounded down by the armed forces.<sup>65</sup> Although the military had repressed that unrest without major efforts, some members of the military leadership sensed that the unequal distribution of land might become a crucial issue in future uprisings. Taking these invasions as early warning and convinced of civilian governments' inability to implement any substantial land reforms, eventually, a group of officers led by Velasco staged a coup against the Belaúnde administration in 1968. Right from the start, the junta announced to break the power of the landed oligarchy (i.e. so-called "forty families") by expropriating haciendas and redistributing them to the peasants.<sup>66</sup> Irrespective of power constellations within the Peruvian elite during those days, indeed, the need for structural reforms of the agrarian sector has been illustrated by MASON:

"The poverty that plagued most peasant communities in Peru was exacerbated by both the nation's high agricultural density (the population-to-land ratio) and the highly inequitable distribution of land ownership. As of 1979 there was only one-fifth hectare of arable land per capita in Peru, making it second only to El Salvador (...) in agricultural density among Latin American nations. In the 1950s a mere 280 families (one-tenth of 1 percent of all farm families) owned about 30 percent of all farmland in Peru, including over half the nation's best-quality crop land (...). In the sierra, the concentration of land ownership was even more extreme. Less than 2 percent of the agricultural units contained some 75 to 80 percent of all arable land (...). Because many property owners controlled several estates, nearly 75 percent of the land was owned by less than 1 percent of the rural population."<sup>67</sup>

Committed to a substantial agrarian reform, the military government promulgated a law of agrarian reform on 24 June 1969. This law expanded the depth and breadth beyond the first mild reform program of 1964 that had not virtually

63 Gott 1970: pp. 373-390; Brass 1980: pp. 427-457; Brass 1983: pp. 368-389; Handelman 1981: pp. 5-7.

64 Masterson 1991: pp. 209-214; Paige 1975: pp. 165-166; Handelman 1981: pp. 5-7.

65 Masterson 1991: pp. 215-219; Mason 2004: p. 240.

66 Mason 2004: p. 241. See also Interview Oporto, 4 June 2010; Interview M. Urioste, 24 May 2010. On Velasco's first years in power see Lowenthal 1974: pp. 799-817.

67 Mason 2004: p. 233. See also Interview M. Urioste, 24 May 2010.