THE MAKING OF THE WHITE MIDDLE-CLASS RADICAL: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF EL SALVADOR BETWEEN 1980 AND 1990

by

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Title: The Making of the White Middle-Class Radical: A Discourse Analysis of the Public Relations of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador between 1980 and 1990

This study explores the role of public relations in the formation of a collective identity of the activists of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) between 1980 and 1990. CISPES was a radical U.S.-based organization comprised of a majority of white college-educated members. CISPES had two goals: 1) stop the U.S. military assistance to El Salvador, and 2) support the Salvadoran revolutionary movements that were fighting a U.S.-backed government.

Through interviews, discourse analysis and historical research, this work shows that CISPES used as currency the whiteness of its activists, in conjunction with its educational background, to influence public opinion and policy-making in the U.S. The formation of CISPES as a white organization was partially achieved by continuous negotiations with Salvadoran radicals living in the U.S. Early in the 1990s, CISPES' collective identity as a white organization entered in crisis as internal debates on gender and race along with social changes in the national and international levels challenged dominant views and the status quo of whiteness and what this implies in political, social, and cultural spheres. This work proposes two models: the intersectional recruiting process and the ideological identity model of public relations. Both models were created

using dialectical methodologies that understand public relations and social movements as processes of permanent contradictions between social conditions and ideology/discourse creation. This dissertation has real applications because it reveals how activist public relations can help the global struggle for social justice.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In February 1988, FBI Director William S. Sessions acknowledged that the agency carried out a "full international terrorism investigation" into the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) between 1983 and 1985 (Shenon, 1988). Sessions argued that the FBI once believed that CISPES, a U.S. activist organization, provided money and guns to the Salvadoran insurgency of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). The administration of President Ronald Reagan viewed the FMLN as a communist group backed by Washington's principal geopolitical enemies: the Soviet Union and Cuba. By the end of 1985, the FBI ruled out the terrorist charges against CISPES and acknowledged that its activities were political and within the frame of the U.S. Constitution. The FBI apologized through the U.S. media; such an apology represented a public relations triumph for CISPES in its battle against President Reagan's government and policies.

Unlike other organizations that framed their work in the defense of human and religious rights in El Salvador (Smith, 2010), CISPES unapologetically sided with the FMLN by supporting the guerrilla-led revolutionary efforts in El Salvador. The organization held the U.S. government "directly responsible for unjust wars against the peoples of El Salvador and Central America" (CISPES, 1988, p. 1). Between 1980 and 1990, Republican administrations and CISPES waged a public relations battle to influence both U.S. public opinion and the political establishment. The conflict took place in the halls of Capitol Hill, in the streets of America's larger cities, in the

newsrooms of U.S. media outlets, outside federal buildings, and on college campuses (Little, 1994).

How did CISPES resist Reagan, who was one of the most popular presidents in the history of the U.S.? Previous research on the Central American solidarity movement in the U.S. (Smith, 2010) and testimonies collected for this dissertation concur that CISPES was, indeed, an organization primarily constituted by white college-educated radicals. This dissertation does not want to be tautological by repeating that white people use their white habitus to achieve their political goals (Bonilla-Silva et al., 2006). Rather, this work sheds light on the processes that led CISPES to become a white, college-educated organization that had two types of audiences: a white political elite and a radical public. The making of CISPES involved a series of strategic and unconscious decisions made by its members through continuous negotiations with Salvadoran radicals. In this dissertation, I propose two models: 1) **the process of intersectional recruiting** and the **ideological identity model of public relations**. The first one shows how CISPES – a relatively homogenous organization– negotiated ideology, strategies and collective identities with Salvadoran refugees with ties to the insurgency of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). I show how the majority of CISPES' activists followed a 6-stage path that explains how family themes and structural factors -such as level of education and race- facilitated the formation of a white organization. The **ideological identity model of public relations** is an organization-centric archetype that describes the centrality of ideology and demographic makeup in the designing and implementations of public relations strategies. The ideological identity model of public

relations also shows that an organization and its collective identity are influenced by national and international social systems.

No public relations studies can be found that examine the role of dominant identity markers (e.g., race, class, education) as resources used by activist organizations to influence the public sphere. A growing number of examinations in public relations addresses issues such as the relevance of social and symbolic capital inside corporations (Edwards 2009; Ihlen, 2005; Ihlen & Van Ruler, 2007; Ihlen, 2009), diversity and inclusion in organizations (e.g., Gallicano, 2013; Mundy, 2016), and racial identities of non-white audiences and public relations practitioners (Edwards, 2013; Len-Rios, 1995; Mundy, 2016; Murphree, 2004, Sha, 2006); however, just a handful of examinations have focused on the role of whiteness in the research and practice of public relations (Logan, 2011; Pompper, 2005; Vardeman-Winter, 2011).

This dissertation provides a theoretical framework in which race is not only conceived as a dimension in the practice of public relations, but also as a force that modulates the assembling of organizational structures and the design of strategies, tactics, and discourses. In situations and places where whites are the majority, or where whites have access to more resources than non-white individuals, whiteness is an analytical category that can help the understanding of how organizations are formed. Lipsitz (2006) argues that "whiteness" possesses "cash values, profits made in housing, unequal educational opportunities available, inside networks that channel employment, international transfer of inherited wealth" (p. Vi). Literature on organizational management has proved how whiteness is an invisible, but central dynamic in organizational culture and power (Grimes, 2002). By including the role of ideology, class

and gender in the development of public relations processes, I understand whiteness in conjunction with other intersectional identities (e.g., Crenshaw, 1989; Varderman-Winter et. al, 2013). A perspective that understands social identities as the intersections of many other factors such as social class and gender reduces the possibility of essentializing a specific group of people, in this case, an organization with a majority of white activists. I am also aware that concepts of race are historic artifacts that change over time and are determined by social and contextual factors (Omi & Winant, 1994). To explain not what CISPES was, but how CISPES became, I looked at CISPES' public relations material (e.g. internal documents, pamphlets, press releases) and interviewed 12 CISPES activists and allies. The combination of examining documents and interviews shows that collective identities, which are intersectional by nature, are negotiated in relation to political ideology. I show that CISPES built a unique set of discourses and crosscutting identities in the 1980s through the continuous negotiation of their political and strategic communication praxis.

Previous research on the narrativization of Central American conflicts in the 1980s has focused on how the U.S. media covered the issues (Bennett, 1990; Lenart & Targ, 1992; Smith, 2010), the relevance of counter public mobilization regarding El Salvador's solidarity movement in the U.S. (Nepstad, 2001; Perla, 2010), and the rhetorical resources of the Reagan administration regarding Central America (Weiler & Pearce, 1992). However, none of these studies examine the types of discourses that radical organizations used in their public relations strategies to counter dominant narratives at this time, and little research addresses how intersectional identities shape the development and perception of those discourses.

This dissertation is divided into eight chapters. The first one is a succinct historical overview of CISPES, and describes the context in which the organization was immersed. This historical account will help the reader understand social arenas in which CISPES attempted to influence Washington's foreign policy. In chapter two, I review four streams of literature: 1) post-colonialism, race, diversity, and intersectional identities in public relations (Pompper, 2005; Mundy 2010, Varderman-Winter, Tindall & Jian, 2013), 2) critical race theory and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989, Frankenberg, 1993; Omi & Winant, 1994; Bonilla-Silva, 2006), 3) the formation of collective identities in activism (Bedford and Snow, 2000; D'emilio, 1983 de Volo, 2000; Nepstad, 2001;Thompson, 1982, Viterna, 2016;), and 4) theoretical framework behind my dialectic methodology (Bourdieu, 1990, 1991; Foucault, 1992; Hall, 1991, 1992, 2000). This theoretical framework allows me to examine CISPES and the phenomenon of public relations activism at the organizational level- a dimension that connects individuals with larger forces in society, such as race, class, and gender (Viterna, 2016).

In chapter three, I describe the methodology of this dissertation and how I have operationalized the concepts and the limitations of my approach. This dissertation uses a mixed methods approach with strong historical perspectives. I use Hall's (2001) discourse analysis to examine both the discourse formation (the creation of ideological messages) and the discourse practices (how those narratives were created). Bourdieu (1990), D'Emilio (1983) and Thompson (1988) are used to understand the dialectic relationships between structural factors (i.e., race and class) and language. This research is qualitative in nature. I got access to some of CISPES' internal documents, which were the raw material for my discourse analysis. In addition, I conducted 12 in-depth

interviews with former CISPES staffers between September 25, 2017 and December 31, 2017 in person or via Skype/telephone.

In chapter four and five, I show the results of the discourse analysis along with the examinations of in-depth interviews I conducted. In chapter four, I provide an examination of discourses, campaigns and public relations strategies have been placed in chronological order to create a discursive trajectory of CISPES's communications and their relation to historical events. Through the examination of interviews, I show the rationale CISPES activists used to select their discourses, strategic goals, and the ways in which they monitored the organization's success. I also highlight several dissenting views that emerge in the interviews about the interpretation of history and collective actions. In the interviews, I ask participants about their personal history to understand the influence of intersectional identities such as race, class, and gender in their political mobilization and work in CISPES. In chapter five, I discuss the findings and propose a model of intersectional recruiting, as well as an ideological identity model of public relations. In chapter 6, I provide conclusions and discuss future avenues for research on race, public relations and activism.

CISPES represents an example in history that shows a common practice in U.S. activism: white college-educated activists use their available resources (i.e. access to politicians and celebrities, knowledge of the media environment and organizing skills, the ability to monitor U.S. politics) to challenge the status quo and propose a radical agenda (Hobson, 2016; McAdam, 1986; Smith, 2010). This is also the story about how CISPES- as a white organization- was the product of the close relationship between Salvadoran immigrant-activists- many of them undocumented- and white radicals. Salvadoran

radicals in the U.S. were aware that the education and racial background of CISPES' activists were assets that they lacked, and that they needed desperately in their struggle against Reagan.

Theoretically, this dissertation contributes to the expansion of the fields of public relations and social movement theory through the use of critical race theory. The main argument of this dissertation is that public relations is one of the vehicles in which collective identities are activated, exchanged, negotiated and reformulated over time. This process of identity exchange is mediated by the ideology and demographic makeup of the organization, which serve as tools to reduce tensions and inspire the development of public relations material. To understand this, the organizational level is ideal because it allows us to see the relationship between national and international levels.

In relation to the field of social movement theory, my research contributes to an understanding of how collective identities, especially whiteness, are historical processes deeply embedded in organizations. Previous examinations on social movement organizations have looked at the centrality of the construction of social identities and frames in transnational social justice (Gamson, 1991, de Volo, 2000; Melluci, 1989), but often overlook the organizational dynamics that facilitate the appearance of identities and collective messages. In this research, I examine the internal processes in which discourses and identities are formed within movements.

Furthermore, this work reveals how race and class are assets for organizations that aspire to profoundly transform U.S. society. CISPES's strategies may serve as an example for contemporary times, revealing an effective model of advocacy between white college-educated groups and immigrant activists. In this context, understanding

models of solidarity between U.S. activists and undocumented immigrants can serve to examine phenomena such as activism around DACA and the Dreamers movement.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Between 1981 and 1991, CISPES operated at the intersection of two axes: anti-imperialist goals to stop U.S. intervention in El Salvador and the emergence of a radical left that challenged the New Right. CISPES' commitment to the self-determination of the people of El Salvador echoes the goals of the Non-Aligned Movement (NOMA). Between 1950 and 1970, a group of Third World countries and national liberation movements built a coalition to push forward an agenda against colonialism and the imperialistic policies of both the United States and the Soviet Union (Prashad, 2007, 2012). NOMA was a coalition of the "darker nations" who "longed for dignity, above all, but also the basic necessities of life (land, peace and freedom)" (Prashad, 2007, p. xv). By 1975, NOMA decreased its international influence while the Group of Seven, a bloc of rich countries (U.S., United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Japan and Canada) reasserted their collective power by pursuing an agenda aligned against NOMA (Prashad, 2013). NOMA's geopolitical goals, along with the emergence of liberation movements in the Third World influenced the work of many social movements in the U.S. during this time. CISPES was one of the organizations inspired by the Third World Left in the U.S., which expressed their solidarity to revolutionary groups in Latin America, advocated for the end of U.S. hegemony in the region, and for the dismantling of race and class hierarchies (Pulido, 2006). This spirit was still alive when Reagan came to power with an ideology that unleashed neoliberal policies on the global economy (Prashad, 2007).

In 1979, Nicaragua's Sandinista Revolution created new political opportunities for national liberation movements in the Third World and for pro-Third World Left

organizations in the U.S. In July 1979, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) overthrew a 40-year ruthless dictatorship and implemented a mixed economy in which representative and participatory democracy operated simultaneously (Prevost & Vanden, 1993). The success of the Sandinista revolution made Nicaragua a leader among progressive forces in Latin America and an active member of NOMA. In 1981, the Republican President Ronald Reagan was inaugurated and immediately implemented a hostile policy against Nicaragua and the emerging insurgency of the FMLN in El Salvador. In Reagan's view (1983), both El Salvador's and Nicaragua's political situations originated in cold war logics of conflict:

> "The problem is that an aggressive minority has thrown in its lot with the Communists, looking to the Soviets and their own Cuban henchmen to help them pursue political change through violence. Nicaragua, right here, has become their base. And these extremists make no secret of their goal. They preach the doctrine of a 'revolution without frontiers.' Their first target is El Salvador." (Reagan, 1983)

The inclusion of Central America in the ideological universe of Reagan dates back to July 1980, when a staff aide to the North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms introduced language in the Republican party platform to condemn the "Marxist takeover of Nicaragua and Marxist attempts to destabilize El Salvador and Guatemala" (Gutman, 1988). The aide was John Carbaugh, who lobbied in favor for a white minority government in Zimbabwe in the 1960s. In July 1980, Reagan attempted to draw an aggressive stance toward Central America, differentiating his ideology from the "softer" position of democratic President Jimmy Carter. In 1981, Helms became the chairman of the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs where he advocated for a tougher policy toward the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Helms was a close ally of the

right-wing Salvadoran politician, Roberto D'Aubuisson and Chilean dictator, Augusto Pinochet- the former tied to the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero in 1980 (PNUD, 2017). In this context, groups of Latin American anti-communists, right-wingers, neo-Fascists and neo-Nazis, along with benefactors and allies in the United States and Europe, formed a network dedicated to "overcoming the communist menace"(Anderson & Anderson, 1986). By 1980, the World Anti-Communist League (WACL), a collection of right-wing individuals, situated the battlefield against communism in Central America. Anderson and Anderson (1986) argue that anti-communism in the 1980s was a political "chameleon able to change its colors, even its politics, at will" (p.263). Roger Pearson, a British-American member of the league, reveals racial debates that occurred inside these organizations:

> The problem was exacerbated by the South American group. They were anti-communists but also believe the communists were Jews (…) These Latins tried to swing all of WACL over their side. They put some books and there was some truth in what they wrote-everyone knows some communists have been Jews-but ridiculous, really, saying all communist are Jewish (Anderson and Anderson, 1986, p.102-103)

Finally, Anderson and Anderson (1986) describe the flexible nature of the Anti-Communist league: "When black Africans are not present, it talks about the democracy and bastion of freedom and prosperity for white-controlled South Africa; when black Africans are present, it talks about black Africa's struggle against Soviet-Cuban aggressors" (p. 102). This debate inside the far right reveals the complicated relationship between anti-communism and conservative discourses in the U.S. Reagan's immigration amnesty of 1986 showed the disagreements between the Republican administration and the ideology of the far-right that pursued the end immigration flows to the U.S. (Omi & Winant, 1994). These three elements show the complexity of Reagan's agenda: punitive

idealism, free-market absolutism and right-wing Christian mobilization (Grandin, 2006). Reagan's interpretation of domestic conflicts in Central America was that the unrest depended on the Soviet and Cuban "adventurism" and the U.S. should act aggressively in order to stop any possibility of communist expansionism (Smith, 2010, p.20).

Domestically, the ascension of Reagan represented the rise of the New Right in the U.S. conservative movement. This faction wanted to reduce the velocity of the civil rights movement that resulted in the rearticulation and relevance of a new black political identity (Omi and Winant, 1994). Black identities provided oppositional frameworks to traditional whiteness. In the 1980s, the political right reasserted a new white identity, after having been "rendered unstable and unclear by the minority challenge" in the 1960s and 1970s (Omi & Winant, 1994, p.120). The construction of a white neoconservative identity included the dismantling of political gains made by racial minorities, the reclaiming of individual interests over collective interests, and a systematic undermining of affirmative action initiatives in the federal government (Omi & Winant, 1994).

At the beginning of the 1980s, whites represented the overwhelming majority of employees in U.S. political institutions. In 1981, only 6% of members in both chambers of the U.S. Congress belonged to a racial minority, despite the fact that almost 20% of the U.S. population was non-white (Bialik & Krogstad, 2017). In 1980, whites represented 83 % of the 226.5 millions of U.S. citizens, while the percentage of Latinos was 6.4% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). In 1980, 40% of the Latino population age 25 and older in the U.S. had an education of 9^{th} grade or less and only 8% had a bachelor's degree (Eisenach, 2016). In the same year, 17% of whites had a college degree (U.S. Census Bureau, 1999). In the early 1980s, only 9% of whites lived under the poverty line, while

25% of Hispanics and 33% of African Americans were poor (Plumer, 2013). The median household income for white families was a little under $50,000 a year, for Hispanics, under $40,000, and for African Americans, under $30,000 (Plumer, 2013). These data show the extent of racial inequality in the economic and cultural realms during the time CISPES was created.

Internationally, U.S. foreign policy has regularly used cultural themes with racial undertones to describe foreign populations whom were subject to U.S. domination and hegemony. Central America and the Caribbean were especially targeted by these racialized discourses. Between 1885 and 1900, U.S. government officials hid any overtly racial discourse before the annexations of Spanish colonies in the Caribbean and Asia, but after Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines were finally in the hands of the U.S., more overt forms of racial language became commonplace (Love, 2005). In early 20th century, Julian Smith, a U.S. marine major, testified that "the racial psychology" of "the poorer classes" in Nicaragua made them "densely ignorant", having "little interest in principles" (Grandin, 2006 p. 20). In 1981, Jean Kirkpatrick (1981), who later became Reagan's representative to the United Nations, locates Salvadoran political unrest in the culture of the Salvadoran subject, specifically; she argued that machismo is key in understanding "the nature of the world and the human traits necessary for survival and success" (p.508). She argues that there is a congruity between cultural traits and political patterns in El Salvador, which produces a "tendency to schism and violence within the political class." Citing Hobbes, Kirkpatrick suggests -that on the verge of a clash between anarchy and civil war in El Salvador- the emergence of a strong leader such as the Christian Democrat, Napoleón Duarte, is necessary.

In addition to her view of the Salvadoran individual as prone to violence, she defends a perspective in which anti-communism is the metaframe that explains social unrest in Latin America. She states that:

> Ignoring the role of ideology had powerful effect in the administration's perception of conflicts and on its ability to make accurate predictions. Although Fidel Castro has loudly and repeatedly proclaims his revolutionary mission, and backed his stated intention by training insurgents and providing weapons and advisers, Carter's Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, William Bowdler, described Cuba as "an inefficient and shabby dictatorship-a description more appropriate to say Paraguay, than to an expansionist Soviet client state with troops scattered throughout the word. The refusal to take seriously, or event to take into account, the commitment of Fidel Castro or Nicaragua's Sandinista leadership to Marxist-Leninist goals and expansionist policies made it impossible to distinguish them either from traditional authoritarians or from democratic reformers, impossible to predict their likely attitude toward the United States and the Soviet Union why in their view Costa Rica and Mexico as well as Guatemala and Honduras constituted invited target (p.510-511)

El Salvador in the Congress

Although the Reagan administration always viewed the FMLN and the Nicaraguan government as two intertwined actors (Grandin, 2006; Peace, 2012; Smith, 2010; Walker 1987), this historical review focuses on the legislative processes in both the House of Representatives and the Senate between 1981 and 1991 rather than the rationale behind Reagan's executive foreign policy. Literature on U.S.-Central American relations in the 1980s (e.g. Grandin, 2006; LeoGrande, 1998; Smith, 2010) and my examination of CISPES' internal documents and the opinions of CISPES' activist reveal that the organization understood the legislative branch as the arena in which they could effectively influence U.S. policy toward El Salvador.

After Reagan's presidential inauguration on January 20, 1981, the administration started its aggressive policy toward El Salvador and Nicaragua. Reagan tried to avoid at

all costs the insurgency efforts of the left-wing group, Farabundo National Liberation Front -a coalition created by five Marxist-Leninist organizations in October 1980. Simultaneously, the U.S. government continued its policy aimed at debilitating the Sandinista government, which possessed strong diplomatic and military ties with the FMLN, Cuba and the Soviet Union. On February 27, 1981, the National Security Council approved 25 million dollars in new military aid to El Salvador, which was more than El Salvador had received in aid since 1946. However, between 1981 and 1984, the administration had a hard time pursuing the House of Representatives with Democratic majority to fund its plans to escalate the confrontation with the FMLN and Nicaragua. The Senate had a Republican majority.

In the early years of the Reagan administration (1981-1984), Congress placed strict limits on American engagement with El Salvador in terms of personnel, (Gradin, 2006). In December 1981, after a well-crafted strategy by democrats in both chambers, Reagan and Republicans were pressured to pass the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1981 that required the U.S. to certify the Salvadoran government in human rights as a condition to send military aid to El Salvador. In 1981, U.S. aid to El Salvador totaled over forty million dollars (GAO, 1990). However, the Reagan administration struggled with Congress for years to pass his requests for funding U.S. military presence in Central America. This was especially true in the House of Representatives. For example, in late 1983, both the House and the Senate voted in favor of banning military aid to El Salvador if the president did not certify that there were improvements in human rights in that country. The democratic representative, Michael Barnes, from Maryland, sponsored the bill in the House. In November 30, 1983, Reagan

vetoed the resolution. In March 1986, the House of Representatives rejected the president's aid package to help the Nicaraguan insurgency, "Contras", with 220 votes to 210 (Smith, 2010).

It took three years for the Reagan administration to get legislative approval of a military aid package to El Salvador that exceeded $200 million (GAO, 1990). In 1982, the National Security Council acknowledged that the administration was having "serious difficulties with U.S. public and congressional opinion" (Smith, 2010, p.27). The U.S. public was largely against any American intervention in Central America, which was in part, due to the trauma of the Vietnam War (Smith, 2010). To improve his chances of winning over Congress and U.S. public opinion, Reagan built a public relations and lobbying machine.

Reagan's PR complex

Since the beginning of Reagan's first term, the White House and the State Department used its insurmountable power to create news that strengthened its vision of the FMLN as an emerging communist threat. In February 1981, the State Department leaked the document "Communist Interference in El Salvador" to the media, which supposedly confirmed that the FMLN was receiving arms from Vietnam's communist government with the support of Cuba and Nicaragua (Smith, 2010). The document written by the Bureau of Public Affairs of the State Department (1981) states:

> The evidence drawn from captured guerrilla documents and war material and corroborated by intelligence reports underscores the central role player by Cuba and other Communist countries beginning in 1979 in the political unifications, military direction and arming of insurgent forces in El Salvador" (p.1).

In the same document, the State Department argues that Shafik Handal, the general secretary of the Salvadoran Communist party –one of the five organizations of the FMLN- received an offer from the Vietnamese government:

> Continuing his travels between June 9 and 15, Handal visits Vietnam where he is received by Le Duan, Secretary General of the Vietnamese Communist Party; Xuan Thuy, member of the Communist Party Central Committee Secretariat; and Vice Minister of National Defense Tran Van Quang. 'I'he Vietnamese, as a "first contribution," agree to provide 60 tons of arms. Handal adds "the comrade requested air transport from the USSR."

Between 1981 and 1987, the White House and State Department continued to leak intelligence reports that tied the FMLN to Nicaragua, the Soviet Union and Cuba. In 1982, the Reagan administration started to assemble a powerful strategic communications and lobbying machine aimed at winning over the legislative branch, improving the image of the executive branch in the U.S. public and receiving positive journalistic coverage (Grandin, 2006). Public offices, think tanks and private entities participated in pushing the idea that the national security of the U.S. was in danger of Central American "communist" organizations such as the Sandinista government and the FMLN (Kentworthy, 1997; Smith, 2010).

The U.S. government tied the FMLN to the Nicaraguan government in their public relations messaging (Smith, 2010). In 1983, Reagan signed the National Security Decision Directive 77 that created the Office of Public Diplomacy for Latin America and the Caribbean (Grading, 2006; Smith, 2010). The office was led by Cuban American exile Otto Reich, and it was staffed by CIA and military officials expert in psychological operations (Grandin, 2006). The goal of the office was to influence both domestic and foreign audiences. By May 1983, the White House invested over $400,000 to support the

work of private groups that defended Reagan's anticommunist agenda (Smith, 2010), and Edelman Public Relations was hired by the National Endowment for the Preservation of Liberty to design a 25-page strategy to challenge democratic leadership who was critical of Reagan's plans in Central America (Grandin, 2006).

In 1984, the conservative think tank, the Heritage Foundation published a paper condemning the "left's Latin American lobby" in Washington D.C. (Frawley, 1984). The think tank provided short descriptions of six U.S.-based organizations that attempted to dissuade the U.S. public and the executive branch that the "Salvadoran government shares power with the Marxist guerrillas operating in that country despite the fact that the government was chosen in free elections witnessed by hundreds of foreign observers." The Heritage Foundation traced the movements against U.S. intervention in Central America back to "Radical Left Students for a Democratic Society", an organization that built a grassroots network opposing the U.S. war in Vietnam, which promulgated leftist transformations in U.S. society (Gitlin, 1980).

Regarding CISPES, the Heritage Foundation believed that leftist organizations followed the guidelines of Salvadoran insurgency:

> CISPES organizers in the U.S. seek to disassociate themselves from [Farid] Handal (an assassinated member of the Salvadoran Communist Party) and other foreign representatives of political or insurgent groups and instead are active in broad based coalitions that represent domestic groups like the National Council of Churches, organizations for the handicapped, Physicians for Social Responsibility, and the Democratic Socialists of America. CISPES, reports Waller, also publicly allies itself with affiliated movements like the National Network in Solidarity with the People of Nicaragua, Coordinadora de Solidaridad con el Pueblo Salvadoreño, and the Committee in Solidarity with Viet Nam, Kampuchea, and Laos.

The Nicaraguan government responded to Reagan's public relations campaign by

hiring a New York campaign public relations company. In February 1986, the U.S. firm Agenda International scheduled meeting between the Nicaraguan President, Daniel Ortega, and editorial boards of different newspapers (Boyd, 1986). According to media reports, Ortega's government paid over $100,000 for the public relations campaign (Allen, 1986). A White House spokesperson called the Sandinista effort as a "very sophisticated plan involving the media and also calls for a campaign of disinformation about the success or failure of the Contra there…It's carefully worked out and a highly professional plan to influence the American people" (Allen, 1986). Since late 1970s and early 1980s, the Nicaraguan government and the FMLN had offered an alternative vision of their efforts through the creation of radical press agencies: New Nicaragua Agency (New Nicaragua Agency) and SALPRESS (de Mateo, 1988; Ortiz, 1990).

The New Left

In the 1980s, the Central American Solidarity Movement in the U.S. inherited many of the conditions, ideologies and tactics of the New Left. The Vietnam war provoked the emergence of new radical thinking and practice in the U.S., especially in important segments of the white, college-educated population (Gosse, 1993; Smith, 2010). The New Left is the collection of political expressions that rejected the traditional interpretation of Marxism centered on class in the1960's (Klimke, 2015). Organizations such as Students for a Democratic Society and the Black Panther Party channeled the dissatisfaction of young people toward consumer society, war, white supremacy, and global imperialism (Slobodian, 2015). Although the epicenter of the New Left has been traditionally located in the U.S. and Western Europe, Central America, especially El Salvador, experienced its own version of the New Left. In early 1970s, a wave of young

Salvadoran radicals disputed the hegemony of Salvadoran Communist Party as the only instrument of radical transformation and created guerrilla organizations that wanted to advance a socialist revolution through guerrilla warfare. Leaders of social movements, Catholic thinkers and communist dissidents formed the Salvadoran New Left (Chavez, 2014). A similarity between the New Left in the U.S. and in El Salvador was that in both countries, radical mass mobilization did not originate in communist parties who traditionally embraced electoral politics. However, unlike the U.S., Catholics and Catholic institutions were central actors in the formation of a broad revolutionary ideology and praxis in El Salvador (Chavez, 2014; Nepstad, 2001). In the early 1970s, the Popular Liberation Front (FPL in Spanish)- one of the five organizations that later became known as the FMLN - acknowledged that the Salvadoran revolution had three sources of inspiration: Marxism, Leninism and Christianism (Alvarenga, 2016).

In the U.S., white radicals of the New Left in 1960's and 1970's protested U.S. foreign intervention and favored radical politics in diverse ways. Some of them aligned their efforts with the lessons of the Black Panther Party, which called white people to organize other white people in order to challenge white supremacy (Hobson, 2016; Klimke, 2015). Some created feminist and gay collectives and others called for the independence of Puerto Rico (Berger, 2006). Some believed that dividing radical mobilization along racial lines could complicate the achievement of class-consciousness in the U.S. (Berger, 2006). However, many white radicals such as the clandestine organization, Weather Underground, emulated revolutionaries in Cuba and Vietnam through the implementation of violent tactics (Varon, 2004). In 1968, there were 236 acts of sabotage in the United States alone (Berger, 2006). The period from the late 1950s

until early 1970s represented the beginning of a struggle in the U.S. that would continue until the end 1980's (Van Gosse, 1993). In those four decades, some U.S. radicals participated in solidarity movements in favor of Third World revolutions, and opposed what they saw as a U.S. imperialist agenda.

CISPES came to life after an intense decade in which revolutions were seen as "logical" and "real" (Berger, 2006, p.8). Racial dynamics and radical politics have always interacted within the U.S. Left, but not always for the best. In 1930s, while the Socialist Party of the U.S. recruited white working class activists in the South, the communist party designed a strategy to enlarge their membership through the recruitment of African American rural workers in Alabama (Kelley, 2015). The difference of strategies between the two parties was based partially in the difficulty of establishing personal ties between white and black radicals. Some white communists were killed for helping to organize African Americans (Kelley, 2015). On other occasions, black and white workers joined forces to challenge the status quo. During the early part of the twentieth century, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) organized white and black workers in Philadelphia, and between 1910 and 1913, timber workers with membership divided between black and white defied Jim Crow laws in the Deep South (Goldfield, 1988).

CISPES as an organization

In words of one of its former members, CISPES "was the major expression of U.S. radical politics during the 80s, it was the only explicitly left current that operated all across the country" (Van Gosse, 1994). CISPES navigated a complex network of geopolitical and national events. At the geopolitical level, their ideological commitment

located them at the forefront of the struggle against the U.S. intervention in Latin America. Between 1900 and 1960, the U.S. military intervened dozens of times in Latin American countries, including once in Guatemala, twice in Nicaragua, six in Panama, and seven in Honduras (Prashad, 2007). In 1983, U.S. troops invaded Granada to overthrow a left-wing government, which, in Reagan's words, was proof that the United States "was back and standing tall" (Lipsitz, 2006). However, in 1979, in Nicaragua, the insurgency of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) overthrew the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza, a member of a family clan who occupied the presidency for 40 years with the support of the U.S. In October 1980, five Salvadoran Marxist Leninist military organizations founded the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), which agreed on a political coalition with the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR in Spanish)- an organization comprised of Social Democrats and Social Christians.

Unlike liberal organizations who advocated for reformist and domestic goals, CISPES had an internationalist view of the Salvadoran struggle as a conflict mainly provoked by the interventionist and capitalistic policy of the U.S. in Latin America and the Third World (Hobson, 2016). CISPES was founded in late 1980 in San Francisco, California (Gosse, 1987). It happened weeks before the FMLN's first military offensive to San Salvador in January 10, 1981 and 10 days before Reagan's inauguration. Van Gosse reveals that the antecedents of CISPES are the Bloque de Solidaridad-Farabundo Martí (the Solidarity Block) comprised by Salvadoran nationals and "a few key North Americans" who formed first the "U.S. friends of the BPR" (Popular Revolutionary Front, a mass organization inside the FMLN), which later created the "U.S. Friends of the Salvadoran Revolution" that later became San Francisco's CISPES in the late 1980s

(Gosse, 1987, p.23). CISPES' mission was to build a national movement to end U.S. support of the Salvadoran regime and to assist in the battle for self-determination of the countries of the Americas (CISPES, 2015). CISPES belonged to a larger effort called Central American Peace and Solidarity (CAPSM), which was a coalition of secular and religious activists and civil society that attempted to frame the Salvadoran conflict as arising domestically in response to the brutality of Salvadoran state (Perla, 2008). Along with CISPES, there were other actors that operated under the umbrella of CAPSM such as the sanctuary movement in which religious volunteers assisted and advocate for undocumented Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees at risk of being detained by the U.S. immigration authorities (Coutin, 1993)

With over 300 chapters and 60,000 members (Cunningham, 2005; Little, 1994), CISPES became one of the most relevant activist organizations against Washington's foreign policy regarding Central America. In the beginning, the organization was formed by a coalition of organizations and grassroots movements, but by 1985, CISPES became a single organization with groups operating throughout the U.S. (CISPES, 20015; Donaghy, 1990; Van Gosse, 1987). Through the mid 1980s, CISPES built a cohesive organization with a stable grassroots volunteer base and local and regional staffers with goal-oriented plans and campaigns (Van Goose, 1994).

By 1987, CISPES had a national headquarters in Washington, D.C., and six regional offices that organized different chapters: Boston, New York, New Orleans, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago and Boulder, Colorado (CISPES, 1988). CISPES hired a group of staffers who established contacts with the different regional officers and also designed political and communication strategies to affect policy debates concerning U.S.

foreign policy towards El Salvador (CISPES, 1988). Green (2014) defines the CISPES model in three factors:

> Three major factors contributed to the success of CISPES as a solidarity organization. The primary one was that CISPES based its program on the needs of the people of El Salvador, not on the priorities of political struggles here in the U.S. There was consultation with Salvadorans and direction taken from them but CISPES still remained an independent U.S. organization. Secondly, CISPES developed its programs by first making a thorough and careful analysis of the situation in El Salvador, Central America and the U.S., then formulating specific objectives and a comprehensive political strategy. The kind of program that would eventually be adopted flowed directly out of those objectives, strategies and analyses. The third factor in CISPES' success was the use of an active, systematic and rigorous methodology of outreach. That methodology was based on the idea that people do things because they are asked to do them. In practice that meant thousands of phone calls, and person-to-person recruiting. CISPES chapters, in other words, didn't just wait for people to come to them, but actively went out and organized people in their own communities.

In the minds of CISPES' activists, Reagan was signaling his intention to support the overthrow of the new Nicaraguan government and undermine the emergence of the FMLN, which was generally seen by U.S. activists as a grassroots expression of the Salvadoran people (Donaghy, 1990). Some of these U.S. activists had a history of involvement with the protests against the Vietnam War and believed their participation in protests against Reagan was a moral and religious commitment (Nepstad, 2001; Smith, 2010). In the1980s, the anticolonial cause was also framed in racial terms, as race was a territorial category that signified the struggle of poor countries against a system of race distinction developed by European colonialism in the Third World (Omi & Winant, 1994).

Public relations strategies were central in CISPES. Many of the guidelines for messaging and media work emanated from the headquarters in Washington, D.C. (CISPES, 1988). These strategies were a combination of extreme and mainstream tactics

that included mass civil disobedience actions at U.S. governmental agencies, demonstrations in front of the United Nations' headquarters in New York City, rallies with thousands of participants, pamphlets, meetings with local and federal legislators, bulletins, TV ads, media appearances in newscasts such as "ABC's Nightline," and documentaries (Little, 1994). CISPES' information campaigns raised suspicions in the FBI regarding the relationship between the organization and the FMLN-an organization framed by president Ronald Reagan as a proxy armed movement in favor of Soviet and Cuban interests (U.S. Select Committee on Intelligence, 1989).

In the 1980s, CISPES was a radical organization that inserted itself in debates about U.S. foreign policy (Donaghy, 1990; Little, 1994). By proposing the "end of U.S. intervention in El Salvador and all of Central America" through a relationship of "mutual independence and respect" with the Salvadoran movement (CISPES, 1988), CISPES went beyond the liberal call for the unrestricted respect of human rights (Smith, 2010). "We do not impose our own perspectives and ideologies on the Salvadoran people," CISPES argued in its 1987 bylaws. In the same document, the organization made an official commitment to recruiting more activists of color into leadership positions. Although there is no available data about the demographic makeup of CISPES activists in the 1980s, a study on the Central America solidarity movement in the U.S. shows that over 90% of the activists were white, with an annual household income above the U.S. average, and with over 4 years of college education (Smith, 2010). CISPES is still active today, but this dissertation does not examine the organization after 1990.

Through the examination of late 1970s and early 1980s, this chapter establishes connections between the debate around Reagan's foreign policy and the rewiring of the

many views of race in the U.S. Although Reagan's foreign affairs ideology was not white supremacist, it is also true that his foreign policy activated a series of racial discourses about Central America, which we can understand as "racial ideologies" (Haney-Lopez, 1994; Hall, 1997; Picower, 2009) that narrate the conditions and possibilities of Salvadoran people (Mohanty, 1991) in relation to the communist menace. Reagan's ambassador to the UN, Jean Kirkpatrick (1981) saw Salvadorans as people who could not rule themselves and needed iron fist governments. Thankfully for Salvadorans, she argues that the U.S. provided guidance and material support against the possibility of international communism endangering U.S. strategic interests. The same can be said about the case of CISPES. As an organization led and comprised of mostly white middle-class activists, CISPES formed radical ideologies not only about race, but also about the nature of the Salvadoran civil war, the FMLN and U.S. foreign policy. CISPES appeared in a time when many discourses coexisted: the decentralization of class in the Left, the Third World as a center stage in the struggle against imperialism, the emergence of a new white conservative identity in the U.S., and the visibility of the FMLN as a grassroots coalition of Marxist Leninists, Christians, and Social Democrats. Through the examination of public relations, it is possible to understand the formation of collective identities in CISPES. These identity formation processes can be understood using the complex lenses of critical race theory, postcolonialism and social movement theory.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical approaches to public relations have attempted to build their own paradigm for over three decades. Karlberg (1996) distinguishes mainstream public relations from critical public relations. In his view, instrumental research is conducted under the "premise that theories are instrument that function as guides to practice", while critical examination is concerned with "critiquing the broader social, political and economic implications of public relations" (p 265). Karlberg criticizes mainstream public relations research for treating citizens and public interest groups as secondary actors and calls for a public relations research that empowers ordinary people and not only rich and influential organizations. Dozier and Lauzen (2000) echo some of Karlberg's concerns. They call for public relations research that liberates itself from the obsessive examination of professional practice. Dozier and Lauzen understand public relations as an intellectual domain- a collection of knowledge about a phenomenon, instead of an area that serves corporate interests. Coombs and Holladay (2012) argue that traditional public relations has overlooked power, persuasion, and activism, and critical theories can help researchers understand these understudied dimensions. These three examples show the emergence of a critical paradigm in public relations that conceptualizes the practice of public relations as a social and cultural phenomenon difficult to quantify (Munshi & Edwards, 2011).

Critical approaches to public relations use an array of theories that originate in fields and traditions such as rhetoric, cultural studies, postcolonial studies, social movement theory, historical materialism and philosophy. In this literature review, I provide an account of different perspectives on the ties between activism, politics and

racial identity formation. The majority of these works come from the critical paradigm of public relations. Secondly, I connect those critical approaches to public relations with critical race theory. In doing this, I show that scholarship of public relations needs to take into consideration that the creation of racial identities and racial discourse inside organizations reflect structural processes and inequality in society. Thirdly, I used social movement theory to place the debate of collective identity formation and the instruments of production and reproduction of identities inside activist organizations. Finally, in this literature review, I engage in a fruitful conversation with cultural studies in order to develop a sound methodology that reveals the intersection of structural demographic markers such as social class, race, gender and ideology-building in the praxis of public relations. The pillars of my methodology are Hall's (1997) perspective on racial identities and discourse production, and D'Emilio (1983) and E.P. Thompson's (1980) views of collective identities as an aggregation of cultural practices located in history.

Public relations, politics and activism

This study is situated in the context of political public relations, which is defined in the following way:

> "The management process by which an organization or individual actor for political purposes, through purposeful communication and action, seeks to influence and to establish, build and maintain beneficial relationships and reputation with its key publics to help support its mission and achieve its goal" (Strömbäck & Kiousis, 2013, p. 2).

Political public relations focuses on political purposes, questions of the common good, and the relevance of volunteers and activists (e.g., Ledingham, 2001; Levenshus, 2010). On the contrary, the focus of corporate public relations is on economic revenues, private actions, and the professionalization of their practitioners (Dozier & Lauzen, 2000;

Strömbäck & Kiousis, 2013). Political public relations embrace political action as a constitutive part of the field of study (e.g., Kiousis, Laskin, & Kim, 2011; Saffer, Taylor & Yang, 2013).

From the political public relations perspective, CISPES may be defined as a radical activist organization because the group "comes together in opposition to something in their environment" and "they work outside of the system to express their objections" (Derville, 2005, p. 528). In this case, the organization wanted to change the foreign policy of the Reagan administration towards El Salvador. CISPES used informational, symbolic, organizing, litigation, and civil disobedience activities to influence U.S. policy toward El Salvador (Sommerfeldt, 2013).

An important amount of research regarding activist organizations that pursue structural change has concentrated on communication strategies and tactics (Smith, 2013). Activist organizations have used carnival-like demonstrations and occupations of buildings to influence public opinion and media coverage, (Weaver, 2010) and to bring attention to the negative environmental impact of corporations (Murphy & Dee, 1992). The use of extreme actions aimed at building identity inside the group's constituency energizes the movement and stresses the idea that the system is skewed (Derville, 2005). Radical actions also tend to trigger the sharing of information among people who are informed about these types of events (Jahng, Hong & Park, 2014). However, little research on public relations focuses on how race, gender, and social class influence the narrative of organizations, and the relationship between multiple identities within organization and discourses they produce.

Racial Identities and whiteness in public relations

There are only a few studies that examine how race and other intersectional identities impact the performance of public relations. A small number of publications in public relations journals are related to race, ethnicity and culture (Pompper, 2005). Pompper (2005) argues that public relations research has a position of ethnocentrism revolving around whiteness, not only in the selection of individuals for their studies but also in the theoretical frameworks behind their methodologies. Whiteness as a problem in the practice of public relations has been systematically understudied, even though white practitioners dominate the profession of public relations in the U.S. (Len-Rio, 1995; Logan, 2011). In public relations, intersectional identities should be understood as "individuals' interdependent and simultaneous identities that affect how publics confront issues" (Vanderman-Winter et. al., 2013 p. 279). In public relations research, we can observe at least four perspectives on whiteness and intersectional identities in public relations: 1) the effect of whiteness and intersectional identities on public relations practitioners (Edwards, 2013; Len-Rios, 1995; Logan, 2011), 2) the effect of whiteness and intersectional identities on public relations audiences (Varderman-Winter et. al., 2011), 3) the role of intersectional identities in conducting research (Varderman-Winter, 2011), and 4) the role of diversity and inclusion strategies in public relations organizations (Mundy, 2016).

In the first group, Logan (2011) claims that race is the most salient factor in choosing white managers- a situation that creates the "white leader" as a "prototypical

attribute of business leadership" (p. 443). In Logan's reasoning, the archetype of the white public relations leader is "a historical discourse formation" in which all other professional roles revolve around. Her argument is built on the examination of data about 25 leaders in the industry of public relations. She found that 18 out of 25 public relations leaders were white men, 7 white women, and two were people of color (one Asian and one Hispanic). Through the eyes of Critical Race Theory (CRT), she concludes that in a society that claims colorblindness, whiteness still symbolizes possession, while blackness symbolizes dispossession. This translated into the practice of public relations means that whites are not only located in the higher echelons of the industry, but they set the standard for the profession.

Research demonstrates that practitioners of color have difficulty being upwardly mobile in corporations. Practitioners of color expressed their satisfaction in being part of the industry, but simultaneously acknowledge that whites are still perceived as actors who can reach wider audiences than practitioners of color (Edwards, 2013; Len-Rios, 1995). Thus, whiteness has been historically constructed as a proxy for relatability to clients. In the mid 1990s, participants exemplify the conflation of whiteness with economic prestige in the practice of public relations:

> "Several years ago she (the practitioner) said had an interview with a PR firm and they have her the bottom line. She asked, 'why don't I have an opportunity here?' and the agency people just came back and told her "If I go down my client list and I send a minority over there representing a business, one example is an exclusive resort area, basically they don't have a lot of black visitors" (Len-Rios, 1995, p. 544).

Almost twenty years later, public relations practitioners of color still feel pressure to manage their own ethnicity, while trying to avoid being labeled as "ethnic professionals" by their bosses. The industry has a tendency to hire white professionals who resemble the demographics of their white managers (Edwards, 2013; Logan, 2011). However, practitioners' racial identity does not only influence the hiring and promotion processes, but also how they create cultural artifacts and engage in relationships with clients and media professionals (Edwards, 2013).

The influence of identity markers in audiences has also been studied in public relations. Varderman-Winter, Jang and Tindall (2013) use the concept of intersectionality as a tool to understand the complexity of the audience in public relations campaigns. Intersectionality originates in black feminist theory and means that the identity of individuals lie at the crossroads of many identity markers such as gender, race and social class (Crenshaw, 1989), Varderman-Winter et al. (2013) criticize the way corporations segment audiences according to gender and call for a more sophisticated way of measuring the impact of campaigns on the receivers. Using quantitative methods and social identity theory, Sha (2006) shows that individuals' racial identities have an effect on the way publics process public relations campaigns. In Sha's view, publics of color, especially African-Americans, report more engagement on issues related to race than their white peers. Sha (2006) argues that recipients have two types of collective identities: "avowed identity" and "ascribed identity" (p. 52). Avowed identity is the identity that individuals choose and define for themselves, and the ascribed identity is the identity that society assigns to individuals.

Whiteness as a methodological constraint has been rarely studied with the

exception of Varderman-Winter's (2001) study. She shows how the race of researchers, especially Varderman-Winter's background as a white woman, can influence the results of health campaigns. Using Frankenberg's concept (2000) of whiteness, Varderman-Winter finds that race matters in the way women of color create meaning in health campaigns, but her findings are inconclusive as to whether the effect is positive or not. Sha and Varderman-Winter suggest that the effect of race is often greater for audiences of color than white publics. As a consequence, the locus of the process of racialization in public relations is the individual of color who complicates the reception of the message and the role of the researcher. A similar assumption can be seen in diversity and inclusion strategies in public relations organizations. Mundy (2016) proposes a perspective that understands diversity as an essential requirement in organizations, and not merely as strategic resource for profits and public recognition. Businesses, he argues, transform diversity into a commodity. This transformation has not solved the difficulties in recruiting and retaining minorities for positions of leadership. To remedy this, Mundy proposes a two-pronged model: 1) structural and cultural and 2) internal and external dimensions. Structural dynamics are the ones "communicating the policies and programs that aid individuals professionally while conveying the benefits of recruiting and retaining diverse employees," while cultural dynamics are the ones "exploring individual difference as a way to help organizations evolve while responding to external cultural mandates from the communities an organization serves" (p. 3).

Mundy's analysis shows the elusive nature of diversity and inclusion efforts in the corporate world. This is because public relations theory has traditionally treated the process of racial identity formation as a dynamic happening inside the minds and the

context of people of color, rather than a social construction that involves social and organizational dynamics. Using an alternative paradigm, Pompper (2005), Logan (2011) and Edwards (2013) argue that the racialization of public relations makes whiteness the default, or standard of public relations practice. Scholars of critical public relations are aware of this and propose that public relations can also be used as tools of resistance against structural racism, neocolonialism and neoliberalism.

Public relations as resistance

In public relations, postcolonial approaches highlight connections between neoliberal economies and colonialist and imperialistic rationales. Munshi and Kurian (2015) argue that public relations can help networks of activists in their struggle against hegemonic discourses, especially regarding climate change and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They argue that the main goal of activist public relations is building "sustainable citizenship," which revolves around the idea of "democracy that resists hegemonic power" and calls for a "subaltern politics to build relationships" (p. 406). Munshi and Kurian state that one of the goals of the public relations of resistance is crafting "alternative narratives that can challenge structures of power wielded by dominant coalitions" (p.406). Alternative discourses should challenge elite voices and align with vulnerable populations. Dutta (2015) claims that colonialism is "structured into new relationships of material flow that simultaneously reproduces the structure of U.S. imperialism, reconfigured under the logic of neoliberal governance." In this sense, subaltern populations both in the developing world and inside developed countries, receive an image of reality in which neocolonial and neoliberal discourses are embedded. Dutta conceives postcolonialism as a framework that understands public relations as a

dialectic of global capital and neocolonialism, and how these two forces build a narrative of empowerment that works "toward serving specific neoliberal goals of privatizing public resources" (p. 253).

Inspired in postcolonial theory, Curtin and Gaither (2005) understand the process of public relations in five moments of interaction: 1) consumption, 2) production, 3) identity, 4) representation and 5) regulation. This model, called the circuit of culture, was first developed by cultural theorists (Du Gay et. al, 2013) and later applied by Curtin and Gaither to public relations. The circuit of culture is an alternative framework to the "functional" and "linear-transmission-based" tradition led by James Grunig (i.e. Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Grunig & Grunig, 2008; Grunig & Huang, 2000). Hon (2015) also expands the view of public relations beyond the practitioner scale and device a digital social advocacy that understands public relations in four dimensions: antecedents, processes, digital media ecosystem and consequences. In antecedents, Hon includes structural forces such as social class, race and gender that facilitate the social mobilization of collective actors.

Understanding public relations as the overlap of structural, organizational and personal dimensions also complicates the notion of racial identities. Race cannot be quantified and predict outcomes as the instrumental paradigm expects. On the contrary, a critical examination of race in public relations requires instruments that explain racial identity formation, especially whiteness, as a complex social and cultural construction that is historically located (Munshi & Edwards, 2011). Critical Race Theory is one of those instruments because it involves understanding racial policies as both material and ideological. These larger social forces do not only affect minorities, but also shape

radical social movement organizations that have an overwhelmingly majority of white members.

Identity as a dialectic structural process

Critical Race Theory is a set of accounts about how law and other political mechanisms function to establish, protect, and reproduce white racial power in the U.S. (Logan, 2011). Critical Race theorists argue that the construction of whiteness is the power-dominance benchmark and the standard in the U.S. (Pompper, 2005). Lopez (1997) defines race as "historically contingent social systems of meaning that attach to elements of morphology and ancestry" (p.10). Lopez provides more details about the three interrelated levels of race: physical, the social, and the material:

> First, race turns on physical features and lines of descent, not because features or lineage themselves are a function of racial variation, but because society has invested these with racial meanings. Second, because the meanings given to certain features and ancestries denote race, it is the social processes of ascribing racialized meanings to faces and forbearers that lie at the heart of racial fabrication. Third, these meaning-systems, while originally only ideas, gain force as they are reproduced in the material conditions of society. The distribution of wealth and poverty turns in part on the actions of social and legal actors who have accepted ideas of race, with the resulting material conditions becoming part of and reinforcement for the contingent meanings understood as race." (p.10)

Lopez' concept moves beyond understanding race as simply people's skin color and taking it into the sphere of power, politics and law-making.

In a similar fashion, Frankenberg (1993) defines whiteness in three ways: as 1) "a location of structural advantages of race privilege," 2) a "standpoint" from which white people look at themselves, and 3) a "set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed" (p. 1). The materiality of whiteness (i.e., access to home loans and to

political elites) is interconnected with the discursive dimensions of being white (Frankenberg, 1993; Lewis, 2004; Bonilla Silva, 2006). Frankenberg operationalizes the materiality of whiteness as personal experience and economic advantage and the discourse dimension as the meaning of those personal experiences in constructing a cultural identity. Whiteness is both a "possessive investment" and "identity" that have "real consequences for the distribution of wealth and prestige and opportunity" (Lipsitz, 2006, p.vii). Whites, Lipsitz argues, suffer less exposure to environmental hazards, residential segregation and home ownership discrimination. The "cash value" of whiteness allow individuals in this social group to access inside networks that help them find better employment than racial minorities in the U.S. (Lipsitz, 2006, p. xvii). Both Lipsitz and Frankenberg reject any biological or cultural explanation of race inequalities; they argue that the organization of social structures, material privilege, and racial narratives put whites on top of the racial hierarchy. Omi and Winant (1994) conceive racial stratification as the process of selection of a "particular human feature for purposed of racial signification." Racial stratification is both structural and ideological and its perception is mediated by an array of competing racial political projects. In each society, we can find a multitude of racial political projects that attempt to reshape the form of the hegemonic racial stratification. The creation of a collective identity of the white working started took place during the first 65 years of the ninetieth century. Roediger (1999) argues that the American "(r)evolution helped to change the social meaning of whiteness by creating new possibilities –realized during the accelerated formation of the working class in the ninetieth century- to conflate terms like freeman or independent mechanic with white" (p.21). Between 1960 and 1980, the hegemonic racial project in the U.S. was

colorblindness, which rests on the idea that racial differences should be overlooked (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Establishing a racist regime is not the only reason for the existence of spaces with a majority of white individuals (Lewis, 2004). The composition of overwhelmingly white settings is not random, Lewis explains, and is due to three phenomenon: a political commitment to exclusive policies in favor of white supremacy, 2) the outcome of exclusive policies at a different levels (social clubs), and 3) the outcome of long histories of racial exclusion, even if those discriminatory policies are not pursued actively or aggressively in the present time (e.g., universities). Whites belong to a heterogeneous group with multiple ways to perform and recreate their identity and social advantages (Lewis, 2004). Whites may be aware of those advantages, but many of them do not label them as white privilege (Hartmann et. al, 2009). Bonilla-Silva (2006) claims that social class and other identities reinforce or diminish the racial prejudices of whites toward other minorities: "Those at the bottom of the racial barriers tend to hold wages of whiteness in support of the racial status quo. Whether actors express "resentment" or "hostility" toward minorities is largely irrelevant for the maintenance of white privilege" (p. 8).

Racial inequality does not only manifest as active hostility toward people of color. Through in-depth interviews with over 200 participants, Di Tomaso (2013) finds that the ultimate privilege of whites are their the capacity for not being racist, because the "acts of favoritism that whites show to each other through opportunity hoarding and the exchange of social capital" contribute most to continued racial inequality and unequal outcomes (p.6). Di Tomaso defines opportunity hoarding as "passing along access to good jobs to their friends and family members" (p.9). Resources, in her view, are group-based, not

individually-based -an argument implying that individuals tend to share the resources between the people they interact with the most, in this case, whites tend to interact more whites, so their resources are enjoyed mostly by other white individuals. Di Tomaso shows how some blue-collar workers were embedded in a network that allowed them to get jobs with the help of their friends from school and, on one occasion, to send their kids to Ivy league universities. In more integrated, multiracial communities, race and class relations still work in favor of white elites. Mayorga-Gallo (2014) argues that spatial proximity does not lead to more interracial interactions or relationships, on the contrary, white, urban and middle class inhabitants in multiracial neighborhoods create the closest social ties with other whites, and delineate the types of "acceptable" behaviors between the individuals of the community.

As an answer for long-standing class and racial inequalities, radical and liberal whites have been at the forefront of social justice since the 1960s (Lipsitz, 2006). They have created networks of activism that have addressed domestic and transnational injustices including the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s (Fernandez & McAdam, 1988) and the Central American Solidarity Movement in the U.S. in 1980s (Courtin, 1993; Nepstad, 2001; Smith, 2010). Whites in radical organizations, especially women, experience interracial relations in a different way than whites without political activity and their views about Latinos in general were more positive than their views toward African-Americans (Frankenberg, 1993). Racialization involves many different processes, especially regarding racial minorities. Pulido (2006) reveals the existence of "differential racialization" which is "the fact that different groups are racialized in distinct kinds of ways" (p.24). Like Frankenberg (1993) reveals in whites, Pulido shows

that, depending on the time, place and context, particular groups of minorities may be "subordinate, dominant, or some in an intermediate position" (p. 24), and geography also plays a role in this differential racialization.

Race is not a standalone identity. Through the examination of black feminism in law studies, Crenshaw (1989) observes that there is not a single source of oppression in the case of African American women. To explain this complex process, Crenshaw uses the concept of intersectionality to describe oppression "like traffic through an intersection, which may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them" (p149). Thus, intersectionality theory conceptualizes race as working in tandem with a multiplicity of social identities, such as class, gender, sexuality, ability, etc.

Stuart Hall (1982) argues that race, as collective identity, performs a heuristic function of informing African American about their position in the society.

> "Race is therefore not only an element of the 'structures; it is a key element in the class struggle and thus in the cultures - of black labour. It is through the counterideology of race, colour and ethnicity that the black working class becomes conscious of the contradictions of its objective situation and organizes to fight it through, " he explains (p. 347).

Intersectionality does not only appear inside national-states, but also reflect geopolitical relationships between hegemonic populations and subordinate ones. Wekker (2016) explains that the construction of "white innocence" in the Netherlands is related to the history of the country as a geopolitical empire and principal actor in the slave trade. White innocence in the Netherlands, she explains, is constructed comparing through the

framing of the Dutch as "an innocent, fragile" country versus "a guilty, uncivilized, barbaric other, which in the past decades has been symbolized mostly by the Islamic other, but at different times in the recent past blacks (i.e. Afro-Surinamese, Antilleans, and Moluccans) have occupied that position" (p.15). Mohanty (1991) reveals how the construction of hierarchies in colonial India was related to the construction of racial ideologies that justified the primacy of white colonizers. Relatedly, Gilroy (1995) and Fanon (2008) show that the construction of blackness was a global project that put white men at the center. Gilroy (1995) explains that nationalist, racist and absolutist discourses have attempted to build an artificial identity gap between being black and European. As an alternative, he locates a transnational sphere called the "Black Atlantic", which is "the stereophonic, bilingual, or bifocal cultural forms originating from, but no longer the exclusive property of, blacks dispersed within the structures of feelings, producing, communicating, and remembering" (p.3).

Fanon (2008) took a more structural route in explaining the interplay between social structures and psychology in colonial mentality. He argues that the black psyche is a product of a social relationship in a colonized system in which the white individual exerts power, not only over the modes of production, but in the production of taste, use of language and emotionality. Fanon proposes an ontology of the colonized that is negative. This ontology is embodied in the daily interactions of the Black man through "a racial epidermal schema" (p.89)

> Ontology does not allow us to understand the being of the black man be black; he must the black man be black; he must be black in relations to the white man. Some people will argue that the situation has a double meaning. Not at all. The black man has a no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man. (p.90)

Fanon assures that the negative ontology of the black individual consists of aspiring to be a white man and aspiring to be included in the society. In his view, black women want to marry a white man to become a member of dominant society, while a black man seduces a white woman to feel that he is dismantling the oppression, which he has been subject to. In these two examples, it is possible to see how Fanon observed the interaction between corporality, social structures and social psychology in the French Antilles.

Another factor that Fanon stresses is the use of natural sciences and social sciences to naturalize the structural oppression of colonization. He echoes a study of 100 Kenian "normal" brains in which Western scientists found inherent brain inferiority (p.13). The same applies to studies of the French psychoanalyst, Octave Manonni, on the complex of the colonized. Fanon contradicts Mannoni's notion that the inferiority complex in the colonized is latent from childhood, long before any encounter with the colonizers. Fanon disagrees:

> Here we see the mechanism at work in psychiatry, which explain there are latent forms of psychosis that become evident following a traumatic experience. And in surgery, varicose
> veins in a patient are caused not by having to stand for ten hours, but rather by the constitutional weakness of the vein walls; the work mode merely deteriorates the condition further, and the employer's responsibility is assessed to be very limited (p. 66).

As we have seen in sociological approaches of critical race theory (Frankenberg, 1982; Omi & Winant, 1994), intersectional literature on black feminism in the U.S. and whiteness in Europe (i.e. Crenshaw, 1989, Wekker, 2016) and postcolonial approaches to race (Fanon, 2008; Gilroy, 1997, Mohanty, 1991), the construction of racial categories,

especially the formation of whiteness in the U.S., is strongly related to the hegemonic role of the West, colonial legacies in the Third World, class hierarchies that position racial/ethnic minorities at a disadvantage and gender dynamics that aggravate the vulnerability of women of color. At the same time, the literature aforementioned confirms that an intersectional analysis of collective identities can situate the study of racial identities as a departure point. Considering the role of racial identities in strategic communications and organizations allows the researcher to expand the boundaries of this examination to include other channels of identity such as class, gender and sexuality in relation to the data. In this dissertation, I understand CISPES as a white setting that produces complex collective identities informed by political ideology. In this white setting, ideology plays a fundamental role as an organizing factor and disciplinary guideline for the organization. In the next section of the literature review, I will explain different concepts of identities and the role of identity formation in social movement organizations such as CISPES.

Identities and social movement organizations

Hall (1981) distinguishes three conceptions of identities: the Enlightenment identity, the sociological and the postmodernist. The identity from the Enlightenment views identity as core of the human individual who has the capacities of reason, consciousness and actions. The sociological identity shows that the "awareness that his inner care of the subject was not autonomous and self-sufficient, but was formed in relation to 'significant others', who mediate values, meanings and symbols" (p.276). The sociological identity connects the internal world of the individual with public worlds and greater society. Lastly, the postmodern identity has no essential or permanent nature, and

is a “moveable feat” “formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural system which surround us” (p. 277). In the postmodern approach, identities are contradictory and are not aligned to structural factors such as race, social class and gender dynamics.

Much of social movement theory attempts to understand the construction of a type of sociological identity that ties individuals to mobilizing actions and political structures and opportunities (McAdam, 2010; Mellucci, 1988). Some conceptualizations of social movements highlight the centrality of collective identities in social change. Social movements (SMO) are “organized groups challenging state institutions chiefly outside institutionalized political channels” (Bob, 2001, p. 38). Snow et al. (2008) explain that social movements are entities with “some degree of organization” that challenge or defend authority (p. 11), but also function as networks of activists and organizations (Krinsky & Crossley, 2014). Social movement organizations (SMOs) are complex and formal organizations that identify their goals in relation to a social movement, and against a counter movement (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). In this case, CISPES is a SMO inside a broader social movement that aligns itself against the U.S. military and political intervention in Central America and, especially, in El Salvador. Organizations like CISPES create transnational advocacy networks that share ties with a diverse array of stakeholders such as organizations in civil society, the media, governments, and international organizations (Keck & Sikkink, 2014).

Melluci (1989) argues that social mobilization occurs not because of macro-structural forces (i.e. structure vs. superstructure in Marxist theory) or by individuals’ motivations (rational choice theory). Collective action, he assumes, is the product of

"purposeful orientation developed within a field of opportunities and constrains" (p.25). Melluci presents a constructionist model in which individuals construct their actions by creating cognitive possibilities and horizons while simultaneously defining their mode of mobilization. Through this perspective, social action is the product of interactions and is difficult to predict. Collective identity is at the center of this model, as Melluci elaborates his concept of identity in SMOs: "(c)ollective identity is an interactive and shared definition produced by several interacting individuals who are concerned with the orientation of their action, as well as the field of opportunities and constrains in which their action takes place." Collective identity processes have three dimensions: 1) creating cognitive schemas related to goals, means and environment actions, 2) activating relationships between individuals and 3) making emotional investments. In short, the core of Melluci's social action resides in interpersonal interactions, which forms the "we" inside social movements organizations. This "we" is not a byproduct of class-consciousness (Lenin, 1977), political structures (McAdams, 2010) or resource accumulation (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). For Mellucci, identities are the result of unconstrained interpersonal exchanges. By examining anti-Vietnam war protests in the 1960's and the movement of Solidarity with El Salvador in 1980s, Gamson (1991) extends Melluci's tradition and locates the formation of collective identities in the interactions between activists. Collective identity, as a sociocultural phenomenon in which diversity of individual identities coincides, is manifested through symbols and discourses. According to Gamson, collective identities have three layers: the organizational, movement and solidarity. He explains the difference between the three dimensions:

> The organizational layer refers to identities built around carriers-the union maid or the party loyalist, for example or may not be embedded in a movement layer that is broader particular carrier. The identity of peace activists, for example, not rest on any particular movement carrier; many support different at different moments while subordinating all carriers to their movement identity. Finally, the movement layer may or may not be embedded solidary group identity, constructed around people's social location as workers (p.41).

Friedman and McAdam (1992) argue that respect for specific rules that are connected to a collective identity is recreated within individual cognition and inside an organizational setting. Collective identities are "shorthand designations announcing statues- a set of attitudes, commitment and rules for behavior- that those assume the identity can be expected to subscribe" (Friedman & McAdam, 1992, p.157). De Volo (2000) proposes the concept of mobilizing identities, which are "idealized" symbols "promoted by the state or contending parties to create a collectivity out previously unorganized individuals and through this collectivity shape and channel their actions" (p.129). Mobilizing identities are strategically organized and structured by an activist organization and arise from the adversarial "we" versus "they", in which "we" is constructed through interpersonal appreciation and the "they" through blaming the Contras –a U.S. backed Nicaraguan paramilitary force- and the U.S. government for the death of their children. The essence of mobilizing identities for De Volo is above all discursive, not structural. In her study of mothers in the Nicaraguan revolution, she assures that identity was not organic and was created by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN in Spanish) in order to blame the counterrevolution, sponsored by the U.S., of the death of their children. The interactions between social movement organizations, state actors, and the opposition also determine the types of mobilizing identities. Bernstein (1997) explains why the LGBT community manifested their

identities in different ways according to region. While strident protests were common in New York City; in Oregon, LGBT collectives had a calmer, more dialogical strategy. The opposition of political elites against LGBT collectivities in New York led them to construct more adversarial identities than in spaces like Oregon

De Volo's vision of collective identities as essentially symbolic coincides with approaches to mobilizations in rhetoric and public relations. Burke (1989) argues that identities are "a set of interrelated terms all conspiring to round out their identity as participants in a common substance of meaning" (p.182). Rhetoric is the bridge "from faction to the universal" that creates collective "consubstantiality" (p.181-83). In Burke, "collective consubstantiality' can be understood as a destination in the process of constructing collective identities, the transition from individual consciousnesses to collective "esprit de corps." In New Zealand, narratives build collective identities in activist public relations against genetically modified products in New Zealand (Henderson, 2005). Advocacy groups managed identities through the tension between two narratives: New Zealand as a center of research excellence vs. New Zealand as a green paradise. Inspired by Charland (1987), Gallicano (2009) also shows that advocacy organizations use "constituitive rhetoric" as a tool to build loyalty inside organizations (p.323). Constitutive rhetoric is a strategy that displays public's identity and ideology inside narratives or messages (Gallicano, 2009). Advocacy organizations formed a collective identity by referring to the staff and the members as collective family.

Narratives were also important in the formation of transnational identities among activists involved in the Central American Solidarity movements of the 1980's. In the

mid-1980's, the U.S. Sanctuary Movement, an effort lead by U.S. citizens with strong religious ties, did not only address issues aimed at helping Central American refugees and stopping U.S. intervention in Central America, but also created stories that resonated with the identities of U.S. middle-class lives of the activists:

> Sanctuary worker's critiques of inauthenticity focused on those aspects of middle class U.S. life that participants considered causes or products of poverty, injustice, and human rights abuses in El Salvador and Guatemala. These included alienations, consumerism, normalcy, secularism, individualism, materialism and numbness. (Coutin, 1993, p.157)

Coutin (1993) described how Teressa Newman, an activist, compared her middle-class life in the U.S. to the poverty of a Guatemalan community in order to critique abundance and consumerism connected to middle class life in the U.S. Teressa explains "Guatemalans laughed at North American visitors who brought suitcases full of clothes for short stays" (p.158). The effort of U.S. middle class activists to accompany undocumented refugees represented also an "encounter with the truth" (p.57). This interaction transformed the identities of American activists:

> "The problematic nature of being American led some sanctuary workers to define themselves as "North American" or less frequently, "Internationals." Peter Lockhart, an EBSC volunteer, argues that it was arrogant to call oneself simply "American." Peter noted, "When we say American,"…we don't think of Canadian, or Central America, or South America. We think of Yankees from the United States (Coutin, 1993, p.61)

These narratives also helped create solidarity across ethnic, ideological and cultural differences between Salvadoran and U.S. Christians in the 1980's. The figure of Archbishop Oscar Romero, assassinated by paramilitary death squads in El Salvador in March 1980, facilitated a transnational collective identity and a model of action for U.S. Christians who chose their allegiance to their religious ideals over their loyalty to their

national government (Nepstad, 2001). Amongst other factors, U.S. activists learned their identity as Christian first through personalized accounts of the situation in El Salvador, transforming Romero into a hero. The similarities between U.S. and Salvadoran Christians' experiences of persecution, the typology of the narrators who were priests, religious individuals who were trusted in the community and the strength of the institutional context of the churches in the U.S. Researchers have tracked the change of discourses and narratives over time to find how specific events reshape the terms of public debate on issues such as slavery in the U.S. in 19th century (Ellgson, 1995) and anti-nuclear energy movements (Benford, 1993). Bedford argues that through the creation of discourses and vocabularies, SMOs foster group solidarity and spirit de corps.

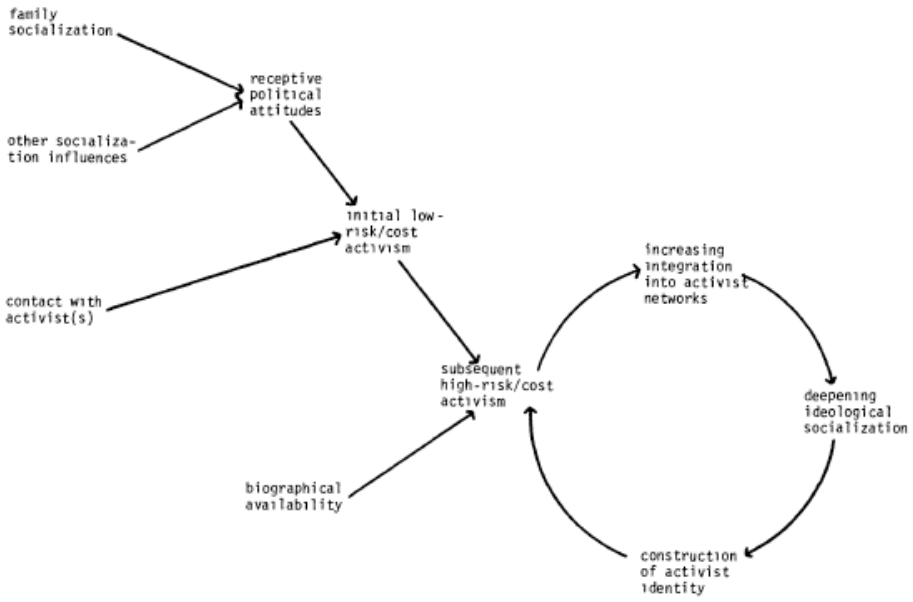
The examination of discourses and narratives help us understand the relevance of ideological artifacts in the formation of collective identities. However, as critical race theory shows, changes in discursive identities also imply changes in structural and organizational factors. For instance, liberal feminist organizations based in Washington, D.C. were more successful in influencing the media frames on abortion because of their superiority in education and knowledge of journalists' demographics compared to their conservative competitors (Rohlinger, 2002). Rohlinger shows that framing is material too: 1) framing is not merely an ideological process but the product of organizational routines, and 2) the construction of collective identities in social movements is a permanent function of organizations. Bedford and Snow (2000) reveal that there are framing variations that can be understood through modifications in contextual factors such as political structures, values, and the type of audience. A "frame dispute" happens when members and organizations of a social movement compete to define the political

reality around them (Bedford, 1993 p. 677). For example, radical actors propose discourses in which the movement pursue structural reforms, moderates attempt to avoid strident rhetoric, and liberals build frames between these two extreme stances—radical and liberal (Bedford, 1993). The relationship between ideology and organizing techniques is demonstrated through the examination of the collective mobilization of the Muslim Brotherhood. Munson (2011) proves that the Muslim Brotherhood survived the repression of the Egyptian State through the creation of a federated structure, which allows the flow of different ideologies and tendencies, and the reliance on hosting meetings in mosques as a way of avoid state surveillance. The use of mosques as a meeting space stressed the religious nature of the Brotherhood in comparison to other organizations such as the Egyptian Communist Party.

Previous research on Central American Solidarity Movements (e.g. Donaghy, 1990; Smith, 2010) have used McAdam (1982) and McAdam et al. (1988) political process model to explain the formation of identity and collective action in the 1980s. McAdam (1982) argues that political mobilization take five steps: 1) Interpretative processes, 2) attribution of threat, 3) appropriation of existing organization collective identity, 4) Innovation of collective action and 5) development of shared sustained action. McAdam's model embraces the many dimensions of collective action from the construction of cognitive frameworks in activists to the formation of organizations. Smith (2010) argues that the political process model can better explain the construction of Central American Solidarity Movement because it shows "both sides of the social dialectic, both the history-making human action and the action-shaping social environment" (p.88). Donaghy (1990) maintains that McAdam "overcomes resource

mobilization's vast potential for generality, where virtually anything which has contributed to movement growth can be considered a resource" (p. 5). As a complement to his political process model, McAdam (1986) offers a model of high-risk/cost activism. In this model, he explained how the life experiences of the activists and interactions with other activists led specific individuals to engage in life-threatening situations. McAdams (1986) shows that the radicalization of activism creates a major activist identity (Figure 1) (p. 69).

Figure 1: Model of recruitment of high-risk/cost activism



Viterna (2013) offers another account of how identity formation is related to the recruitment of insurgents in the Salvadoran guerrillas. Viterna remarks that structural factors are the reasons which collective and individual identities are modified. By examining the process of mobilizing the Salvadoran recruits who joined the FMLN, she shows that mobilization occurs when structural factors reshape the meaning of individual

identities and alter the membership networks of the activist. According to her, identities are formed after larger forces in the society influence the construction of social networks and the self. Viterna (2013) describes two types of identities: internal (how the individuals see themselves) and external (how the salient identity is understood by relevant actors in the society). She argues that organizations are looking for a prototype of activist identities that help them to advance their strategic goals.

D'Emilio (1983) goes one step further and argues that construction of homosexual identities emerge with the consolidation of capitalism in the U.S. society. He explains:

> (I)t has been the historical development of capitalism-more specifically, its free labor system-that has allowed large numbers of men and women in the late twentieth century to call themselves gays, to see themselves as part of a community of similar men and women ant to organize politically on the basis of that identity (p.102)

Through a historical review of the means of production in U.S. between the nineteenth century and late twentieth century, D'Emilio (1983) explains that collective gay life was fostered by changes in U.S. society from one in which the heterosexual rural family served as a self- sufficient center of material production to an institution in which of their members were wage laborers and the central reason for romantic relationships was emotional and not procreative. He elaborates:

> As wage labor spread and production became socialize, then, it became possible to release sexuality from the "imperative" to procreate. Ideologically, heterosexual expression came to be a means of establishing intimacy, promoting happiness, and experiencing pleasure. In divesting the household of its economic independence and fostering the separation of sexuality from procreation, capitalism has created conditions that allow some men and women to organize a personal life around their erotic/emotional attraction to their own sex. It has made possible the formation of urban communities of lesbians and gay men and, more recently, of a politics bases on a sexual identity" (p.103)

D'Emilio does not claim that same-sex erotic predilections were born out of capitalism, rather, he argues that collective gay and lesbian identities –in a similar fashion in which Hall (1981) defines sociological identities- were possible under the economic conditions in the second half of twentieth century. Those changes in the way the society was organized facilitated the emergence of the movement in favor of gay and lesbian rights in the 1960's and 1970's. D'Emilio's (1983) view of gay identities in society align closely with the concept of "experience "and "class consciousnesses" in E.P. Thompson's (1982) *The Making of the English Working Class*. Thompson explains that class-consciousness is "the way in which these experiences (productive relations) are handled in cultural terms: embodied in traditions, value systems, ideas and institutional forms" (p.10). In the English working class, the common experience was configured in a dialectic fashion: a cultural and material struggle between the wages laborers and the owners of the means of production.

> In the years between 1780 and 1832 most English working people came to feel an identity of interests as between themselves, and as against their rulers and employers. This ruling class was itself much divided, and in fact only gained in cohesion over the same years because certain antagonisms were resolved (or faded into relative insignificance) in the face of an insurgent working class (p.11)

Thompson and D'Emilio, as well as Pulido (2006) -with her examination of how geographic dynamics in Los Angeles fostered different levels of racialization among minorities- reveal that the construction of collective identities is not merely a discursive process that precedes material conditions. Collective identities emerge from structural forces (economic, political, and cultural) that facilitate the formation of groups who share specific attributes and assemble collectively in favor of a cause. Some research of social

movement theory suggests that race can be a central factor in understanding the strategic differences between white and black activist organizations, especially in the civil right movements in 1960's. Morris (1981) shows that African American activist use churches to boost the sit-in movements. Morris reveals that early sit-ins "were sponsored by indigenous resources of the black community; the leadership was black, the bulk of the demonstrators were black, the strategies and tactics were formulated by blacks, and the finances came out of the pockets of blacks, while their serene spirituals echoed through the churches" (p.749). In the case of white activists, college campuses became the central nodes for the recruitment of volunteers for the Freedom Summer in 1964 (McAdam, 1986). With all this in mind, there is a self-evident truth: people build networks, especially political networks, with people they perceive as their kind, whether it be working-class individuals in England (Thompson, 1986), African American activists (Morris, 1981) or white American college students (McAdam, 1986). Lazarsfeld and Merton (1954) call these ties of common ancestry as "homophily" (p.23). In the U.S., white populations tend to build homophilic relations with other white peers based on their share lifestyles and segregated geography (Bonilla-Silva et al., 2006). However, according to Lazarsfeld and Merton (1954), homophily is not only material but also can be built on common "cultural values" (p.20). For people to experiment belonging to a specific group, it is not enough to merely be similar to others- in this case having the same racial identity- but to share a common view of the world with other members of the network. It is here where ideology intervenes. In the next section, I will introduce definitions of terms such as ideology, discourses, discourse practices and habitus that will help show the ways ideology and materiality intersect in collective identity formation.

Ideology, discourse, identities and dialectic

According to Hall (1996), ideology is a "(s)ystem of meaning, concepts, categories and representation which make sense of the world" (p.334). These concepts, categories and representations give people an imaginary relation "to the real, material conditions of their existence". Ideology precedes the formation of discourses. Hall (2000) defines discourses as "ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice: a cluster (or formation of ideas, images and practices), which provide ways of talking about forms of knowledge and conduct associated with a particular logic, social activity or institutional in society" (p. 6)

Hall (2000) adopts the concept of discourse from Foucault (1971, 1980). He argues that, at a micro level, a discourse is a group of statements that work together to create a "discursive formation" (Hall, 1992, p. 201). The relationship between statements in a discursive system should be regular and systematic, not random. Any changes in the cluster of ideas in discursive systems modify the entire explication of the political reality. Discourses are collective artifacts and do not depend on individual actions (Hall, 1991). The underlying force behind discourse is power, either to challenge the status quo or reinforce it (Hall, 1992). Discourses are historically situated and change over time (Hall, 2000).

A discourse is constituted by two elements that interact in a dialectical way: discourse formation (the statements) and the discursive practices, which are defined by Hall (1992) as "the practices of producing meaning" (p.201). For example, white western discourses have defined blacks as "frightening, cunning and glamorous crooks in New

York cop stories" and have framed the indigenous population as people with primitive nobility and dignity on one side, and savagery and barbarism, on the other (Hall, 1991, p. 21).

Hall's work (1991, 1992, 2000) allows us to see a dialectical force between discourses and the ways that discourses are produced. In Bourdieu's perspective (1991), this dialectic is about discourses and structural factors that influence the creators of the discourses and their audiences:

> "Specialized discourses can direct their efficacy to the hidden correspondence between the structure of the social space within which they are produced, the political field, the religion field, the artistic field, the philosophical field, and the structure of social classes within the receptions are situated and in relation to which they interpret their message" (p.410).

Bourdieu (1991) also assures that unconscious dispositions influence the production of discourse. Habitus, he argues, is comprised of the insentient constitutions that allow an individual to have practical sense of their behavior in the social game (Bourdieu, 1993). Habitus has a long process of inculcation, starting in childhood, and prepares the individual to behave in specific environments. Habitus does not imply character traits, it refers to social and cultural conditioning that supports the reproduction of social norms and hierarchies (Bonilla-Silva et al., 2006). In the world of social meaning, political entities achieve their maximum ideological effect "by exploiting the possibilities contained in the polysemy inherent in the social ubiquity of the legitimate language" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 39).

Throughout this literature review, I have shown that the role of white collective identities in public relations has been understudied and that critical, historical and

postcolonial approaches to public relations can provide important insights about the ways people with power can use their privilege as instruments of resistance against colonial and political-economic oppression. In the case of CISPES, white, middle-class, educated activists utilized their resources to activate CISPES' strategic public relations campaign in the context of the Reagan administration.

Secondly, I have explained the importance in understanding racial formation as both material and ideological phenomena that require a historical perspective. As critical race theory and postcolonial literature reveal, racial identities and hierarchies change over time and need constant reassessment, especially regarding its relationship with other intersectional identities such as gender, social class and sexuality. Intersectionality shows that identities are flexible and that public relations help to maintain and transform them inside organizations. Thirdly, I have reviewed how social movement theory conceptualizes collective identities as discursive artifacts, while other theories purport that these identities are formed through structural forces that push people to form groups and to assemble. As I mentioned before, this is a false dichotomy because the formation of collective identities is a dialectic process between discourse (ideological) and materiality (structural). Finally, I have given definitions of relevant terms such as ideology, discourse, discourse practices and habitus. The concept of habitus, the unconscious dispositions in which the society trains individuals for the social game, helps us understand the reasons why CISPES' white college-educated activists were central in the Salvadoran solidarity movement. Through document analysis and interviews, I show how their habitus influenced the types of public relations strategies that CISPES planned and developed in the 1980s.

It is important to note that CISPES' activism took place before the term "intersectionality" became widely used in U.S. academia and advocacy. Crenshaw (1989) proposed it in the late 1980s and, soon after, the term entered the vocabulary of the U.S. left as it faced the end of the Cold War period. However, many members of CISPES were troubled by the issues discussed now through the notion of intersectionality, which brings to the fore-complicated relationships between race, class, gender, and sexual orientation, albeit these identities were not necessarily central to their mission.

In this dissertation, I examine *the ways collective identities are constructed through public relations discourses and campaigns*. I call these types of identities ***mobilizing organizational identities,*** and they are sustained by the construction of ideologies that give meaning to collective mobilizations. These ***mobilizing organizational identities*** are heavily affected by structural factors such as racial dynamics inside and outside organizations, political climate, social class background of participants and gendered processes.

With all these in mind, I propose three research questions:

RQ1: What were the themes of discourses that CISPES produced for its internal audiences and how they varied or evolved from 1980 to 1990?

RQ2. What were the public relations strategies CISPES used from 1981 to 1991 to influence public opinion and political agendas?

RQ3. What was the role of race, class, and gender in the making of CISPES and the construction of their discourses?

CHAPTER IV

METHODS

Operationalization

Mobilizing organizational identities can be studied through a dialectical method that involves the ideological and the material dimensions of organizations. The selection of my research methods is inspired by the dialectical approaches of Bourdieu, Hall, works in Critical Race Theory (Frankenberg, 1992; Omi & Winant, 1994, Lewis, 2004) and social movements research (e.g., Ellgson, 1995). It is impossible to understand the discourses of CISPES without understanding the impact of intersectional identities in CISPES' practices, especially in the early 1980s.

I use a mixed method approach: discourse analysis (Hall, 1991) and qualitative interviews. In both methodological pathways, I take a historical perspective, which examines public relations retroactively (Hon 2015; Stacks, 2011). A historical case studies perspective has helped scholars in the creation of models that explain the relationship between internal and external forces that shape organizational settings (Anderson et al., 2006; Hon, 2015; Yin, 2017).

The first method consists of a discourse analysis of documents produced by CISPES and the second employs in-depth interviews with former CISPES staffers; both methods are qualitative. These two approaches provide methodological triangulation in this research, which attempts to corroborate the findings produced by each approach and achieves a richer and stronger explanation of the phenomenon, in this case the public relations of CISPES (Rothbauer, 2008). In the following section, I describe each of the approaches and operationalize basic concepts that make up my examination.

Discourse Analysis

I have examined 56 of CISPES' internal documents, which belong to an archival collection in the Wisconsin Historical Society in Madison, Wisconsin. I visited Madison to access the archival collection in summer 2016. This is a purposive sample because I only chose documents produced by CISPES. These documents include materials such as pamphlets, minutes, press releases, strategic plans, letters, banners, and brochures. To examine these documents, I use the software ATLAS TI to develop themes and codes. Due to the random selection of the sample, I obtained CISPES' documents from the years 1980 to 1990, with the exception of 1982, 1983 and 1989. I will discuss the years that are not listed here under the limitations of this dissertation.

In this research, discourse will be operationalized as *the statements that explicitly define organizations, people, or situations.* In this case, I code each statement by date and by target. According to Lindenberg (1976), target is the entity to which the "actor acts upon" (p. 155). In this case, the actor is CISPES. I focus on examining the discourses of five targets: the U.S. government, the government of El Salvador, CISPES, FMLN, the people of El Salvador and the U.S. people. Previous literature on the Central American Solidarity Movement in the U.S. (Perla, 2008; Smith, 2010) shows that CISPES attempted to define these six targets as a way to mobilize activists against the Reagan administration.

I adapted McCracken's (1988) five-step method of analysis of interviews (1) utterance, 2) observation, 3) expanded observation, 4) observation, and 5) theme) into a

way to examine discourses. However, my adaptation only includes four of McCracken's stages: 1) utterance, 2) first moment of observation, 3) second moment of observation and 4) themes. Stage 3 and 4, in my view, are repetitive, thus not applicable to my study. According to McCracken, the first moment "treats each utterance in the interview transcript in its own terms, ignoring its relationship to other aspect of the texts" (p. 42). In the summer of 2017, I read the documents and created 45 coding sheets in which I transferred information such as the date of the document, the origin, the discourses, the public relations tactics and the names of people mentioned in those documents. The first moment of observation, in which the researcher transforms the utterance into preliminary categories, occurred in December 2017. I created 284 codes from 406 quotations and the codes were divided by years (1980, 1981, 1984, 1985-1986, 1987, 1988, 1990) and the codes related to CISPES' strategies and tactics were grouped in five groups: media strategy, street strategy, political strategy, fundraising strategy and tour strategy. McCracken argues that the observation stage "takes the observations generated at previous levels and subjects them, in this collective form, to collective scrutiny" (p.42). The second moment of observation happened in early January, 2018 when I assembled the discourses by year and by target. Finally, the fourth stage –themes- in the examination of discourses took place in late January, 2018. I created a timeline that tracks the appearance and disappearance of the most common CISPES discourses between 1980 and 1990, but also the discourses that only emerged sporadically. With this, I probe the core discourses that helped to create a **mobilizing organizational identity** in CISPES.

I limit my examination to written documents and do not include audiovisual material. This examination took place before conducting in-depth interviews with former

CISPES staffers and volunteers. After several phases of codifications and recodifications, I found that from over 200 codes in the discourse analysis, 28 appeared systematically in CISPES' public relations material between 1980 and 1990. First, I organized the discourses by year. Later in each year's diagram, I inserted a group of categories that explain the type of the relationship between the discourses and the six targets: the U.S. government, El Salvador government CISPES, FMLN, the people of El Salvador and the U.S. people. By understanding the history of the discourses, we can learn the manners in which CISPES tried to define itself and its friends (people of El Salvador, U.S. people, FMLN), as well as its adversaries (U.S. government and the government of El Salvador). Also, the examination sheds lights on the mobilizing organizational identity that CISPES instilled in its activist base through public relations.

As I mentioned before, the 28 discourses are divided into six target groups: the U.S. government, El Salvador government, CISPES, FMLN, the people of El Salvador and the U.S. people. The discourses regarding the U.S. government are separated by their references of two out three branches of the U.S. government: the executive branch and legislative branch. Previous literature (Smith, 2010) shows that the activist groups who oppose the U.S. foreign policy targeted these two branches of the U.S. government strategically. Depending on the nature of the issue mentioned in the discourse, the discourses on El Salvador government are divided into three categories: political, military and economic. If the discourse referred to the role of the El Salvador government, it was categorized as a political discourse. When the discourse referred to the Salvador military forces and its human rights abuses, I code them as a military discourse. Economic discourses describe economic inequality or poverty in El Salvador. As a target actor,

CISPES had two types of discourse: speeches that describe the nature of CISPES (coded as "nature") and discourses that represent the organizations in relations to other targets or actors ("relational"). According to the same rationale, I divided the other three target actors (Salvadoran people, U.S. people, and FMLN) into the same two discursive typologies: nature vs. relational.

The first step in answering this question is to provide discursive "snapshots" of CISPES' discursive system by year. The examination of each year's discursive systems reveal changes in the domestic and international context. Finally, I show a timeline that reveals the most pervasive discourses that appeared in CISPES' public relations between 1980 and 1990. As a needed annotation, I do not provide exact names and date of CISPES' internal documents with the purpose to protect the confidentiality of the information and the people who prepared it. However, at the end of this dissertation, I attach a reference list with abbreviated titles of all the primary sources I used here.

Interviews

By reviewing the coverage of *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* on CISPES between 1981 and 1991, I selected seven initial participants. This is a purposive and convenient sample. These participants were CISPES' staffers in Washington D.C., Los Angeles, Chicago, New York and Oregon. From these initial seven participants, I expanded the total number of participants to 12 through the use of snowball sampling (Browne, 2005). Nine of the twelve participants were white and three identified themselves as Latinx or Salvadoran. Six identified themselves as women and six, as men. Eleven worked directly with CISPES and one organized Salvadoran refugees in the U.S., but coordinated activities with CISPES. All of them had a college degree or were in the

process of achieving college degree when they joined CISPES and the solidarity movement. Ten of them have English as their first language and two, Spanish; however, all of the participants are bilingual. From the sample, four participants enrolled in Ph.D. programs after their involvement in CISPES; four have master's degrees or medical school education and four, bachelor degrees only. Two participants indicated their involvement in student protests against the Vietnam War between 1962 and 1972 and eight started their activist life in late 1970s or early 1980s. Only one informant joined the organization in late 1980s, specifically in 1988.

I used a semi-structured interview protocol aimed at probing the life stories of participants and their experiences with CISPES. The interviews lasted between 50 minutes and two hours. Two were conducted in person in Oregon, while 10 occurred via telephone or Skype. The participants interviewed on telephone or Skype were located in San Salvador, California, Washington D.C., Pennsylvania and New York.

One strategy to approach my participants was to make them think about themselves in retrospect, and reflect on their memories and thought processes in the1980's, or when they were active in CISPES. I also told my participants about samples of CISPES documents I found and asked them about the history of the artifacts and what they perceived to be the purpose, strategy, and ideology behind the documents. Later, I asked them about how they became involved with CISPES and their histories as activists. My questions not only probed participants' political awareness, but also how CISPES operated in terms of public relations strategies on a national scale. What were the goals of the public relations strategies? Who was in charge? Why did they consider communication an important tool? I asked participants about the political and public

relations ideologies that they held back then, and about their views of the U.S. government, the FMLN, the U.S. left, and the civil rights movement. Finally, these interviews also aim to reveal the mechanisms that CISPES utilized to monitor the privilege of their members and to promote the leadership of people of color. Previous research on the Central American Solidarity Movement in the U.S. has explored the reasons and history of activists who joined those organizations (Smith, 2010), but none of them have focused on radical activists such as those in CISPES. Previous examinations have not paid attention to the relevance of race, class, and gender in the performance of those organizations. My interview protocol followed four core sections: individual background, activist history, personal ideology, CISPES (constraints and advantages), and historical context. I stopped recruiting participants when I reached a level of saturation with interview #12. Saturation is reached when the interviews no longer provide new information about the phenomenon in question and the participants only add anecdotal information (Taggs, 1985; Small, 2009). Guest et al. (2006) argue that saturation can be reached with 12 interviews.

In the interviews, I operationalize race as the self-identification of the participants in locating themselves in a specific racial category (Hartmann et al, 2009). With participants who identify themselves as white, I try to understand what whiteness meant to them in the moment they were involved in CISPES, and in what situations they became aware of their race and its role in their activism (if any). Self-identification is also used again in participant descriptions of their social class and gender. The process of self-identification represents only the beginning of the conversation about the larger issue of understanding privilege and how it was revealed in their lives. Privilege here is the

individuals' interpretation of their advantages in the performance of activist work; this could be based on race, class, language skills, or gender. For the examination of the interviews, I use the research software Atlas TI.

The analysis of my interviews was based on the methodologies of Taggs' (1985) life stories and Rubin and Rubin's (2011) examination of concept, themes and events as the three core elements of qualitative interviewing. In social science, Taggs argues that life stories of participants in collective movements are important only in that they provide fresh information about the behavior of the group in which the researcher is interested. In Taggs' methodology, time sequence is important. This is the reason why I explored how participants remember their childhood, college years and the events that led them to join CISPES or the Central American Solidarity Movement in 1970s and 1980s. The commonalities between a participant's life events and the conditions in which they were involved can suggest how structural factors such as race, social class, gender, nationality, immigration status and language skills facilitated or constrained their activism. Rubin and Rubin (2011) define concept as a term "that represents an idea important for your research", themes as "summary statements and explanations of what is going on", and events as the "occurrences that have taken place" (p. 207). The identification of events helps me pinpoint the incidents that influenced the public relations of CISPES, as well as the construction of collective identities through individual life histories. When commonalities between the participants' experience were found, I created concepts that suggest the existence of a collective process that involved CISPES activists in specific conditions. As Curtin and Gaither (2005), Logan (2011) and Pompper (2005) show, the public relations strategies and tactics are closely related to the formation of identities. In

order to identify CISPES' philosophy behind their political acts, I observe and compare the definitions that each participant gave me about the ideology of the organization. I paid attention to concepts, events or themes that explained racial conditions that are related to other intersectional conflicts such as class and gender. In this dissertation, racial themes are defined as situations that evoke interactions between different racial and ethnic groups, and gender involves the relevance of women and gender relations in CISPES' political discourses. I conceptualize themes about social class as connected to issues of poverty and inequality in El Salvador and the United States. Finally, I classified the "disputes" between members of the organization that are present in the interviews. I am interested not only in understanding the conflicts in the organization, but how they were solved for the stability of the organization. In the "how", I tried to understand the role of ideology in conciliating the internal differences and helping CISPES to survive as a coherent organization. In social movement theory literature, "framing disputes" are defined as the debate between members and organizations to define the reality in specific frames (Bedford, 1993, p. 677). In addition to interviews and documents, I used historical information that complements the perspectives of the participants. The quotations in this dissertation are not a literal reproduction of the interviews. I have edited the conversations to provide a readable version of the participants' opinions. In some occasions, the participants do not complete the sentences or skip words. Though, the edits have not modified the meaning of their views. Only one of the interviews was conducted in Spanish. I translated the interview from Spanish to English.

Positionality and limitations

Rubin and Rubin (2011) and McKee (2003) argue that the interpretation of the researcher is part of the methodology. By defining the themes, concepts and events, every researcher creates an overall interpretation of a social phenomenon. My experience as a Salvadoran man who was born and raised in El Salvador and who has befriended many CISPES activists over the years oriented both my attitudes toward the participants and the relevance of some categories in the analysis, especially the ones related to racial dynamics in the U.S. and the geopolitical views of the organization. My upbringing during the Salvadoran civil war (1980-1992) facilitated the creation of a strong rapport with the participants and the topic of my research. I knew "by heart" the historical background of the conflict and the complicated nature of the CISPES struggle.

However, my identity as a brown man with a marked accent made the discussion about the racial constitution of CISPES unpredictable, especially with white members of the organization. In some occasions, my questions about the whiteness of CISPES were seen by some participants as a mechanism to provoke an apology from them. In those moments, I reminded them that I have a non-judgmental approach to the issue. I was direct in stressing that I was not representing any faction inside CISPES and did not have the ulterior motive of inflaming old conflicts. My role, I told them, was to understand, more than to judge the past with categories of today. In other terms, participants offered candid accounts of the lack of diversity in the organization in 1980s, while a small group of participants acknowledge the lack of reflection about the conditions that enabled the formation of CISPES as white organization. In general, white participants never directly recognized that their educational background and racial heritage became assets for the efficiency of the organization in its struggle against the U.S. administration. The

situation was different from the perspectives of the two Salvadoran participants who acknowledged that the college education level and racial background of CISPES activists helped the Salvadoran cause to gain some visibility in the U.S. congress and the media. In general, having previous connections with the participants helped me develop a conversational environment that enabled fruitful and sincere interactions.

I have to acknowledge that one of the limitations of my dissertation is the scarce number of interviews that I conducted with Salvadorans. In my conversations with Salvadorans (one conducted in English and the other in Spanish), I attempted to understand the intersections between CISPES and other organizations funded and operated by Salvadoran citizens, specifically refugees. By interviewing Salvadoran participants, my intention was not to explicate the forms and mechanisms of their political mobilization in the U.S., but to understand how the interaction with Salvadorans influenced CISPES' work. More interviews with Salvadorans could have brought a more complex and rich view of the mutual learning process between Salvadorans and U.S. activists in the 1980s. Another limitation is that, due to lack of time and financial resources, I could not review and scan documents from the following years: 1982, 1983, and 1989. I also did not have enough time to see the events that led CISPES to revamp its messaging. However, the years that I have used are representative of the universe of documents housed at the Wisconsin Historical Society.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS OF RQ1 AND RQ2

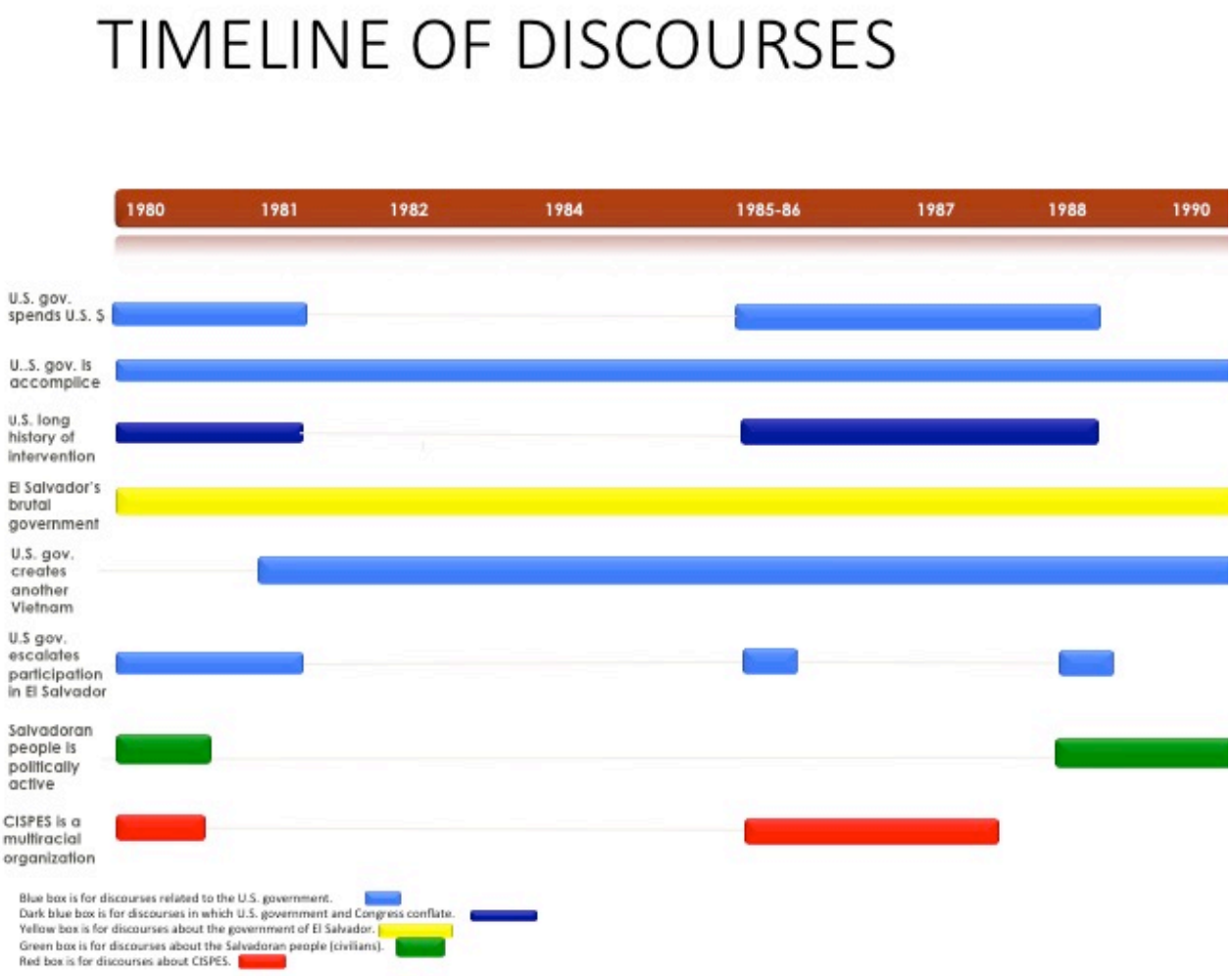
The three research questions are the pieces of a puzzle of two larger models. These models are the **process of intersectional recruiting** and the **ideological identity model of public relations**. Concerning strategic communications, the latter is inserted within the former. By answering each of the research questions and proposing two models that emerged from the examination of this historical case study, I demonstrate the relevance of structural factors in forming collective identities and the instrumental nature of public relations in building, preserving and renegotiating organizational shared views of the self.

From a total of over 28 themes in CISPES' public relations, I found that eight systematically appeared more than three times in the organization's documents from 1980 to 1990. These are: 1) The U.S. government wastes money on wars, 2) the U.S. government is an accomplice of the Salvadoran government human rights abuses, 3) the U.S. has long history of intervention in Central American, 4) El Salvador has a brutal government, 5) the U.S. is creating another Vietnam in El Salvador, 6) the U.S. escalates military participation in El Salvador, 7) Salvadoran people are politically active and 8) CISPES is a multiracial organization (Figure 2). These eight themes are the core of what Burke (1989) calls the "collective consubstantiality' of CISPES' social mobilization. With these themes, the organization instilled in its base the "esprit de corps" in which the collective identity of its members was based on a transnational and radical view of the role of the U.S. in Central America and the world.

Nepstad (2001) and de Volo (2000) show the centrality of social movement organizations in the formation of collective identities in activism. In the case of CISPES, and by looking at their discursive themes, we can appreciate that its mobilizing organizational identity connects at least four discursive locations: Vietnam, El Salvador, Central America and the U.S. These places are not only geographic but represent thematic and historical coordinates that give CISPES an ideological horizon to conduct its mobilization. Although CISPES has a transnational inspiration, the location of its praxis is in the U.S. Through the examinations of the discourses by year, I show how Vietnam represents the moral and economic failure of a super power to impose its domination in the Third World. El Salvador and Central America are the new episode of resistance against Washington's desire to perpetuate right-wing military governments as it happened in Chile in 1973. The themes in CISPES discourses coincide with the articulation of Third World Left in the U.S. The Third World Left differentiates itself from other liberal organizations because of its internationalist views of the conflict in Central American and a discourse that conflates self-determination calls with a radical critique of the capitalist system (Pulido, 2006; Berger, 2006; Hobson, 2016). In order to show a complex answer to this question, I will bracket the themes by year and provide historical information that helps to understand the emergence, the consolidation and the disappearance of different themes.

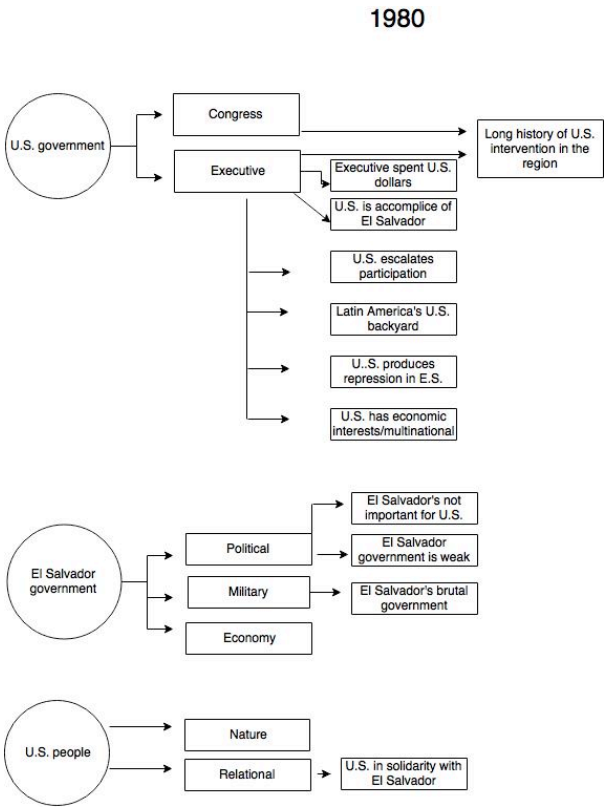
What were the themes of discourses that CISPES produced for its internal audiences and how they varied from 1980 to 1990?

Figure 2: CISPES' themes 1980-1990



1980: Creating the polarization and defining the struggle

Figure 3: 1980: Defining the struggle



In late 1980, the year CISPES was founded as a network of grassroots organizations, the activist organization focused on defining the role of the U.S. executive branch regarding the struggle of El Salvador (Figure 3). The then President James Carter still advocated for a foreign policy with emphasis on human rights (Carleton & Stohl, 1985). Many liberals believed that the Carter administration had the ability to control the El Salvador's military by supporting a junior officers movement which was committed to

protecting human rights and democracy (Peceny & Stanley, 2010). In October 15, 1979, this movement led a coup d'état that overthrew the conservative administration of Carlos Humberto. The officers promised to end the human rights abuses conducted by the army and implement political and economic transformations such as land reform and the nationalization of banks and foreign trade (González, 2018)

In this context, CISPES defined the U.S. government as an actor with a "long history of intervention" that spends "millions of dollars" on being the "accomplice" of the government of El Salvador, which is "brutal", "weak" and "irrelevant" for the national interests of the U.S. In doing this, the U.S. was contributing in the "escalation" of domestic unrest in El Salvador and "producing more repression." Two undated booklets published by CISPES, which appear to be released in 1980, established strong connections between the U.S. government and the government of El Salvador. In *U.S. Military Involvement in El Salvador 1947-1980,* the organization argues, "U.S. involvement in El Salvador is only a part of its overall policy in Central America, in the Caribbean, and in South America." CISPES' point was that the U.S, military and economic assistance to the Salvadoran government "has promoted, and actually implied, increasing repression of the great majority of the people (including the Church), and lack of democracy."

In this polarized discursive system, CISPES defines the U.S. and El Salvador governments as its adversaries. At the other extreme, the U.S. "people" needed to show solidarity with the people of El Salvador: "The hatred that such a policy generates in these people against the United States should provoke a greater opposition within the U.S… as should our sense of responsibility as U.S. citizens to end such unjust policies".

In 1980, CISPES started to outline the contours of its discursive system in which the U.S. and El Salvador governments are intimately tied, in the same way Reagan connected the FMLN with Cuba and the Soviet Union, during his inauguration in January 1981 (Gutman, 1988).

1981: The emergences of the allies

On May 3, 1981, at "least" 20,000 demonstrators protested U.S. policy toward El Salvador in front of the Pentagon in Virginia (de Onis, 1981) (Figure 4). The New York Times reported that many of the activists belonged to committees in solidarity with El Salvador throughout the country and arrived at the capital by bus from distant places such as Florida and Wisconsin. The chapter of CISPES in Madison, Wisconsin, organized a round trip to Virginia in which the main slogan was, "No more U.S. aid to El Salvador." In 1981, CISPES' public relations material defined more actors within the narrative of the Salvadoran conflict, including itself. The organization described itself as a "multiracial," "nonsectarian" and "domestic" entity. In the edition of "El Salvador Alert!" published on June 1st, 1981, CISPES described the Pentagon demonstration as a social movement that was as diverse as possible: "Blacks, trade unionists, religious worker, anti-war organizers, gay rights groups, representatives of third world movements and solidarity organizations were all present". "The Alert," as CISPES activists call it, was the official news outlet of the organization. Jeffrey, who was Alert's editor in the mid 1980s, described the newsletter as CISPES' instrument to "educate" and inform its base in times when mainstream media did not sympathize with the Salvadoran revolutionary movement.

The protest at the Pentagon was a response to Reagan's two-pronged strategy: 1) increasing military and economic aid to El Salvador by bypassing Congress, and 2) establishing a propaganda campaign to define the FMLN as a communist organization plotting against the U.S. (Gradin, 2006; Leogrande, 1998; Smith, 2010). On February 23rd, 1981, the State Department published a "white paper" called "Communist Interference in El Salvador", in which the U.S. government reveals that the FMLN reached out to communist governments in the world to acquire arms (U.S. Department of State, 1981). In *El Salvador: a people in struggle. A brief of overview*, CISPES portrays the U.S. government as the puppeteers that were pulling the strings of the Salvadoran army:

> With the country on the brink of revolution, younger reform-minded military officers were used by the U.S. State Department and the salvadorean oligarchy, to overthrow Romero and put in place a military-civilian junta which promised sweeping reforms. The U.S. supported junta failed to fulfill its promises and the situation in El Salvador grew progressively worse. The death toll in the first two weeks of the junta's rule exceeded the rate of deaths for the first 9 months of the year under Romero. Right-wing elements regained control (…)

In CISPES' narrative, the people of El Salvador were in a state of continuous organizing and struggle. Salvadoran civilians represented ultra-politicized subjects who were trying to consolidate a political project using "a different route" than "electoral change." CISPES argues for "mass organizations, initiated non-violent campaigns to demand land reform, increase waged and better way of life." In CISPES' discursive system, the battle in El Salvador was a conflict between the U.S. and its allies and "stronger ", "popular democratic revolutionary forces." CISPES, through the Alert, framed its support for the social movement as an "American tradition" of "people from

all walks of life who believe that intervention is alien to American ideals of Liberty and self-determination."

With the staunch anti-communist agenda of Reagan, the newsletter saw Congress as a window of opportunity to influence the U.S. government:

> "The message is clear that Capitol Hill has grave doubts concerning White House policy toward El Salvador (…) of the five major conditions contained in the amendments, three could not be certified unless radical changes occur in El Salvador prior to October (…) The "compromise amendments" received overwhelming support in committee only because the American people were asking for much more: an end to U.S. involvement in El Salvador

CISPES was referring the conditions that the House Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee imposed by any approval of military and economic assistance to El Salvador (The New York Times, 1981). Amongst the conditions were to communicate to the leaders of both chambers of Congress that El Salvador's Government was 1) not "engaged in consistently violating internationally recognized human rights," 2) "achieved substantial control over its armed forces", 3) "is making progress in implementing essential economic and political reforms," 4) "is committed to holding free elections" and 5) "has demonstrated its willingness to negotiate a political resolution of the conflict." (97th Congress, 1981). In January 1981, death squads in El Salvador assassinated two U.S. land reform advisors: Michael Hammer and Mark Pearlmann, as well as a Salvadoran official, José Rodolfo Viera.

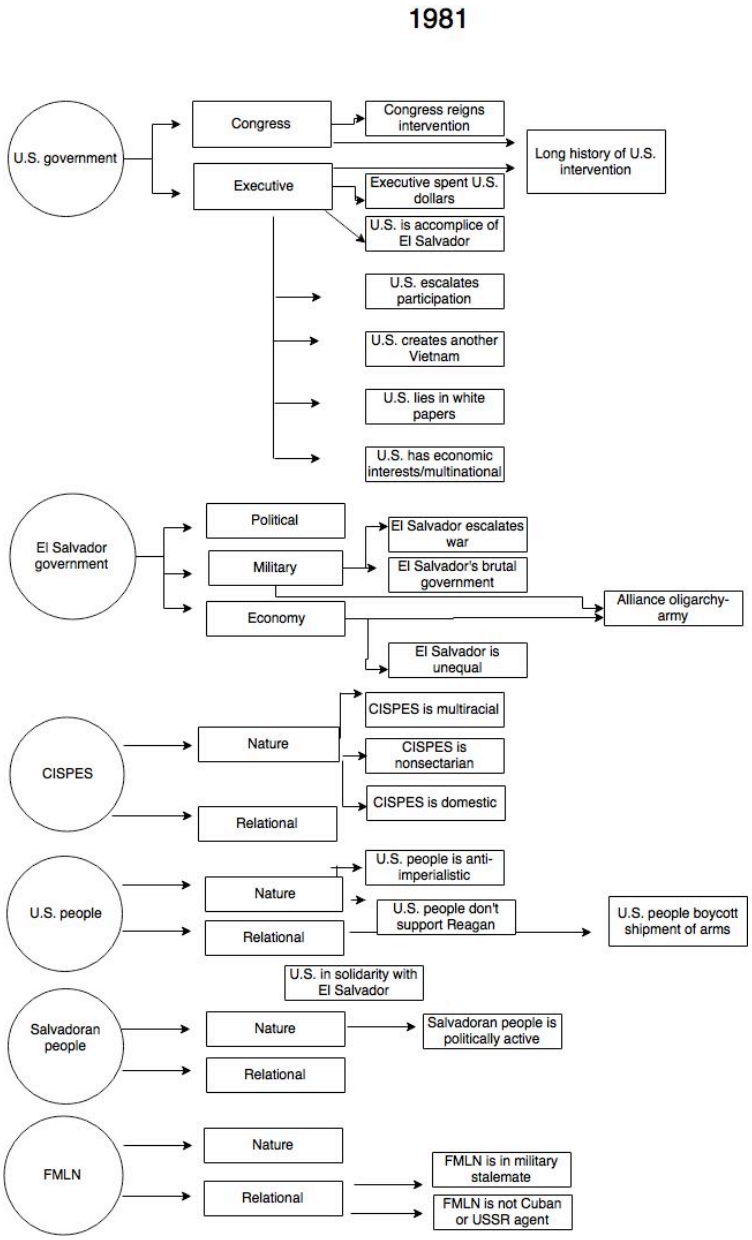
Since the end of the Vietnam War in April 1975 and through the early 1980s, the U.S. Congress increased control over the ability of the Executive branch to engage in foreign wars (Gradin, 2006). In 1981, the shadow of Vietnam was still lingering over American politics- a fact that CISPES used as political discourse against Reagan. In a letter written in Chicago in April 25, 1981, CISPES' Labor Task Force communicated to

its base that the organization feared "that growing U.S. involvement in the internal affairs of El Salvador is leading us down a disastrous path of another Vietnam." This discursive move in the Alert argues that the El Salvador and U.S. governments have the "ruling elite" as an ally:

> Ruling elites launched unprecedented violence against the populace, financed by armed forces oligarchy, paramilitary groups (…) Target of repression were peasants and urban trade union leader, and catholic priests.

In 1981, CISPES' discursive system became more sophisticated by defining a group of actors that were absent in 1980: the FMLN, the people of El Salvador, and CISPES itself. The discourses also show a shift in CISPES' strategies and tactics. The battle against Reagan would occur in the Congress, where the organization tried to put sand in the wheels of Reagan's administration.

Figure 4: 1981: The emergences of allies



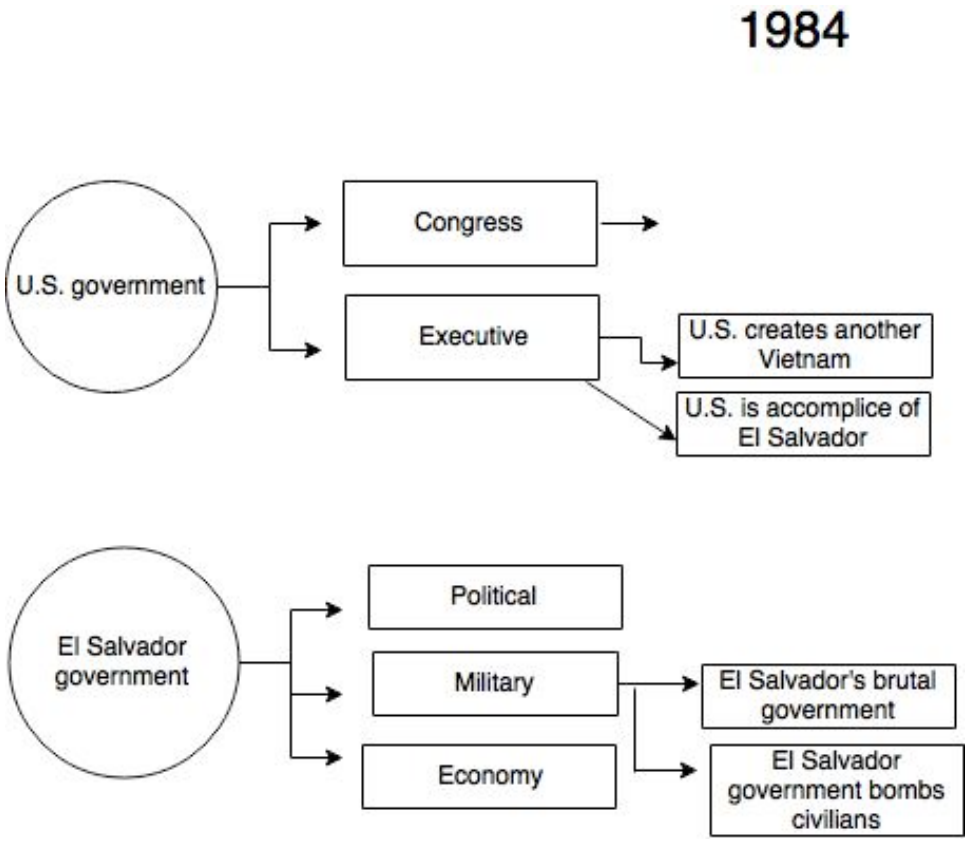
1984: The closing of congressional path

By 1984, the congressional conditions to stop military and economic aid to El Salvador in Congress had deteriorated (LeoGrande, 1998) (Figure 5). During 1981, the Reagan administration sent around 20 million in emergency support to the Salvadoran army. Since 1982, Congress rapidly approved a sustained increase in the assistance to the Central American government. According to GAO (1990), in 1982 the U.S. military aid reached $80 million, a year later it was $83 million, but by1984, the assistance almost tripled to $220 million. If at the beginning of the 1980s, CISPES expected that the Congress would help them to contain Reagan's doctrine, by 1984, the situation was turning the conflict into a normalcy. The election of a new president in El Salvador fit perfectly into the script of this new normalcy. On March 25, 1984, the Christian Democrat, José Napoleón Duarte, was elected as president of El Salvador after four years of a government controlled by a civilian-military junta and an interim president. On May 21st, 1984, Duarte met Reagan at the White House and they agreed on a joint communiqué in which they "reaffirm strongly that the abandonment of El Salvador and Central America in the midst of a continuing armed struggle serves neither the interest of their two nations, nor those of the community of free countries" (American Presidency Project, 2018).

A report written by the organization Medical Aid to El Salvador, in possession of CISPES, showed that the air capabilities of the Salvadoran army had improved. The document reports air bombings in Tenancingo (a north central municipality) at the end of September 1983. "The operation was purposely bombed by the Salvadoran Air Force in its efforts to kill guerrilla," the report states. In the same document, the activists argue

that the "U.S. embassy seems to be in agreement with the Salvadoran government that the civilians getting bombed probably deserve it." As a conclusion, they affirm that the "U.S. role in bombing was a greater than earlier believed" and "they have collected numerous testimonies on the use of white phosphorus and napalm in Vietnam."CISPES was looking at the air advantage of the Salvadoran army as the main issue to define in its next major strategic turn.

Figure 5: 1984: The Closing of Congress



1985-1986: Stop the Bombing

Throughout 1984, the U.S. media informed publics about vigorous air bombings of El Salvador with material donated by the U.S., government (Hedges, 1984) (Figure 6).

The airpower was a considerable advantage for the Salvadoran government against the FMLN that struggled to retain the control in some remote areas. With aerial actions, the Salvadoran government attempted to reduce the expansion of FMLN' sanctuaries. According to Corum (1998), the Salvadoran government, with American equipment, began bombing rebel villages in Chalatenango and the Guazapa Mount. Using information provided by a faculty of the Air War College, located in Alabama, Corum estimates that aerial bombardment with Cessna A-37 aircraft totaled 227 in all 1983, but in June 1984 alone, there were 74 A-37 aerial bombs.

By the end of August 1984, CISPES started the implementation of a large-scale campaign: "Stop the Bombing in El Salvador", that attempted to reveal the cruelty of aerial actions that targeted Salvadoran civilians and simultaneously put pressure on the U.S. Congress (Donaghy, 1990; Vellela, 1988). The campaign was fully embraced by the organization between 1985 and 1986. As expected, the discursive innovation during those years was to focus on the aerial bombardments. They held the U.S. responsible for its support of the Duarte's government. In a letter dated June 6th, 1985, Amy Brodigan, CISPES' Legislative Director, requested its members to exert pressure on their representatives:

> Ask your Congressperson to support the recommendations of Reps. Leach and Miller (D-CA) and Senator Hatfield's (R-OR) paper on El Salvador. It calls for an end to U.S. support of the aid war, a mandatory redirecting of economic and development aid to social change programs, and a strict 55-person limit on U.S. advisors in El Salvador. Strengthen the human rights restrictions.

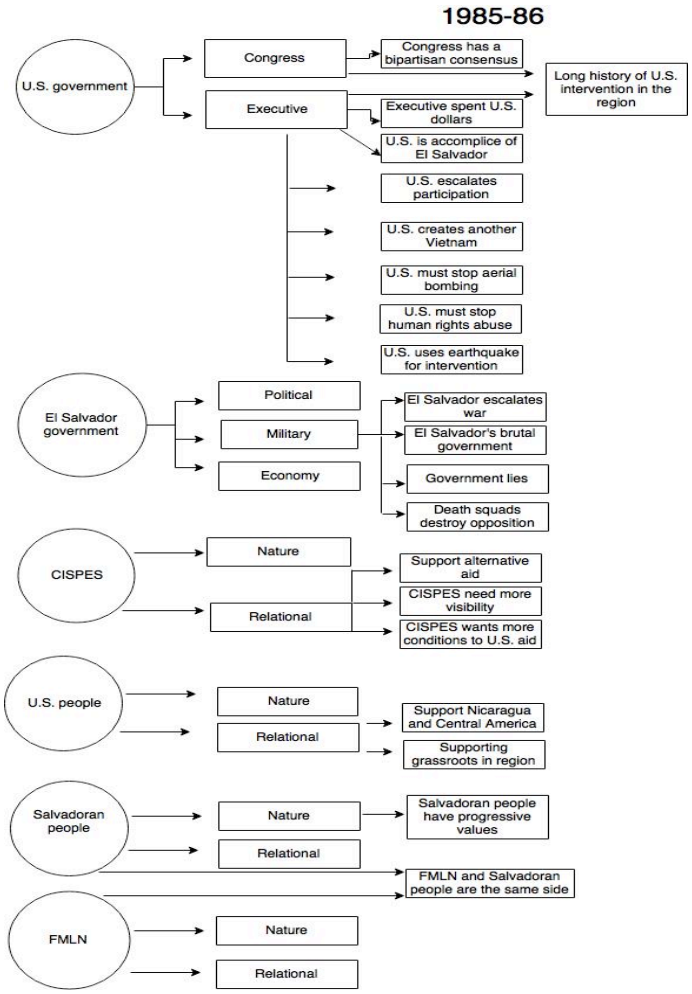
On September 21st, 1985, the Midwest Regional Office, located in Chicago, accused the Reagan administration of "(r)ecent shipment of twelve additional attack helicopters to the Salvadoran Air Force, which only increases the importance of our work

in exposing Duarte and the air war in El Salvador." On October 1st, 1985, the CISPES Northwest Regional Office informed its base about this method "used in this air war against the civilian population are as horrifying as the statistics". The same day, the South East Regional Office in New Orleans informed that the Salvadoran government, since 1982, "has been bombing its own people" and has killed "thousands of civilians." The New York city chapter stresses the alleged connection between death squads and the Salvadoran government: "right wing military and paramilitary death squads sought to crush all signs of opposition (…) They continued to organize and demonstrate despite the bullets and bombs used against them." CISPES' discursive system continued tying the U.S. to El Salvador's governments, but between 1985 and 1986 in particular they utilized discourses about aerial bombardments.

CISPES complemented protests with an alternative approach to assist El Salvador through grassroots organizations in El Salvador, many located in places under the control of FMLN's rebels. In March 1986, the Midwest regional Office called for "a door-to-door canvass to raise T-800 for Medical Aid to El Salvador and [to] raise the visibility of the bombing with "Stop Bombing El Salvador" window signs." Medical Aid to El Salvador was a Los Angeles-based organization that distributed aid in FMLN's sanctuaries, the same ones the Salvadoran army was bombing at the time (Peace, 2012). Ten days after the Earthquake of October 10th in El Salvador, CISPES' national office promoted channeling the humanitarian help through the National Union of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS in Spanish), an organization with close ties to the FMLN, "in addition to NEST, Medical Aid for El Salvador, and the Salvadoran Medical Relief Fund." NEST is the acronym for New El Salvador Today, an organization founded in the San Francisco

Bay Area in 1981 (Share El Salvador, 2018). The Salvadoran Medical Relief Fund trained community health-care workers and provided medical care to UNTS members (Squires, 1987). CISPES' international approach included condemning U.S. policy toward Nicaragua. On September 21, 1985, the Midwest Regional Office endorsed the campaign: "Let Nicaragua Live", and collected funds for the victims of the war against the Contras. The recipients of this aid were not regular individuals, but, in CISPES' discursive system, they were mythic characters who were in close alignment with the strategic goals of the FMLN. In March's newsletter, CISPES New York argued that the violence of aerial bombardment and other human rights abuses aspire "to destroy popular support for the FMLN/FDR through terror." In CISPES' view, these Salvadoran subjects have created communities that "have set themselves a twofold goal: to survive the war and to lay the groundwork for a society based on the principles of human rights and democracy."

Figure 6: 1985-1986: Stop the Bombing



1987: The National Referendum Campaign

In 1987, the public relations material shows CISPES' efforts to frame the situation in El Salvador as a dilemma for the U.S. government (Figure 7). In a document of the Midwest Regional Office, CISPES locates the US government's predicament after seven years of war in El Salvador and with no end in sight: "The U.S. must now choose between the two remaining options, escalating U.S. intervention or allowing the Salvadoran people to achieve a negotiated, political solution to the war." On August 14th,

1987, the FMLN accepted the offer of Duarte to meet for negotiations by mid-September of the same year (Farah, 1987). However, Duarte's plan was derailed by the assassination of the human rights activist, Herbert Anaya in El Salvador by death squads on October 26th, 1987. The killing was enough justification for FMLN's renunciation of returning to the negotiation table with the Salvadoran government (Associated Press, 1987; OAS, 1988).

In 1987, CISPES' goal was to increase pressure on the U.S. Congress to support a peace agreement between the FMLN and the Salvadoran government. In a CISPES Congressional update on March 13th, 1987, the organization's headquarters in Washington D.C. announced about a "democratic party policy on Central American" that emphasized "seeking a negotiation, regional settlement." CISPES' strategic team was aware that inside the democratic party some voices were suggesting "no aid to the contras, but at the same time increase" economic pressure on Nicaragua" and increasing the aid to "Central American democracies," in which El Salvador was included. CISPES' pressure on Congress followed two strategies: a grassroots national campaign and intense lobbying at the legislative level. Along with other grassroots organizations that supported the end of U.S. intervention in Central America, CISPES launched the campaign called *The National Referendum to End the War in Central America* in February 1987. In a letter on February 5th, 1987, the organizers publicized that the campaign attempted to "ask people to vote for the referendum to end the war on street corners, in shopping centers, at churches and at our workplaces." The campaign tried to "reach a new audience not usually contacted and ask them to take a stand against the war." The principal objective of the campaign was to increase the pressure on "Congress to stop contra aid

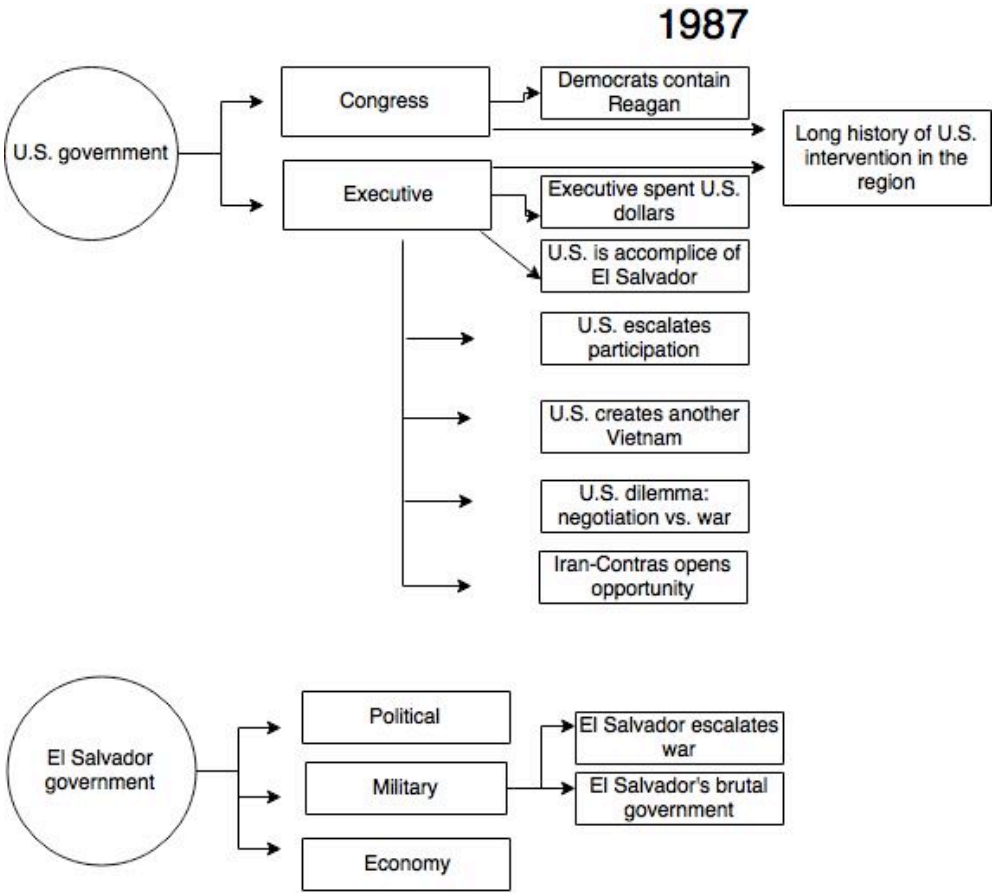
and military involvement in the rest of Central American through signature gathering on the ballots (sending them in prior to the votes) and specially timed pressure tactics." Another CISPES document estimated that at the beginning of the campaign, over 30 local chapters from 22 states joined the effort.

On February 27, 1987, the main message in CISPES' congressional update of the campaign in Congress said it "should continue to be that we want a resolution of disapproval. End contra aid now. No aid to El Salvador and Guatemala." CISPES headquarters in Washington D.C. monitored the status of bills and other legislative actions regarding the U.S. aid to El Salvador through the deployment of its staffers to Capitol Hill. On February 12th, 1987, CISPES assessed the influence of *The National Referendum to End the War in Central America* on Congress' attitude toward the issue.

> The work that is being done by our committees and other organizations calling on members of the Senate Foreign Relations committee to get rid of the $300 million is being heard in Congress according to congressional staff people. Please let your committees know that their work is having impact.

The CISPES national office in Washington D.C. believed that there was a window of opportunity after the Iran-Contra Scandal emerged in November, 1986 (Brown, 2018): "The Iran-contra affair has indeed opened the eyes of the American public of the falsehoods and illegalities of the current policy toward Central America." The Iran-Contra Affair was a secret U.S. government deal that involved selling arms to Iran and investing the money from that operation in arming the Contras, a U.S. backed insurgency that attempted the overthrow of the Sandinista government of Nicaragua.

Figure 7: 1987: The National Referendum



1988: The legitimation of FMLN

The National Referendum to End the War in Central America, along with the lobbying strategy in Congress were deliberate processes to move CISPES toward the next step in their political mobilization: the quest to legitimize the FMLN as an actor that is representative of the people of El Salvador (Figure 8). In 1981, the governments of France and Mexico recognized the alliance between the FMLN and the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR in Spanish) as a representative political force (Tamayo, 1981). This diplomatic gesture elevated the international profile of the FMLN, but Reagan's position from the beginning of his tenure was to tie the Salvadoran insurgency with Cuba

and the Soviet Union. The FMLN's strategy was a "two track policy" of negotiations and insurrection. In both strategies, military force was required to leverage the insurgency position at the negotiation table (Farah, 1988). Along with the FMLN's position, Duarte suffered terminal cancer that kept him away from the spotlight during this time.

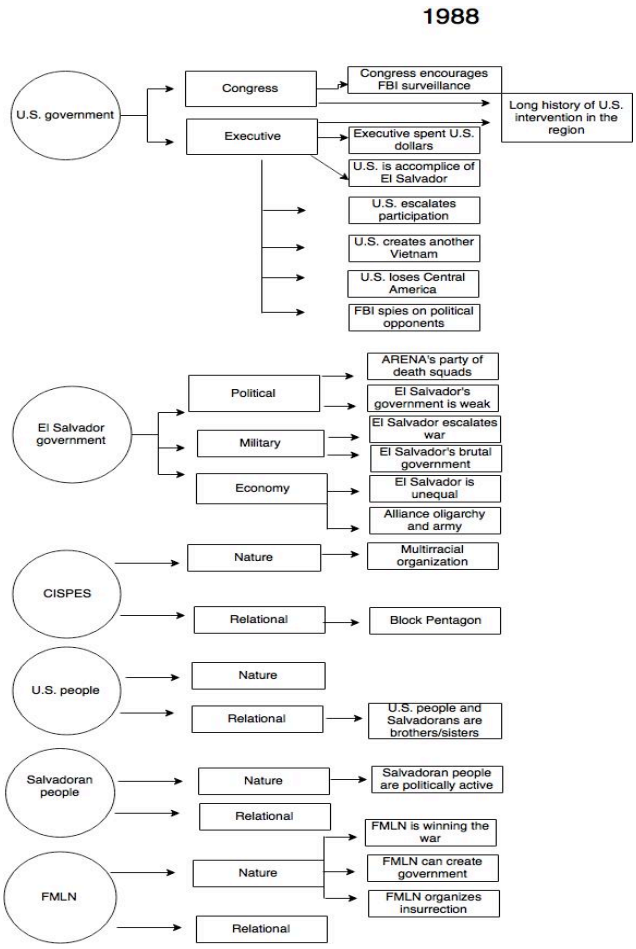
Through the monitoring of U.S. Congress, CISPES' political operators observed signs in the late 1980s that some circles inside Washington D.C. might be considering a political exit from the Salvadoran conflict. Morris, responsible of CISPES' congressional strategy, argues that it was a "gradual process" where it became clear that "there is not going to be a solution without the FMLN." In the late 1980s, Samantha, a CISPES staffer on the West Coast, stated that the line of the organization "was to raise visibility of the FMLN." On January 23rd, 1988, in a communication regarding the planning of the 6th Annual Midwest CISPES Conference, the Midwest regional office called all the committee "to expand their El Salvador program and to go on the offensive in order to protect, legitimize, and build the popular movement in El Salvador."

In the discourse analysis of CISPES documents from1988, we can attest that the organization defined the state of the FMLN in three themes: the FMLN can create a government, the FMLN is winning the war, and the FMLN is organizing an insurrection. In October 1988, a document explains how CISPES activists were involved in a new campaign called *Steps for Freedom*. CISPES headquarters in Washington D.C. states that the Salvadoran people demand "the formation of a government which truly represents a majority of the people, a government of national consensus." This government would be achieved through a "national dialogue, involving the FMLN/FDR, the government, and the popular movement." The other two themes (FMLN is winning the war and FMLN is

organizing an insurrection) are evident in a communication from the Midwest Regional offices in Chicago to all the local chapters in the area. CISPES Midwest assumed the "rapidly" expanding "opposition movement" in El Salvador was a fact; a "fact" that could be leveraged by "the promotion and legitimization of the FMLN/FDR as a key part of [their] support for the movement."

By 1988, the talks between the FMLN and the Salvadoran government, initiated in 1984, became stagnant. Three situations contributed to the stagnation of the dialogue: the decline in Duarte's health, the eventual end of the Reagan administration in the early 1989, and the potential victory of right-wing Republican Nationalist Alliance (ARENA in Spanish) in El Salvador's presidential election in March, 1989. CISPES' self-definition relies on the themes of *Block the Pentagon,* a one-day non-violent blockade outside the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. On October 18th, 1988, over 1,000 activists protested there. At least 250 of the demonstrators were arrested (CISPES, 2018a). CISPES (2018a) framed "Block the Pentagon" as part of CISPES' campaign *El Salvador: Steps to Freedom* that attempted to stop the U.S. military aid to El Salvador. The blockade replicated the 1967 protest opposing the war in Vietnam that gathered over 30,000 demonstrators (Bates, 1967).

Figure 8: 1988: The legitimation of FMLN



1990: The end is near

As in 1989, in 1990, many of the themes related to the strengthening of the FMLN in the battlefield (FMLN's military strength is an advantage) were combined with themes that framed the guerrilla as a responsible political force (that the FMLN should be part of the negotiations) (Figure 9). In this period, there was an emerging discussion about race relations within CISPES, acknowledging that the organization was overwhelmingly white. On April 1990, a staffer of CISPES' Southwest regional office –

which coordinated CISPES chapters of Southern California, Arizona and Nevada - reported that at the 1990 CISPES national convention in January the organization decided "to become a multiracial solidarity organization." In the opinion of the staffer, CISPES as a "mostly white organization" was beginning "the process of becoming a multi-racial solidarity organization." The organization envisioned a new time in which the congressional work was a "means", but not an end.

By April 1990, U.S. assistance to El Salvador suffered a huge blow after the killing of six Jesuit priests and two of their collaborators in the midst of the FMLN military offensive in November 1989. After the slaying of the priests, the Bush administration told the newly elected Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani that "we would accept nothing less than a thorough investigation" (Pear, 1990). Between November 20th-21st, 1989, – four days after the assassinations – the House of Representative and the Senate voted bipartisan resolutions (409 to 3) that warned the Salvadoran government that the resolution of the Jesuit case would be instrumental in the allocation of more U.S. assistance (Pear, 1990). From a geopolitical perspective, the fall of the Berlin Wall in November of 1989 represented the beginning of the end of the Cold War and the future dismantling of the block of communist countries.

In February 1990, the U.S. supported the role of the United Nations as the broker of a peace agreement between the FMLN and the Salvadoran government (Goshko, 1990). On April 4th, 1990, both sides signed the first pact about the rules and objectives of the negations. The new environment favored triumphs for CISPES. On October 23rd, 1990, CISPES headquarters celebrated a political defeat of the Salvadoran government in Congress:

> A political blow was dealt on October 19 to the Administration's El Salvador policy with the Senate Vote (74-25) to withhold 50% of U.S. military aid to the Arena government. A second vote, on the Graham-McCain amendment to condition any cuts in aid a unilateral FMLN ceasefire was closer.

Days before the vote, the Bush administration had lobbied to "dilute" the cut to the U.S. assistance to El Salvador (Krauss, 1990). For CISPES' political operators, the vote marked "a new phase" in Congress and represented a "psychological boost to the popular movement, and the FMLN in their quest to remove the obstacles to a negotiated solution based on demilitarization." Fourteen months later, on January 16th, 1992, the FMLN and the Salvadoran government signed a peace agreement in Mexico City. In a year and a half, the two sides had agreed to transform the Salvadoran political system via 24 constitutional reforms that weakened the power of the Salvadoran army to the civilian government and created a new set of institutions such as the National Civilian Police.

The themes of CISPES' discourses reveal that the principal role of the organization from 1980-1990 was containment of US policy toward El Salvador first, the anti-communist agenda of the Reagan administration and later, to put pressure on the Bush administration to support negotiations with the FMLN. The CISPES discourse system also shows the perseverance of the organization to define its friends and foes by repeating eight core themes that drove the organization on the intricate, complex and transnational nature of the Salvadoran conflict. These themes were: 1) The U.S. government wastes money on wars, 2) U.S. government is accomplice of the Salvadoran government human rights abuses, 3) the U.S. has a long history of intervention in Central America, 4) El Salvador is a brutal government, 5) the U.S. is creating another Vietnam

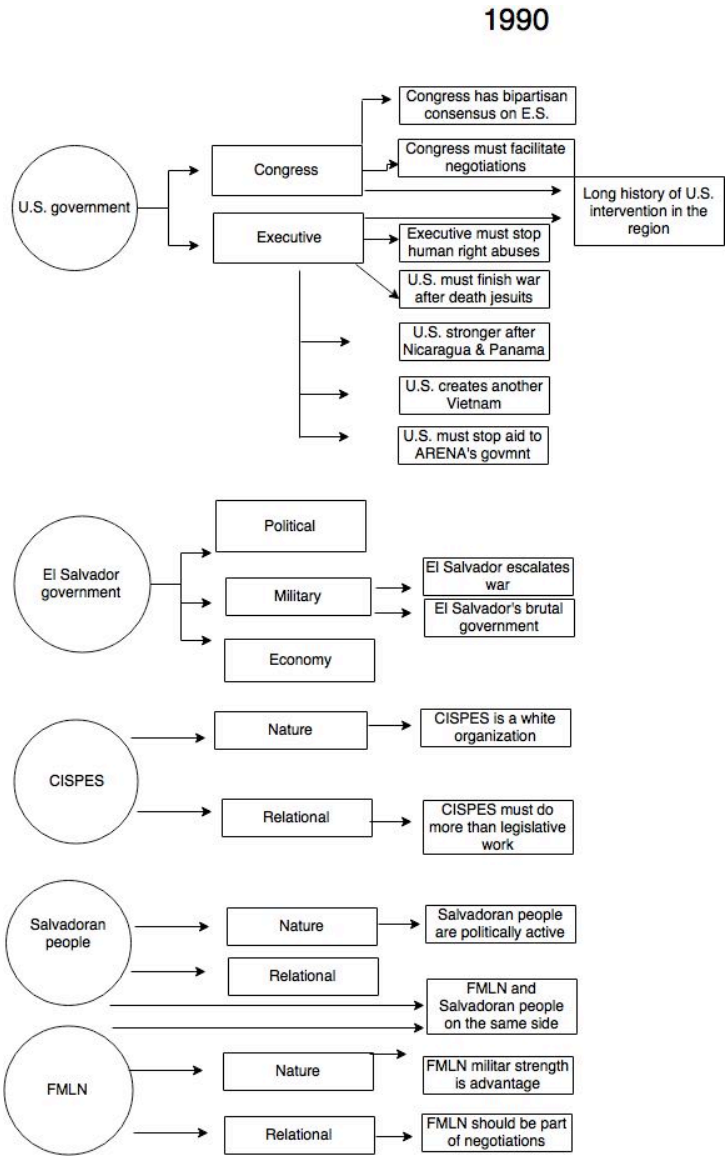
in El Salvador, 6) the U.S. is escalating military participation in El Salvador, 7) Salvadoran people are politically active and 8) CISPES is a multiracial organization.

However, the consistency of these messages throughout this longitudinal discourse analysis needs to be complemented through the examination of these themes at specific junctures during CISPES' campaigns. I address this by providing a microscopic view of the discursive system through seven historical discursive categories between 1980 and 1990. They are:

1) 1980: Creating the polarization and defining the struggle
2) 1981: The emergences of the allies
3) 1984: The closing of congressional path
4) 1985-1986: Stop the Bombing
5) 1987: The National Referendum Campaign
6) 1988: The Legitimation of the FMLN
7) 1990: The End of the War is Near

By putting together these seven historical segments, I see CISPES' longitudinal narrative in three parts: 1) 1980-1981: the presentation of characters in CISPES' discursive system (friends vs. foes) and the problem (reducing damage from Reagan and advocating for the FMLN), 2) 1984-1987: CISPES's definition of its primary spaces for political action (Congress and the streets), and 3) 1988-1990: CISPES finds a solution to its problems by moving its focus from reducing the damage to framing the FMLN as a responsible and powerful actor in the a negotiated solution.

Figure 9: 1990: The end is near



What were the public relations strategies CISPES used from 1981 to 1991 to influence public opinion and political agendas?

From the data produced by the interviews with CISPES activists and the examination of documents, I observe a rationale behind the design, implementation and evaluation of public relations in the organization. I call this "centralized-decentralized" public relations. This "centralized-decentralized" public relations approach consisted of concerted strategies designed and led by the organization's headquarters in Washington D.C., and decentralized executions by regional and local chapters throughout the U.S. This is especially true after 1985, when CISPES decided to become a national organization instead of a network of grassroots organizations (CISPES, 2018a; Donaghy, 1990; Van Goose, 1988). The analysis of this "decentralized-centralized" approach led me to find five types of public relations strategies (media, street, political, fundraising, and tours). Each one of the strategies had a series of tactics that coalesces around the idea of challenging the U.S. government by using the resources of CISPES activists, who tend to be white and college educated.

A decentralized-centralized public relations

My interviews reveal that a majority of participants, during their tenure in the organization, worked in local and regional offices, as well as in CISPES' headquarters. Between 1985 and 1990, Barbara, Morris and Jeffrey were at the headquarters. Laura was a regional representative, but in the early 1990s, she moved to the headquarters. Vincent joined the NYC chapter, later worked in the headquarters, and finally landed in a local chapter in the East Atlantic region. Samantha was a staffer in a sister organization in the Pacific Northwest, but later moved to CISPES' offices in New England and the West Coast. Claudia also had the role of staffer in the Midwest and West coast offices. Alvaro worked in the headquarters, and later moved to coordinate a CISPES regional office on

the West Coast. Robert and Marla stayed active in its local organization, which was an affiliated and semi-autonomous organization that had a larger scope that included solidarity actions for the entire Central American region. Marco continued working in an organization comprised of Salvadoran refugees, and Gabriela withdrew herself from activism on El Salvador and finished her doctoral degree in a California university.

As one of the principal CISPES strategist since 1985, Morris argues that the effectiveness of the organization was developing a reduced set of strategies that produced a multitude of tactics. Morris revives:

> If you have everybody in a concerted way in a campaign, not doing similar tactics but having the same strategy, you're going to be more effective. That's true of any movement, right. I don't feel that it's only a CISPES issue, I would say that today. That's one of the lessons of CISPES; you punch above your weight. In other words, we were tiny; if you really think we had 100 (staffers) and…20 chapters and another 200 groups that are affiliated – I forget the exact numbers. We were pretty visible, present and effective at what we did because of that fact and because we did have a group of people that were very committed to participating and developing the strategy, and then carrying it out. Again tactics can be flexible, but if you have the same strategy or similar strategy, you're ultimately going to be more efficient.

Morris also argues that at the center of concerted strategies was the goal of developing messages that transform what many saw as radical ideas into "mainstream discourses". In the eyes of Morris, the efforts of CISPES to initiate local referendums about U.S. assistance to El Salvador in the early 1980s – in cities such as San Francisco, Portland, and Eugene – reveals the efforts of transforming a fringe cause into a national movement. He called this effort "mainstreaming":

> But one of the things about CISPES, even though by any outside observer can consider us Left, we were very tactically flexible. We wanted to reach out to the broadest audience, reach out, get involved as many people as possible and find ways to engage people in creative ways. And that's what attracted me to CISPES. It wasn't dogmatic, you've got to do things one way tactically or you know that

> you have a strategy; you have a goal, which was to stop the U.S. War in El Salvador and to support the struggle.

CISPES' emphasis on transforming its messages into a mainstream code seems to confirm Mundy's (2013) findings on LGBT organizations at the state-level. Mundy argues that LGBT organizations crafted their message using "mainstream" language that catered to general publics. This means that their discourses about marriage equality were "non-combative," "positive" and communicated "the importance of diversity, the breadth of diversity within the LGBT community, and how that diversity reflects society as a whole" (p. 388).

Barbara, also working at the headquarters, assures that CISPES planned its campaigns in ways that included input from regional and local representatives:

> If it was huge campaigns, we had, there were quarterly meetings called the national advisory committee meetings, and so they would be discussed there and approved, and those were based on representatives throughout the regions. Or if there weren't a meeting coming up, there would be like a communication; it wasn't like the national office just decided, "this is the campaign we are going to do." There was like a process with the regional coordinators to talk about, "this is what we are proposing, can you guys talk about this and tell us what you think and give us your input." Then based on that, we might go for it. And usually, people knew it was based on what the need was down there, so the feedback was really just tweaking it and making it be a better campaign. Once in awhile, there were some issues about some stuff, like people had other work going on, but it usually worked.

As a regional coordinator, Laura recalls that she had to travel at least "twice a year" to the capital to have strategic meetings with CISPES staffers that lasted "3-5 days." From those encounters with regional representatives, CISPES would produce materials and suggestions of activities: "We would usually come up with the base (of the campaign), and we would send that to the country. So everyone would have a press

release. Obviously, local things were going on, you had to adjust it". Later, Laura explained the role of a centralized strategy in regional mobilization:

> We would have local protest but there was kind of a message so a lot of it was we would strategize. We would always start our meeting with an analysis of our reality and so we would base and do prototypes, so the committees would not have to reinvent the wheel. That's how we were able to get our message and have such a broad impact. I think through that multiplying (process). Our democratic process was important, people could give input on the strategies; write papers for our conventions and even (attend) to the regional managers meetings.

As regional coordinator, Laura serves as the connection between the national office and the local chapters and other affiliated organizations. "Some people made fun of me as being the most democratic regional director, that I would bring up the opinions of the committees. Other people were just like made [the decisions] more top down. I listened to people and made strategic battles to build consensus [with local chapters]," she remembers.

Claudia and Samantha shed light on the complications involved in assembling public relations strategies and tactics in the chapters. From their testimonies, I argue that staffers in the local chapters were responsible for preparing materials and organizing the collective mobilization of members and allies. Claudia recalls that she was responsible – in a chapter in the Midwest – for writing the newsletter to CISPES' donors and doing "a lot of press work" for the protests. "I was on the radio and TV stations… and then we were always going out to churches, communities, anybody who would meet with us. And I did a lot of that work, especially in the summer of 1988," Claudia recalls. She explained that before each protest "we would decide who would do media work by event…There wasn't just one person in charge, we would build it collectively and in a coalition, and we

would divide roles." However, Claudia asserts, she would take "the communication role" because she was the staffer.

Samantha, who worked in an affiliated organization in the Northwest, explains that the model in which she was embedded was "more democratic than some CISPES in a way." She illustrates her role as the only staffer, especially being the intermediary between the leadership and the volunteers:

> It was a general meeting that would run, so I wasn't making decisions. I was implementing them, so if we were doing a fundraiser, I would be in charge of recruiting the volunteers or creating a committee to recruit the volunteers. I would be in charge of working with the group to think about a fundraiser. I was in charge of gathering everyone together into organizational groups that made sense to carry out the work and also recruiting new members, so it was kind of everything. But I wasn't making the decisions because that was in general meeting. Although I was certainly helping to shape them, I would support work on the agendas, send out all the mailings, get people to come, all of that. It wasn't without power.

Robert recalled that the volunteers and members of his local chapter used to meet periodically to write column opinions, which they later submitted for publication in local newspapers. Samantha also remembers the use of paid and unpaid media, especially the ways the organization pitched stories to journalists in the late 1980s:

> At the time we also had a radio show on KCC because they were very friendly, maybe it was once a month, where we would come on and discuss issues in Central America. We had friendly people; certainly, the Guard was trickier. We did some paid advertising in the Guard, we cultivated people, but they were just harder editorially, but the Weekly was sort of more lefty weekly press, and KCC definitely would cover us and we had good contacts there.

Barbara remembers that the media tour in which CISPES reached out to local audiences using tactics such as testimonies of Salvadoran refugees generated a good amount of journalistic coverage in small towns. She recalled: "We would go around to college campuses and community events and did press work, you know local press work, in small towns or whatever, so that was a big thing,"

In their interviews, Samantha, Morris, Vincent and Jeffrey all seemed to agree that CISPES' public relations improved by strengthening their relations with national media. Morris recalls that hiring a former reporter who helped them have access to elite journalists was key:

> We hired a person with media experience in the late 1980s. That bumped up our exposure on access because she knew exactly how to talk to the national press, and it's again when you could send a press release out. And if you had contacts in the media, you got a response. I would deliver press releases all over the Washington D.C. to all the major news outlets. I was on Nightline you know because we had the strategy that was on thing because we had somebody who knew how to do that. I think that at the local level people were just very creative.

Vincent argues that the sophistication of the public relations was correlated to the professionalization of CISPES:

> We became, as a national organization, much more professional. I mean disciplined, efficient, serious, practical, trained. All of those things were part of becoming more professional, for example, our communications, both internal and external, including reaching the media.

Jeffrey remembers that from the hiring stage, CISPES consolidated two streams public relations: internal and external. In the first stream, it was the newsletter "El Salvador Alert" – in which Jeffrey and Alvaro participated – that educated their memberships and served as an alternative source of information. In the second stream were the new staffers who had to do the "mainstreaming" into the national media. In 1988, the national headquarters had the opportunity to use those accumulative capabilities after it was revealed that the FBI had CISPES – alongside dozens of other Central American solidarity movements – under surveillance since 1980 (Shenon, 1988). The scandal sparked congressional hearings and dozens of the news articles, contributing to the dismissal of the FBI Director, William Sessions. Morris acknowledged that moment was "the only time we got substantial national media." He recalls that the issue was framed by the media as "political harassment by the FBI of CISPES and other Central American

groups" in the U.S. However, he argues, that this episode in CISPES' history was an exception:

> We focused on local television, local newspapers, and also we did a lot of tours with Salvadoreans that got a lot into local newspapers. We made alliances with other organizations, faith-based groups, labor unions, because we were trying to build coalitions and often those voices were more effective than ours about getting the message out.

CISPES' internal documents, propaganda material, and newspaper coverage demonstrate the interactions between a concerted strategy – led and developed by the headquarters in agreement with regional and local levels – and the decentralization and "flexibility" of the tactics. The newsletter "El Salvador Alert" was an example of how a project that started as an effort of CISPES headquarters in Washington D.C. was rapidly replicated on a national scale. In June 1981, CISPES published the issue number 9 of "El Salvador Alert" in which the organization communicated that the "May 3rd march" on Washington that "turned out" "tens of thousands" of demonstrators against the U.S. assistance to El Salvador. The "Alert", as CISPES' activists called the medium, included the reactions to the march by representatives of the Salvadoran insurgency:

> The turnout didn't go unnoticed by the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR), the political front of opposition forces in El Salvador. Arnoldo Ramos of the FDR told the protestors "…the greatness of this march will fill the hearts of my compatriots with hope and enthusiasm to continue their struggle.

The 1981 Alert also provided activists with an analysis of El Salvador's government, the role of the CIA in Central America and a list of literature and videos about the Salvadoran situation. The publications listed political documents written by the FMLN-FDR and movies such as El Salvador: Revolution or Death, filmed by a group of Dutch filmmakers. This movie was an important tool in recruiting both U.S.-born and Salvadoran activists.

By 1986, the "Alert" model had been replicated by the Chicago CISPES chapter. The local committee published the "Chicago Alert," which made announcements about protests that would take place in the state of Illinois and give space to CISPES' national campaigns. "Chicago Alert" also publicized the public meeting with the Rep. Frank Annunzio that took place at the Church of Our Lady of Mercy in Chicago.

The "Chicago Alert" chapter connected CISPES' actions with the "Stop the Bombing" campaign. Indeed, the newsletter framed the encounter with Rep. Annunzio as part of its efforts to persuade the Congress about stopping U.S. support of the aerial bombardment of rural areas in El Salvador:

> (T)he meeting is the result of months of pressure and work by the CISPES 11th Congressional District Stop the Bombing Campaign. As reported in the last CISPES newsletter, Annunzio entered a statement into the December 2 Congressional Record vigorously opposing sending military aid to El Salvador and noted that U.S. support for the Duarte government is directly linked to the bombing of civilians. The Campaign is planning a large and effective meeting to show Annunzio that his constituents support his position and to encourage him to take further action. Annunzio agreed to the public meeting on January 3 in his first face-to-face meeting with members of the Campaign. The congressman told Campaign representatives he would not vote for military aid for El Salvador and has reservations about voting for economic aid.

The "Stop the bombing" campaign that ran from 1984 through 1986 is an example of CISPES' decentralized-centralized approach to public relations. Donaghy (1990) explains that the campaign was planned by a few members at CISPES' headquarters in Washington D.C and later went national:

> Campaign planners told (CISPES) chapters about the bombing and the new campaign, and informed them rather than push one uniform set of tactics, the campaign is designed to allow for the maximum amount of flexibility and creativity in implementation by committees. The important thing is to plan a local campaign which effectively meets the goals.

Like it happened in Chicago, the Portland Central American Solidarity Movement (PCASC) – an affiliated organization to CISPES – joined the campaign and produced

flyers calling for people to join the protests and support its fundraising:

> PCASC is planning to put this sign (Stop Bombing El Salvador) in Tri-Met buses to make tens of thousands of Portlander aware of what Project Censored, the national media watch-dog committed, called the number one censored story of the year: the U.S. sponsored bombing of El Salvador… Please send us your contribution, and helps us cut through this media black out.

PCASC also organized a "nonviolent direct action" at the headquarters of FLIR systems, the company that shipped the helicopters that the Salvadoran government was using for aerial bombings.

The "Stop the Bombing" campaign also motivated innovative actions by other local chapters. Morris recalls how CISPES New York City displayed a balloon in the form of a bomb at Macy's Day parade in 1989. The New York Times (1989) reported about the event:

> Seven people received summonses for disorderly conduct yesterday after they briefly joined the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade with a black balloon shaped like a bomb that read, "Stop U.S. Bombing of El Salvador" on one side and "No Vietnam War in El Salvador" on the other. The seven inflated the balloon and joined the parade at 62d Street and Central Park West about 10 A.M., a police spokesman, Sgt. Raymond O'Donnell, said. He said police officers pulled the group off the parade route at 61st Street. One of the demonstrators, Connor Walsh, 23 years old, of 45 West 11th Street in Manhattan, said the group wanted to call attention to United States support of the Government of El Salvador in that country's internal war. Yesterday's demonstration was sponsored by the New York chapter of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, which supports Salvadoran rebels. "We feel there's a real danger of a larger conflict developing in El Salvador and of a new Vietnam War," Mr. Walsh said.

The connections between the strategic role of CISPES headquarters and the relevance of local groups as reproducers of tactics was evident in "Steps To Freedom," a national campaign comprised of eight organizations – including CISPES – that were against U.S. military assistance in the region. On February 5th, 1987, the campaign was launched and had the goal of "making visible the opposition to the war through the use of

creative events and the use of radio and print ads" and "bring organizations together at the national and local level on a Central America grassroots campaign." The campaign placed duplicated ballot boxes on street corners, malls, city halls and other public institutions. Volunteers encouraged people to vote in favor or against the U.S. role in the region. One of the campaign tactics was a blockade against the Pentagon on October 17, 1988. In a letter to its members before the blockade, the coalition, through CISPES, announced: "379 women and men have committed themselves to risk arrest at the Pentagon to publicly oppose the U.S. war being waged in El Salvador and throughout Central America." The coalition sent a package of materials to the local groups, which included information about the blockade and the goals of the campaign.

The strategies

The "centralized-decentralized" approach was at the center of the development of the organization's public relations strategies. Morris explains that in CISPES, the communication strategy would be "in support of " its political goals and "not leading that." After conducting an analysis of CISPES' internal documents and interviews, I have created a table that systematizes CISPES' strategies into five groups (Table 1). Each strategy consisted of many tactics and was activated in different locations, which means that geographic place has a relationship to collective actions that occurred.

The media strategy consists of all the tactics that involved the relationship between CISPES activists and people in the media industry. In this strategy, we can find tactics such as paying for ads on U.S. media, placing op-eds in newspapers, press conferences, media workshops for activists, the "El Salvador Alert," the effort to cultivating relationships with journalists to facilitate friendly coverage, and the

production of radio shows. Claudia, Samantha, Robert, and Jeffrey all explained that the media strategy was mainly designed and coordinated by paid staff, but with the participation of many volunteers. This role of volunteers was essential in the publication of opinion editorials that attempted to frame the situation in El Salvador as a U.S. intervention war. The coalition of Steps to Freedom, in which CISPES was one of the eight organizations, had a direct goal to pay for advertisements in newspapers and radio stations. In the late 1980s, CISPES developed a multi-year campaign called "El Salvador Public Information Campaign," which produced TV announcements that attempted to air on national TV (CISPES, 2018c). The "El Salvador, Public Information Campaign," complemented the organization's effort in lobbying, organizing, and fundraising. In 1986, CISPES hired Ellen Braune who became the organization's Communication Director until 1990. Braune was one of the strategists of the "El Salvador Public Information Campaign," and its primary goal was to reach out mainstream media and book CISPES national representatives in news shows. Before joining CISPES, Braune was a former editor and producer at CBS, NBC and PBS. The location of this strategy was remote and could be initiated from the headquarters in Washington D.C. or from any regional or local committee.

Table 2: CISPES public relations strategies and tactics (1980-1990)

Media Strategy	Street Strategy	Political Strategy	Fundraising Strategy	Tour Strategy
- Ads on U.S. media - Op-eds - Letters to Media - Press conferences - Press Releases - Media Workshops - Creation and distribution of The Alert and Venceremos Magazine -Cultivating relationships with journalists -Production of radio shows	- Protest Salvadoran Consulates - Demonstrations U.S. branches of government	- Alternative Aid - Canvassing - Endorsing congressional proposals - Correspondence to Congress representatives - Correspondence to Salvadoran officials - Alliances - Movie Nights -Vigils - Monitoring Congress	- CISPES Budget preparation - CISPES raises money for earthquakes - Direct Mail/ Phone - Donating CISPES Washington - Door to Door Collect - Fundraising plans - Medical Aid to El Salvador - NEST - Salvadoran parties - Work-A-Day Celebrations - Pledges of Resistance - Selling Books	- FMLN speakers - U.S. musicians - U.S. speakers - Delegations to El Salvador - Benefit concerts
Location: Remote	Location Political Buildings	Location: Congress/ Remote/Universities/ Churches	Location: Street, Remotely, CISPES, community centers, universities	Location: Universities/ El Salvador

The street strategy consists of all the protests that the organization used to visibly repudiate the actions of the U.S. and El Salvador governments in El Salvador. There are numerous examples of these actions such as the Pentagon Blockade in 1988 and the march against the Pentagon. On February 14th, 1986, CISPES' Southwest regional office in Los Angeles, through an internal document, called its members to "to hold vigils/pickets/demonstrations to protest the offensive and to send delegations to the Consulate of El Salvador." In the 1988 Pentagon Blockade, CISPES attempted to simulate "the building of a cemetery of grave markers on the grounds of the Pentagon

bearing the names of those killed on disappeared in El Salvador." The locations of the street strategies were public buildings, but also some private buildings if the company had ties to the U.S. assistance to El Salvador. As Derville (2005) shows, a radical organization such as CISPES used "humiliation" among their public relations strategies (p. 528). These types of actions distinguish more radical organizations from moderate ones.

The political strategy consisted of all the actions CISPES took to influence U.S. policy-making in the federal, state and local levels. The political strategy also included all the efforts to form new CISPES chapters. Unlike the street strategy, the political strategy – more than to merely humiliate the U.S. government – tried to have a direct impact on the work of U.S. politicians. The most relevant tactic was CISPES' correspondence with politicians both in the U.S. and in El Salvador. In March 1986, the CISPES Midwest Office estimated the engagement of its membership in favor of the "Stop the Bombing Campaign "by looking at the numbers of telegrams and letters sent to U.S. and Salvadoran politicians. They calculated that over a few days, their members had sent "over 20 telegrams" to Duarte, "over 20 telegrams" to the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador, "70 letters sent to Congressional Representatives," and made "several phone calls to Congressional offices." On June 6, 1986, CISPES headquarters informed its membership that Salvadoran activists remained in custody of the Salvadoran authorities. "It's imperative to continue pressure on the U.S. Embassy, Duarte and Congressional representative to stop the repression against human rights organizations and release the members captured by the Treasure Police," the press release states. In the same document, CISPES announced that the organizations and individuals from several states

had sent telegrams to politicians. They publicized that 15 telegrams were sent from Massachusetts, two telegrams from Lexington, Kentucky, two from Chicago, four from Iowa City, five telegrams from Santa Cruz, California, eight telegrams from Eugene, Oregon, and 20 telegrams from Seattle. CISPES also reported a phone banking campaign in Tacoma, Washington. Another tactic in their political strategy was CISPES' support of alternative ways to provide material assistance to the people of El Salvador. In March 1986, CISPES Midwest called its members to support the New El Salvador Today (NEST), an organization that supported civilians in war-torn areas throughout El Salvador. CISPES explains the organization's goals: "NEST is a non-profit foundation which supports material aid projects organized by the popularly elected councils, groups in the countryside of El Salvador which replace the militarism of the Duarte government with democracy."

The fundraising strategies were comprised of all the actions aimed at gathering monetary contributions for CISPES' political goals. The most frequent fundraising tactic was through mail/phone contacts. Days after the earthquakes of October, 10th, 1985, CISPES' headquarters invited its members to donate "through independent humanitarian aid channels." They also planned to start phone banks, canvasses and "collections at street corners, churches, and schools." In June 1981, the "El Salvador Alert" announced that the organization "has been growing very quickly" in hopes "to build a strong national movement," but they were "desperately in need of funds." "If we do not receive substantial funding in the next months, we will be unable to continue our work through the summer and launch massive campaigns in the fall," CISPES internal document states. The fundraising goal was to receive $25,000 by "September 1" 1981. Members and

supporters could send their contributions to a P.O Box in Washington D.C.

The tour strategy consisted of journeys that involved a series of stopovers both in the U.S. and in El Salvador in which CISPES members were able to communicate the organization's goals across international regions. In 1984, the CISPES South East office communicated to the headquarters that they were organizing a tour with progressive speakers to cities in Georgia and Florida. Among the speakers was Charles Clements, a medical doctor and human rights advocate who volunteered as medical staff in areas under the control of the FMLN. Another type of tour involved delegations organized by CISPES that visited El Salvador gather first-hand knowledge of the situation there. Delegations were public relations tactics because in the minds of CISPES' organizers, bringing U.S.-born citizens to Central America could have a ripple effect in recruiting new people to the organization and, at the same time, serve as testimonies for CISPES's lobbying efforts. Barbara explains part of the rationale behind the delegations to El Salvador:

> We wanted for people to see first hand what was going, not just hear from us, but having their own experience. (We want them) to use that experience to come back and strengthen the work that they were doing, and give them more credibility, and hopefully more access to another circle of people to help them to know what was going on down there. When they go meet with their congressional representative, they can say, I saw this, I talked to this person who had been in jail and this is what had happened…. Maybe, we could have done more, but I think they were probably one of the most effective things that we did, and even we were able to take Gus Newport, the mayor of Berkeley.

Samantha put the effectiveness of the delegations in religious codes:

> If you put it in religious terms, it's conversion. You know, which means it's a turning of the heart and because you know for Americans -and particularly for middle-class Americans- live in a bubble…. And you go, and it's a very intense experience, you see the reality of the poverty, the shantytowns, the effects of the war, you hear testimony from people, you talk to folks there. It's a consciousness that you suddenly see. I will stand for the integrity of that intense experience

> though. It was intense, and there is a way in which I can look back now and sort of distrust (of people saying they) give you like nothing but the truth. But (in the case of CISPES) it wasn't wholly managed, there were chances to get out and talk to people, and the testimonies were true. I mean bombs were being dropped; people were being shot, that was true. Especially after the peace accords, we used to have meetings with the American Embassy, that was always really fun.

Claudia recalls that CISPES sent at least one delegation to El Salvador every month and to be part of the delegations. She noted that the travelers had to be interviewed by a CISPES staffer before being approved to go. She explained that the delegations were based on the concept of accompaniment, "which was the idea to let the people in the Salvadoran struggle know that they weren't alone." Accompaniment also means "to build witness to what happened, to bring it back to the United States, and then to also offer the small amount of safety that our bodies could offer." Claudia acknowledged that the presence of U.S. citizens in war-torn areas in El Salvador was an asset against police and military brutality: "Sometimes they wouldn't attack a march if they knew people from the United States was in it, sometimes they wouldn't raid a particular office, if they knew people from the United States were in it."

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS OF RQ3

RQ3. What was the role of race, class, and gender in the construction of these discourses?

I argue that similarities among the majority of CISPES' U.S.-born activists (white, college-educated, with strong connections with activists of color) became the principal precedent for activists in joining the organization. In particular, I believe that the most precious asset of CISPES was its whiteness, and what whiteness signifies in U.S. society. With U.S. Congress being 95 percent white (Bialik & Krogstad, 2017), the whiteness of CISPES staffers was fundamental in building strategic relationships with the Washington establishment and, simultaneously, with its white- majority activist base. Bonilla-Silva et al. (2006) and Di Tomaso (2013) confirm that whiteness is an asset that provides individuals access to social capital and job opportunities. Educational level and language skills were also fundamental prerequisites for doing CISPES' strategic work. My examination of the organization's public relations strategies and tactics show that some of those activities required activists to possess a college-level education or be somewhat sophisticated and politically savvy. They had to execute duties such as writing press releases, monitoring the voting records in Congress, planning fundraising activities and pitching stories about the Salvadoran solidarity movement to the U.S. media.

McAdam (1986) and Viterna's (2016) models of activist and insurgency recruitment have influenced this dissertation, especially the ways in which both theorists thread the relations between life-experience, structural factors and identity formation. However, I argue that both models - especially McAdam (1986) - overlook the centrality

of racial identities, and other intersectional identities, in the recruiting of activist organizations, especially the ones with a majority of white members. In the same tenor, public relations theory, with the exception of Mundy (2013, 2016) and Edwards (2013), have avoided acknowledging that the organizations will appear to be insufficient in providing higher-ranked positions to practitioners of color or practitioners who originated from the lowest echelons of our society. In many situations, people of color occupy the lower echelons of our society.

Interviews with CISPES staffers reveal that the participants were aware that the organization was a white-majority space, but at the same time, their narratives show that the "nature" of this white-college educated organization was strategically negotiated between the white leadership and Salvadoran refugees with strong ties to the FMLN and other popular movements in El Salvador. Many of these refugees were undocumented, but had a rich history of political organizing in the Salvadoran left. The life-stories of CISPES participants probe the historical processes that facilitated the emergence of CISPES in the early 1980s. The **mobilizing organizational identities** of these white, educated activists were facilitated by their early memories of witnessing racial injustices, or what I call "the racialization of political life stories".

The role of race and other intersectional identities (e.g. social class, education level and gender) in the recruitment of staffers and volunteers in CISPES is better explained by the **process of intersectional recruiting,** a model that I propose here. Secondly, understanding public relations as an instrument to preserve the organization's collective identity lies at the core of my **ideological identity model of public relations**. Both models are historical in the sense that they follow the life stories of the participants

and their political trajectories from their childhood to their enrollment in CISPES. The uniqueness of my approach is that race represents an entry point to examine the foundations of these organizations. The models I propose here are rooted in their historical contexts and should not be seen as fixed artifacts. However, I argue that racial and economic factors in the U.S. that contributed to the formation of CISPES have not been overcome since the 1990s.

By using a life-story methodology (Taggs, 1985; Rubin & Rubin, 2011), I paid attention to the sequences of events that led CISPES activists to embrace the organization and its causes (McAdam, 1986). The sequence of events is traced back to the activists' childhood memories, their experiences in college and the description of the factors that motivated their participation in CISPES. By examining common themes of collective behavior, rather than anecdotal accounts or personal opinions (Taggs, 1985), I found that the majority of CISPES activists (9 out 12) experienced six life- stages in their involvement with the organization until 1990 (Figure 10). The exceptions to the process were Vincent, Claudia and Laura, who were recruited by CISPES in college or high school (Figures 11 and 12). The three participants who did not report that they were involved in other activist organizations outside campus before joining CISPES are represented in stage 4 of the model. However, the majority of my participants followed what I call the model of the **process of intersectional recruiting**, which results from the dialectical interaction of two underlying forces: 1) the necessity to create a white organization that effectively challenged Reagan's foreign policy and 2) the strong relationships with Salvadorans in the U.S. who became a sources of inspiration, political advice and resources for CISPES' activism.

Process of intersectional recruiting

The stages of the **process of intersectional recruiting** are:

1. The foundations of the radical individual
2. The racialization of political life stories
3. “Despertar de la conciencia” (awakening of consciousness) triggered by an event
4. Rehearsals for radical politics
5. The formation of the white organization
6. Reconfiguration of the white organization: the awakening to gender and race

Figure 10: Process of intersectional recruiting

Figure 11: process of intersectional recruiting of Laura and Claudia

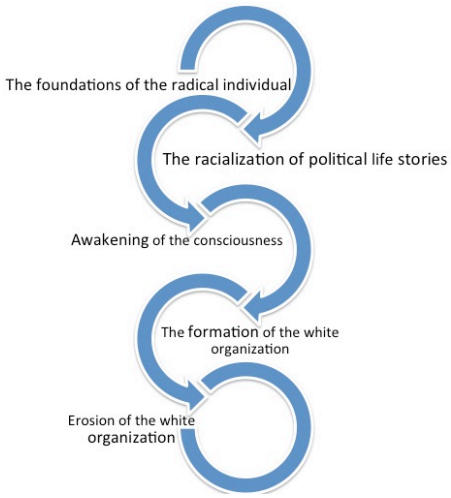
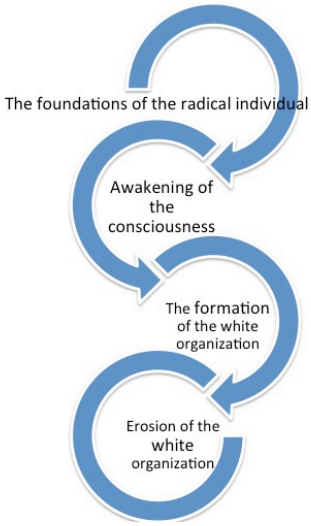


Figure 12: process of intersectional recruiting of Vincent



The foundations of the radical individual

When the participants were questioned about their childhood, they tended to provide explanations related to their parents' occupations and ethnicity, the geographic location of their upbringing and parents' political leanings. During my conversations with U.S.-born activists, the description of their social class varied from wealthy to working-class. However, among activists, there were two underlying themes: 1) the break from tradition and 2) the continuation of radical heritage. The first theme was found with individuals from wealthy and conservative backgrounds who acknowledged their privilege but interpreted their time before attending college as a place where they escaped (Vincent, Robert, Gabriela and Barbara). On the opposite trajectory, participants from somewhat progressive upbringings (Laura, Samantha, Marla, Claudia and Jeffrey) or who grew up in El Salvador (Marco and Alvaro) see their early years as a heritage that they continued later in life through their work in CISPES.

Regarding the theme of breaking from tradition, Vincent, – a white male raised in New York City – who was born in a small town in Pennsylvania, describes his background in a privileged Irish-American family:

> I'd say I was you know, I'm pretty bourgeois. My father was a university professor. My mother had inherited some money and so we were not wealthy, but we were quite comfortable and then she inherited more money so we were kind of wealthy. I was born in 1957 when my dad was teaching at X University, and then he was hired and spent the rest of his career at Y University in Pennsylvania, in this small town in Pennsylvania, which is where I grew up. I think of that as my hometown. So I grew up in a small college town in Pennsylvania, but then when I was 12, I moved to New York and I sort of went back and forth for the rest of my youth between that town and New York, and in many ways that's still how my life is.

Regardless of his class background, Vincent was brought by his mother as a child to anti-war demonstrations in the 1960s. "There was a peace center right in my

neighborhood, you could walk in there and be given something, if they needed flyers handed out, at the time, " Vincent recalls. To escape from his bourgeois background, Vincent began working in "progressive" political campaigns before finishing high school.

Robert -a white man from Connecticut- also came from a similar privileged background. His father was a science university professor who worked in several Ivy League universities. "My father is a geneticist so he was working on the tracing of the roots of corn; he worked with the University of Agriculture of Mexico," he calls to mind. Robert reveals his struggle with his parents' conservatism:

> My parents' politics were pretty conservative and I was conservative too in High School. But I went from that to seeing things in a really completely different way over those four years. Some through class and some through outer class experience, both.
> His tension with his privileged past has led Robert to call himself "a declassee intellectual," a politicized individual detached from his social class origins.

Barbara -a white woman grew up in New Jersey- remembers her working-class household:

> My father when he got back from the war… he never graduated from college… My mother was a professional tap dancer and didn't even finish high school because both of her adopted parents passed away and she had to make a living. So that was their educational background.

Despite this, Barbara broke with her "very conservative family", as her father was upset by her involvement in the protest against the war in Vietnam in the early 1970s. Gabriela - a white woman from Northern California- also had origins in the working class. Gabriela's mother worked as a grocery clerk at a supermarket. However, her parents got divorced in early 1960s. "And so my parents divorced when I was nine and my mom raised my sister and me just by herself with no help from my dad, he was a deadbeat dad, I think he once gave her 100 dollars. But basically she took care of us on very little income, so I think that also affected me, growing up just barely making it," she

remembers. Gabriela's grandparents and parents were Republicans too, however, they were "struggling to try to get ahead in the middle class." For Gabriela, the dream of upward mobility for her parents "was a lot of lies they were swallowing." Gabriela did not buy her parents narrative of the U.S. society.

On the opposite trajectory, Laura – a white woman- feels like the inheritor of a progressive tradition. Laura lived her childhood in the suburbs of Cleveland, Ohio. "My mother studied history and my father dropped out of high school and was in the Navy and started his own business. So we're a middle class family in Cleveland," Laura remembers. Laura's mom was Catholic and taught in "impoverished areas of Cleveland". "I guess part of the social justice teaching of the Catholic Church rubbed off on me," Laura argues. In a similar fashion, Jeffrey- a white man in his 50s- grew up in Salem, Massachusetts "in a middle class family" with a father who was a teacher and in summer a "merchant marine." Jeffrey's father belonged to multiple unions in Massachusetts.

Samantha's father was an Episcopal priest and her mother a Catholic house maker, both, she confesses, "white" "New England Yankees". Samantha-a white women- recalls her childhood in Worcester, Massachusetts:

> We had this urban ministry and we were in a very much of an immigrant, very poor, working class neighborhood in Worcester, Massachusetts when I was young and that was very formative for me. I went to a public school, but when I say immigrant, it was in transition, it was all immigrant, like we were but a long time ago.

Samantha's parents were active in the civil rights movement through their membership to episcopal and catholic churches. Samantha recounts her mother's activism: "my mom was active, I mean she was the wife of an episcopal priest, so she was really active in the Roman Catholic Peace and Justice Group and I just remember her

talking about what was going on in Central America." Marla- a white woman from New Jersey, who has resided a long time in the Pacific Northwest- relates her progressive politics with her upbringing in a family of protestant missionaries. Claudia originates from mixed race home with an Irish-American mother and a Mexican immigrant father. She recalled that both of her parents met in in anti-racist activism in Chicago. Morris originates from a white family in Los Angeles with "mixed" political inclinations, but with "kind of a liberal framework in general."

The two Salvadorans involved in CISPES trace back their origins with the working-class in the cities of Sonsonate and Santa Ana. Alvaro - a Salvadoran man- grew up in Sonsonate expressed that father was a "well-known" journalist who was awarded "journalist of the year in 1971," but his mother was a market vendor. Alvaro's parents met in an electoral campaign in the early 1950s. Both parents supported the conservative official party in El Salvador. "My mother was a political organizer inside the market," explains Alvaro who acknowledged that his father also did a little activism for conservative causes. However, his father, as a journalist, developed strong relationships with "left-wing politicians." Contrary to the U.S.-born activists, Alvaro reclaims the political heritage of his family, but he projects it in a radical way: "I was born in a political activism environment, of knowing the critiques against the government, as well as the position in favor of the government. I got to know people who were military and municipal leaders," he acknowledges. Marco's father was a car mechanic and his mother owned a small grocery store in her house. Marco -a Salvadoran man- was born and raised in Santa Ana, a city located in the Western side of El Salvador. Like Alvaro, Marco

describes himself as a follower of the political history of his family. However, Marco located his family's history of activism in the opposition:

> My family was always in the opposition, my mom's brother was a diputado (legislator) in the family for the Partido Acción Renovadora in 1955-56.Also, there are teachers in my family, in the past some were teachers. They professed the idea of democracy in El Salvador.

As I have shown in the stage of the **foundation of the radical individual**, one group of participants frame themselves as disrupters of their family tradition, while the other, as followers of a radical heritage. This is in line with previous research observing that white activists follow different life paths in joining organizations (Thompson, 2001). However, I can see that Salvadoran activists reflect a vision of how their family's political past influenced their radical views. These finding are not definitive and more interviews are needed. For example, although he was born in a conservative family, Alvaro sees a political continuum, or bridge, between his radical left activism and the more conservative views of his parents. Marco has a similar vision, arguing that the role of one of his relatives in electoral politics is closely related to his revolutionary praxis. In other words, the dilemma that U.S. born activists face between understanding their family background either as a disruption and or as a continuation might not be true for Salvadoran refugees who came to the U.S. in the 1980s. A potential explanation for these two different approaches could be that Latin American people, especially in 1980, had a strong tradition of left-wing politics and many expressions of leftist politics originated in "conservative" institutions such as the Catholic Church and the Christian Democratic Party (PDC in Spanish). For example, Alvaro recalls how his experience as a Catholic catechist in his teenage years represented a step toward radicalization. For Salvadoran leftists, the ranks of the Catholic Church were fertile terrain for recruitment of cadres, and

they adapted their practice and ideology to this long-standing tradition (Alvarenga, 2016). Between the 1960s and 1980s, a progressive reading of Catholicism and the emergence of the Liberation Theology facilitated the overlapping between radical politics and old religious symbols (Chavez, 2014). Thus, the conflation of an early type of mass mobilization and a new revolutionary praxis promoted a framing in which Salvadoran radicals understood their past as a continuation of their parents, regardless of their political leanings.

The racialization of life stories

The second stage of the process of intersectional recruiting shows how CISPES activists understood issues of race connected to their childhood. I call this **racialization of life stories.** This is the mechanism that activists use to explain their collective mobilization through racial themes before attending college. Out of 12 CISPES activist I interviewed, two grew up in El Salvador and ten were born in the U.S.; seven of them (Morris, Laura, Samantha, Marla, Robert, Morris, Claudia) use examples of racial injustice to explain their political awakening. With the exception of Laura, I did not ask directly about their perception of race in their childhood; however, six participants argued that witnessing racism was as an important component in their radicalization. The interviews reveal that, before attending college, U.S. activists born in the U.S. were already connecting the racial injustices in the U.S. to the role of their government globally.

Laura recalls two events that helped her connect domestic racism to U.S. foreign policy. As a child she remembers the house of a black family that was "burned out by KKK sympathizers." In the 1980s, Laura recalls how the death of four Catholic religious

leaders in El Salvador shaped her political identity. "I was a senior in high school and a freshman in college when Archbishop (Oscar) Romero was killed and four U.S. churchwomen were killed, and one of those women was from Cleveland," she explains. Laura refers to Sister Dorotohy Kazel, who worked training catechists in La Libertad, El Salvador, and was killed by Salvadoran death squads in December of 1980. Romero was also assassinated in March 1980. Like Laura, in March of 1980, Samantha was in high school and the killing of Romero was the subject of her mother's activism. By then, her family had moved the center of its activism from the U.S. civil rights movement in the 1960s to the struggle of Central American people. Before attending college, Samantha recalls how her interaction with seminarians marked her awareness of the role of the U.S. in the world: "We also had seminarians come and visit us that we would have from Nicaragua and this would be in like pre-revolution in like 77' or 78' and so I remember just being sort of surrounded by and hearing about what was happening."

Earlier in life, in the early 1970s, Samantha experienced racial tensions in her elementary and high school in Worcester, Massachusetts:

> Most of the families were Irish, French Canadian - Quebecois, and Italian but the neighborhood was very much in transition economically, but also ethnically from that sort of white ethnic groups, immigrant groups, still identifying very much - like they went to their French-speaking church or their Italian church or the Irish church-to Dominican, Puerto Rican, Cambodian, and now the neighborhood is also Chinese and Vietnamese, but it's all Asian and Latino now. So the tension was this transition and the larger context was in the mid 70s the Boston Busing Crisis, so and I remember feeling very much, because of my family, my family totally identified with the black families in the busing crisis and with the newer immigrants and feeling kind as an outsider within that school because the White racism was strong, let's put it that way, but it also in a context of economic dislocation so that's important to know too that a lot of our fathers were losing their jobs. And then we moved to, from there for high school only for my high school, to a small town outside of Worcester which was wealthier, sort of semi-rural, on it's way to being sort of a higher economic status, tech community, eventually, but that was also in transition, so they still had townies, there was still

> a factory, now long gone, now it's a shopping mall. But at the time it was in transition to sort of townie culture to – you know what that means, kind of like local, mostly White, Irish, French Canadian kids to more upper class, upper middle class tech workers of all kinds of backgrounds, that was also happening when I was there. But the school itself was very white.

While Claudia's parents met in an anti-racist demonstration in the 1960s, she also recalls that their activism had moved from focusing on civil rights to the conflicts in Central America. Claudia was nine when Romero and the American churchwomen were killed. She recalls the rationale behind her parent's activism with El Salvador:

> Those (the assassination of Romero and the nuns) were very big deals in my house, even though we weren't Salvadorans or anything, (they were big) because of my parents' activism in the progressive Catholic Church. So those were things that I knew about [since] very very young and I knew that the United States, the role that you [know] United States had.

Claudia recalls doing activism against the U.S. intervention in Central America at thirteen years old. She was fourteen when she was first arrested for civil disobedience. Still in high school, on May 19th, 1985, Claudia protested the commencement speech of Salvadoran President, José Napoleón Duarte, at the University of Notre Dame (Christian, 1985).

While Laura, Samantha and Claudia's memories can be seen as intersections between racial inequality and the role of the U.S. abroad, Marla, Gabriela, Morris and Robert recount other situations in the 1960s and 1970s that helped them build bridges between racism and geopolitics before attending college. Marla believes that the faith of her "parents and grandparents," as Protestant missionaries, instilled in her "a sort of regional, national, and international connection" with religions from other latitudes. In a different tune, Gabriela argues that her political identity was already latent in elementary school:

> I was just really becoming aware of imperialism in its various forms. First in Vietnam, but also in Latin America. I started thinking, you know in school, K-12, very little of this is taught or discussed. I remember a little bit some of my teachers in high school talking about Vietnam and what was going on there like the My Lai Massacre, things like that. But I just remember thinking, "Hey, there's a lot going on here that's not okay." I wouldn't say I had a label for it, like a certain ideology that I was aware of. I just felt like there's injustice happening globally, and the country I live in is very much involved and responsible for a lot of that injustice.

In high school – in the early 1970s – Gabriela witnessed the racism of her neighbors in the agricultural area of north San Francisco. "There were lots and lots of migrant laborers and I worked in the fields picking fruit, so I saw the inequalities and the suffering and the bad treatment of immigrants as I was growing up. And that really upset me a lot," Gabriela remembers. She also felt conflicted when her neighbors called Mexicans "lazy":

> I would be like "wahh [*exhales*]," "what?!" you know, "They're doing all the hard work! And they're getting almost no, you know very little pay, and they've got the whole family out there, the little kids are helping… " and it just struck me as so unjust and upsetting, so I think from early on.

In 1970, before finishing high school, Gabriela went to protest against the Vietnam war in Northern California.

Morris began to link the drafting of his cousin for the Vietnam war with the acknowledgement of the conditions Chicanos were living in Los Angeles. Chicanos were the only non-white group in Morris' high school.

> I was on the track and cross country club and you know I had friends there who I started to think about what life was like for them versus what life was like for me as a White person, so you know I started thinking about these issues very early on and in towards the latter part of my high school years, [I] participated in anti-war activities.

Robert's connection with Latin America occurred in 1961 when he was 12 years old. "I spent a whole year living in Mexico City, my dad worked in Chapingo and I learned

Spanish in Mexico, so I speak Spanish. I went to the American School in Mexico City and it was a half day in Spanish in terms of Spanish instruction," he recognizes. Later in life, that experience in Mexico contributed to Robert's participation in diverse activist organizations that ranged from solidarity with the people of Chile to supporting Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers in the Pacific Northwest.

In the case of Jeffrey and Vincent, I was not able to discern, through the examination of their interviews, how, before attending college, they connected themes related to racism with the global role of the U.S. Like Morris, Barbara acknowledges that the Vietnam War was a catalyst for her political consciousness in the early 1970s. Vincent also traces his radicalization back to the participation of his mother in demonstrations in the late 1960s in New York City. As a teenager, he worked "on a presidential campaign, for the democratic nomination for a very progressive candidate."

As I have shown through the life-stories of 7 out of the 10 U.S.-born activists, they were prone to reflecting on racial matters before attending college, in part due to the overarching frame created by the Third World Left and dramatic events in which members of the left were involved. It is clear that the Third World Left had an influence in the U.S. between the 1960s and 1980s providing a more accessible frame to activists (Berger, 2006; Pulido, 2006). Thompson (2001) shows that white anti-racists were influenced by international events. However, my argument here is not that race and international perspectives are inherently connected, but that the understanding of race and geopolitics are strongly mediated and connected by ideology. I also argue that knowledge about geopolitics shape activists' understandings about domestic race relations.

The awakening of consciousness

The third stage of the process of intersectional recruiting is, what I call, the awakening of consciousness or, in Spanish, "el despertar de la conciencia." In this case, the awakening of consciousness means gaining a political awareness about how the U.S. government affects the quest for social justice in Latin America, as well as in U.S. soil. This stage is provoked by a series of historical events that led the majority of U.S.-born activists – by then college students – to realize the connections between the domestic role of the U.S. government and the conflicts in Latin America. I recognize two different ways that college activism influenced the life of CISPES activists: 1) For nine out of the 12 activists (Barbara, Robert, Samantha, Marla, Vincent, Jeffrey, Marco, Alvaro and Morris), college activism was a time of experimentation before joining other radical groups outside campus and 2) college as the means to join CISPES directly (Laura, Vincent and Claudia).

College activism as experimentation

In the early 1970s, Barbara was a college student in a Midwestern university. The Kent State University shootings on May 4th of 1980, represented a turning point in her life. "We were walking the streets and some of my friends were saying, 'no we shouldn't be following all of these people, we are just being sheep.' We are not, we are standing up for what's right," Barbara recalls. Like Barbara, Robert, Samantha, Marla, Vincent, Jeffrey and Morris, they recall college as the stage in which their commitment strengthened. The exception to this case was Laura, who was recruited by CISPES in college, and Marco and Alvaro, who attended college in El Salvador prior their arriving to the U.S. as undocumented immigrants.

For Marla, the turning point in her activism occurred when some of her friends were arrested as freedom riders. The freedom riders were activists who challenged segregation in Southern states by riding interstate buses in mixed-race groups. Marla recalls:

> Their landing in jail was very impressive. I wasn't there, I was in the college health clinic with all freshman with measles and pneumonia which gave me a lot of time to think and the thought process was that my friends are in jail for something I say I also believe, values I also hold.

Years later, Robert remembers that an awakening of consciousness happened on April 18th, 1969, when the Afro-American Society took over Cornell University's student union building for 36 hours. Robert believes that in a two-year span, his identity entered into a leftward trajectory:

> The years at Cornell were very radicalizing for me because it was the years of the Vietnam War and in addition to the Civil Rights Movement. And so many things happened in the 60s that were really crazy and led me to really change what I thought about things quite a lot. So by the end of 71', I was really quite alienated with the rest of society as it was.

As a freshman at a California university in 1971, Gabriela remembers the movement in solidarity with Chile as the moment in which her commitment with the struggles of Latin Americans grew deeper. "There was great concern among the peace community in the United States that there would be an intervention to overthrow Salvador Allende and we were working against that. And then of course he was overthrown," Gabriela states. For Morris, the war in Vietnam triggered his activism. As an undergraduate in California, Morris started chapters for political organizations and got involved in progressive politics. Morris graduated from college in the 1970s.

In 1983, Samantha recalls the bombing of rural villages in El Salvador by the Salvadoran air forces and the funding of the Contras by the U.S. as the most important

episodes in her college activism. "We used to go out and do little demonstrations at the post office cause' it was the only installation of the federal government, we used to march around with signs," she recollects. Jeffrey also remembers participating as a college student in community campaigns in Massachusetts.

Regarding the role of Salvadorans in CISPES' orbit, college was also a route for radicalization and joining the revolutionary forces. As a student of engineering, and after participating in activism in high school, Alvaro joined a strike in a textile mill, and he remembers:

> I wanted to participate in a student organization and somebody told me that there was a strike (…) I showed up and told the workers that I wanted to help them and they interrogated me about the reason I wanted to join the strike. They were afraid of being infiltrated by snitches. I informed them I was a student of engineering, they asked if I can draw letters and I responded that I have drawn since I was a kid. They want me to draw signs and banners. I spend all that night drinking coffee and listening to revolutionary songs.

In the mid 1970s, Alvaro's work as student activist took him from being a new member of the organization Universitarios Revolucionarios 19 de Julio (Revolutionary Students 19th of July) to be a leader of a revolutionary organization with ties to the insurgency of the Fuerzas Populares de Liberación (Popular Forces of Liberation).

Marco was a student leader at the University of El Salvador. His connections with the student organization came from his roots in Santa Ana. During his college years, Marco occupied the position of president of the student government and belonged to the same organizations that Alvaro did. Alvaro and Marco had to leave college and El Salvador due to the level of repression from the Salvadoran army against student activists and others. In 1979, Marco was kidnapped by paramilitary at the entrance of the university and decided to leave El Salvador. Months later, Alvaro went into hiding after

the death-squads showed up at his house. “I got only three options: staying in El Salvador and die, becoming a “guerrillero,” or leave the country altogether,” he recalls. Alvaro left and came to the U.S.

College as the mean to join CISPES

For Laura, a movie turned her life inside out during her freshman year in an Ohio college:

> I was 18…we went to see it and it was called “El Salvador Revolution or Death” and it was made by Dutch journalists and they were killed, some were killed while making the film. They filmed everything, they filmed Romero and they filmed his funeral. They also filmed the people training who joined the FMLN, they filmed national guardsmen lining up, student’s dead bodies. It was very graphic and so it was kind of shocking and I was appalled that it was the U.S. government, my government, funding that war which I think we were on the wrong side against the people so it was a grave human rights violation. After I saw that film, some Puerto Ricans told me about a meeting that was being called by the National Lawyers to form a chapter. It was to form a solidarity committee and about a month or two later, we became a chapter of CISPES.

After that experience, Laura climbed the organizational ladder from being a founder of the CISPES chapter in an Ohio university to a national leader at CISPES headquarters in Washington. D.C. There was no intermediate step. In 1983, Vincent did something similar after joining a CISPES chapter in a university in New York. In May 1983, Vincent was hired to coordinate a door-to-door national campaign at CISPES’ national office: The National Neighborhood Protest. Vincent explains how in that campaign, CISPES deliberately tried to equate the war in Vietnam with the Salvadoran conflict by using similar symbols.

> The goal of the campaign was to put up billboards around the country and the billboards had a great image of the helicopter, we all know that helicopters suggest counter insurgency, right? Vietnam, a huge helicopter, this image wasn't from Vietnam, but it looked like Vietnam, exactly, and above it said, “no Vietnam

> War in Central America". And we put up 70 billboards around the country and raised the money for the billboards by going door to door.

Vincent stayed in CISPES for few years more in different positions and in different locations.

Claudia went almost directly from high school to a position in CISPES in Chicago. Later, she moved to California as the Los Angeles CISPES chapter director. In this case, radicalization happened at home and in the demonstration against U.S. interventions in the early and mid 1980s.

The process of recruiting reveals the role of college as a major catalyst in the awakening of the political consciousness of CISPES activists. However, the majority of the activists had a stage between college and joining CISPES in which they acquired organizational skills, tactical repertoires, and a collective identity aligned with the Third World Left. In the fourth stage, rehearsals for radical politics, the majority of CISPES activists practiced the skills they gained in college or in other political settings before joining CISPES.

Rehearsals for radical politics

Rehearsal for radical politics is the stage in which CISPES activists participate in an array of other radical causes before formally joining the organization. This moment is different from stage three because it occurs outside of college campuses. Of the twelve participants, nine of them reported participating in other activist organizations before joining CISPES. The three exceptions (Claudia, Laura and Vincent) reveal that they were recruited on campuses by CISPES and their adult activism in 1980s and the early 1990 was entirely dedicated to CISPES. The activism of this period is clearly influenced by the political upheaval of late 1960s. McCarthy and Zald (1973) argue that structural factors

caused the political effervescence of the late 1960s. They claim that three factors explain the emergence of a social movement industry:

> Three related propositions are advanced: (1) the growth of mass higher education creates a large pool of students whose discretionary time can be allocated to social movement activities; (2) as the relative size of the social service, administrative and academic professions increases, more and more professionals can arrange their time schedules to allow participation in social movement-related activities; (3) a relative increase in discretion over work-time allocation permits the emergence of transitory teams to engage in socio-political activities (p. 10)

McCarthy and Zald (1973) believe that these structural changes transformed the realm of activism into a professional field. "Movement leaders in this matrix become social movement entrepreneurs. Their movements' impacts results from their skill at manipulating images of relevance and support through the communications media," they argue. Following McCarthy and Zald's explanation (1973), I believe the ebullience of social activism in that period facilitated the participants' combined activism in favor of radical movements in the Third World with struggle for racial equality in the U.S. This allowed them to create networks with a diverse array of activists.

Marla moved to the Pacific Northwest in 1966. After arriving there, she participated in the Vietnam Day Committee, a coalition of diverse organizations that call for the end of the U.S. military intervention in Vietnam. From 1969 to the mid 1970s, Marla focused on the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, an organization that attempts to bring together women from different political and ideological traditions in favor of permanent peace. Marla recalls how she moved her interest for a new project in line with the values of Martin Luther King:

> And then starting in late 1974, I worked for CAC, which is now the Community Alliance for the County, but it was an initiative that was clearly concerned about Vietnam and it was a national organization. Martin Luther King was involved in it; actually, he was the chair of the organization at the time of his death.

In the fall of 1972, after leaving Cornell, Robert moved to small city on the west coast. There he volunteered for Cesar Chavez' United Farm Workers of America. "My wife actually did work for the union in Deleno in 1971. I had some connection. For example when Cesar Chavez came to the city in '74, I was his bodyguard and my wife was his assistant," he recalls. In 1976, Robert also funded a committee in favor of the mobilization for a democratic Chile and the anti-apartheid effort for South Africa. His job as a pressman made him responsible for designing and printing pamphlets, fliers and invitations for various causes ranging from the anti-intervention movement to the women-run national food whole sellers movement. Robert belonged to a co-op of printers. In 1977, he published a pamphlet for the Committee for a Free Chile. In the document, the Chilean dictatorship Augusto Pinochet appeared with a Nazi cap. The leaflet informs that "President Carter, worldwide advocate of human rights, HONORS GENERAL PINOCHET by an invitation to Washington for the ceremony of the signing of the Panama Canal Treaty Today, September 7". The pamphlet implored U.S. citizens to "speak out against Carter's support of the FASCIST regime of Pinochet."

Like Robert, Barbara embraces the cause of Chile. After she moved from the Midwest in the mid 1970s, she hosted Chilean refugees in her group house. She also worked in the alternative food system. However, she vividly recalls how a coalition of activist organizations coalesced against the demolition of the International Hotel, a low-income residential hotel where, she says, "elderly Asian people lived":

> The Asian community there basically called for solidarity. And we organized as security teams, because we had also done anti-war protesting and the different organizations and work projects would have done security teams to deal with the events we had during the Vietnam War, before that was over. There would be mobilizations around the hotel down in Chinatown, I mean we would literally be

> circling around the block. Thousands of people would come out on the weekends to protest and to be visible, with the understanding that one day they were going to try and knock it down and we were willing to put our bodies between the knocking ball and the hotel. (…) It was pretty well known, and then one night, we got a phone call like at 1:00 in the morning saying it was happening. Everybody got down and we circled the hotel and obviously, they had more equipment than we did, and we pretty much got the shit beaten out of us. The worst people who got it were the ones upstairs upside, and then those of us in front, and by early morning, they had gotten control of it.

Gabriela went off to Mexico City to conduct research for her senior thesis in the mid- 1970s. In Mexico, she met political exiles from South America and Central America. "I learned a lot about the history of European and US imperialism in Latin America and people's struggles with that, and the efforts to bring about democratic change, and again, how countries like the United States would try to thwart those efforts, even when we supposedly were a model for democracy," Gabriela recalls.

In late 1977, the possibility of a revolution in Nicaragua began to emerge in radical circles. Between 1977 and 1978, while living in a predominantly Latino neighborhood in the Bay Area, Morris got involved in activism in favor of the Nicaraguan revolution. "I remember my door being knocked on and Nicaraguans sort of petitioning and raising money for the struggle in Nicaragua," he remembers. Also, Morris belonged to the Alliance for Responsible Employment and Admissions Policies (AREAP) that advocated for Affirmative Action in California.

In 1986, as a senior in college, Samantha went to Washington for an internship in a left-wing think tank:

> I actually didn't do the research on El Salvador, I was focused on Chile and this was what, 13 years after the coup, and Jamaica. But the whole purpose was to write what was happening in Latin America, so I was surrounded by people who were writing about the military operations in El Salvador, and obviously, the Contra war.

Like U.S.-born activists, Salvadoran participants also interacted with other

organizations before establishing closer ties with CISPES. After being persecuted by the Salvadoran army, Marco and Alvaro arrived in Los Angeles as undocumented immigrants in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Marco arrived before Alvaro, and in California, he joined a solidarity movement in favor of the Salvadoran revolution, which was comprised of Salvadoran and Latin American immigrants. Marco and Alvaro called the organization as simply the *comité*- committee in Spanish. Eventually, Marco became the national coordinator. Marco remembers how organizations in support of Salvadoran refugees created links with radical movements back in his native country. "Early 1980, the four committees decided on the sympathy for the mass organizations of El Salvador. And mine was an organization that sympathized with BPR. So we found an organization that was trying to be familiar with members of the BPR," he recalls. BPR stands for Bloque Popular Revolutionary (Popular Revolutionary Block), a multi-sectorial organization with ties to the FPL – one of the five guerrilla organizations that formed eventually the FMLN. Marco's organization participated in demonstrations against human rights abuses in El Salvador and created their own newsletters and propaganda in Spanish. For propaganda purposes, Marcos' committee created a sophisticated logistic on the West Coast.

> We even had at one point people in Seattle, we usually gave them a printer for them to print their own newsletter because we basically organized them in a way that you can produce your own activities and publicize them, so they would ask us because we could buy them in Los Angeles at a cheaper price.

Unlike CISPES, Marco says that the audience of their organization was Salvadoran refugees and not U.S.-born activists:

> We started with about 100 people that were well organized, that were members of different committees by neighborhood. We started expanding and expanding and we started to have many activities to collect money, people sold pupusas, tamales,

> horchata, quesadillas. My mother used to make quesadillas also, my brother who was a cashier at the bank, he started to go out and sell this product so we could get money to buy printers and paper and all of that. And also of course, to help refugees and people who didn't know. You know, we help each other.

Alvaro met Marco in Los Angeles during the exhibition of the movie "Revolutionary or Death," the same movie that CISPES used to recruit Laura in Ohio in 1981. In the meeting of the *comité*, Salvadorans, many undocumented and with limited proficiency in English, sang revolutionary songs and organized social activities. "By 1981, we stopped being just a few and we became hundreds of Salvadorans, 300 people, that met each Sunday – in the same way Catholics go to mass – in a basement at the People's College Law in Los Angeles," Alvaro states.

Alvaro recalls that the organization of *comités* was inspired by the example of the Nicaraguan refugees in Los Angeles who met "at the corners of the MacArthur Park" between 1978-1979. Those meetings at MacArthur Park, Alvaro argues, facilitated the interactions between Salvadorans, Nicaraguans and California Chicanos:

> The Nicaraguans protested against (Anastasio) Somoza and supported the Frente Sandinista (he refers to the Sandinista National Liberation Front) and some Salvadorans supported the Nicaraguans. Little by little, Salvadorans started to get to know each other and believed they could do something similar and show support for the Salvadoran revolutionaries. Later, Chicano college professors supported the Salvadorans.

Alvaro believes that symbolism helped create the connections between Salvadoran refugees and Chicanos intellectuals. "You have to remember that Chicano ideology, created in the 1960s, had our lady of Guadalupe and (Ernesto) Che Guevara as icons," he recalls. Alvaro also remembers how a Chicana law student, Angela Sanbrano, offered the "comité" a place to meet at the People's College of Law. According to CISPES' website, Sanbrano "was the bridge that brought the Salvadorans and the gringos together and kept

us all motivated." (CISPES, 2018d).

The stage of rehearsals for radical politics shows that before joining CISPES as full-time staffers, U.S.-born and Salvadoran participants had the opportunity to interact with diverse networks of activists that advocated for various causes. That experience trained them in organizing skills such as legislative analysis, public relations tactics, and coalition building. But also, the involvement strengthened their goal to create an organization with global goals that acted domestically. Prior to joining CISPES, the participants operated in spaces where racial equality and anti-imperialistic goals connected. For example, Barbara worked on issues of racial justice such as the International Hotel and, simultaneously, supported Chilean refugees. Robert protested against the Apartheid in South Africa and mobilized against the Chilean military dictatorship. Morris joined a door-knocking campaign in favor of the Nicaraguan Revolution and defended Affirmative Action in California through AREAP. In the case of Marla, she was a peace activist, especially against the war in Vietnam, but founded an organization against the U.S. intervention in Central America. Finally, Marco and Alvaro joined an organization for Salvadorans that was inspired by Nicaraguans, but was materially supported by Chicano Californians in the early 1980s. The most important product from this rehearsal that eventually shaped CISPES was the strengthening of ties between U.S.-born participants – a majority white, college-educated group– and Salvadoran refugees who possessed strong organizing cultures and a clear revolutionary ideology. As we will see in the next stage, CISPES functioned as a majority white organization, but received strong guidance from Salvadoran radicals. Some participants argue that the majority of members were female. In the words of some participants, the

fact that CISPES was a white organization made its strategic goals clear.

The formation of a white organization

The creation of the white organization had two parts: the co-creation of a collective identity, and the formation of the white organization. The first phase takes place between 1979 and July 1980, the year when American activists initiated the effort to form a national organization (Van Gosse, 1988). The second phase occurred between July 1980 and early 1990, when women and people of color started to reclaim a discussion about gender and race relations within CISPES.

Early co-creation of collective identity

This section examines the interactions between U.S.-born activists and Salvadoran radicals prior the creation of CISPES (1979) and in the year of its inception (1980). With the term co-creation, I mean that the collective identity of CISPES was a product of the relationships between U.S. and Salvadoran radicals. These forces helped define CISPES' purpose, ideology and organizational strategy. Co-creational dynamics between Salvadorans and American radicals accompanied the organization throughout the 1980s and were both sources of peace and conflict inside CISPES.

Since 1975, in the U.S. there were a series of efforts to support Salvadoran revolutionaries, which back then, were split in between several organizations such as FPL, the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP in Spanish) and the Salvadoran Communist Party (PCS in Spanish) (Donaghy, 1990). However, by 1979, some of the strongest organizations dedicated to support the Salvadoran revolutionaries were the Frente de Solidaridad Popular Salvadoreño (Salvadoran Popular Solidarity Front) in Los Angeles and the Comité de Apoyo a la Lucha Popular Salvadoreña Farabundo Martí (Committee

of Support of the Salvadoran Popular Struggle, Farabundo Marti) (Van Gosse, 1988). On the West Coast, Barbara and Marco argue that their relations with Salvadoran radicals were through the BPR, an organization with ties to the FPL. Barbara recalls that first time she met Salvadorans with connections with the BPR was in San Francisco:

> It was just the way the organizing was done and then listening to them talk about what was going on and I think the thing that I've always, and I continue to admire about the Salvadoran revolutionary process is that it's from the bottom up, its community-based organizing, you know the CRM, that was the Coordinadora Revolucionaria de Masas, was to me, that's what drew me in because that's the level of work that I like. You know, like right there on the ground. And it was all these different sectors coming together, and from there the political… those who participated in the struggle… and for that the political revolutionary class continued. And I don't want to be a leader, I don't want to be out in front, I want to be like out on the streets with the masses.

Morris remembers that he encountered Salvadoran radicals through his work advocating for Affirmative Action in San Francisco. "We were very involved in supporting Affirmative Action and we just had activities on campus. I invited someone from Casa El Salvador, to come and speak about El Salvador and I was really moved by everything that he said," he evokes.

The formation of the white organization

In July 1980, after meeting with members of a political wing of the Salvadoran insurgency the Frente Democrático Revolucionario (Democratic Revolutionary Front in Spanish with acronyms of FDR), a group of U.S. activists agreed to initiate a national solidarity effort that would eventually hold two conferences: one in Los Angeles and a second one in Washington D.C. Close to seven-hundred people were involved in these two conferences, from religious representatives to unaffiliated leftists (Van Gosse, 1988). In October 1980, CISPES was officially founded after the Washington D.C. conference (CISPES, 2018). The concept of CISPES as a white organization means two things: 1)

the fact that CISPES was formed and constituted by a majority of white activists, and 2) CISPES was a white organization because it used white racial privilege in conjunction with the higher education of its members as assets to influence public opinion and policymaking.

In the early 1980s, Morris recalled his interest in joining a "comité". However, a Salvadoran activist told him to wait. "The Salvadorans encouraged me to actually, instead of working with them, because they were trying to organize the Salvadoran community primarily, they said, why don't you go work with CISPES, that's where Northern American solidarity work is being done," he remembers. Smith (2010) assures that the Central American Solidarity Movement was over 90% white and college-educated. During my examination of internal documents and conversations with people who have access to CISPES archives, I did not come across information about the demographic makeup of CISPES. However, through the interviews with the participants – whether they were whites, Latinos or Salvadoran-born – all of them agree that the organization had a majority of white activists. Barbara acknowledges that "definitely" CISPES was a "white organization." Vincent asserts that "there were a few Latinos and very, very few African Americans," but the class background from the white population was more diverse. Laura believes that the organization "was definitely white middle class, but I think people that were working on bringing diversity and undoing oppressive behaviors." Alvaro and Claudia calculate that over 80% of CISPES activists were white. Alvaro's estimation is that it "was between 85-95% Anglo Saxons." Claudia takes a step further and argues that the majority of members were female. She bases the interpretation on her experience as a staffer in the CISPES regional office in Chicago and as a leader in

CISPES Los Angeles. Roberto does not concur with Claudia: “It was more mixed, I think, but there were a lot of women involved. I don't recall CISPES being overwhelmingly women here. I think it was mixed.” Robert worked in a chapter in the Pacific Northwest.

Regardless of the composition of the entire CISPES membership, the 12 participants had a similar educational background during the time that they worked with CISPES: all of them had attended college. From the 12 participants, 8 worked as staffers in CISPES, two were volunteers (Robert and Marla) and one was a leader in the Salvadoran refugee movement who coordinated activities with CISPES (Marco). I interviewed 10 U.S.-born participants; nine identified themselves as white and one as a Latina (Claudia). I understand my sample is not representative of the universe of the organization, but this research seems to confirm Smith’s (2010) findings. Smith (2010) found that the vast majority of the members of the Central American Solidarity movement in the U.S. in the 1980s were white with a college education. Although there is no quantitative proof of the organization’s demography, all the participants expressed a belief that CISPES was a white organization.

Since its founding, CISPES’ ideology coalesced with its two strategic goals: to stop the U.S. intervention in El Salvador and to support grassroots revolutionary movement in El Salvador. “It was about intervention but also about progressive movements. I mean, the revolution in Nicaragua was empowering to a lot of people here. We saw it as a really hopeful thing. So people thought that maybe that could happen in other places too,” Robert recalls. Barbara adds to the definition of being critical with the “U.S. role” in the region. Morris assures that to achieve those two goals, CISPES would

"do things one way tactically, or you know that you have a strategy, you have a goal." In Claudia's opinion CISPES' ideology attempted to attract as many activists as possible:

> Personally, I wanted the FMLN to win the war, and I wanted them to develop the kind of country that they wanted, you know, I wanted that. I wanted El Salvador to do with its country what it would do without U.S. interference. I wanted that! And I think the creation of alternatives and southern strategies and all that kinds of things, I think that many people believed that. But other folks who were just liberal democrats who just didn't want their tax dollars go to – and we could stand side by side, because in the end I wasn't fighting for socialism and they weren't fighting for democracy, we were fighting – you know that's why, the two goals: support, you know, the FMLN and the civilian struggle in El Salvador, and cut off the aid.

The interviews with CISPES activists reveal that CISPES' ideology was deliberatively crafted around its organizational purposes to prevent being framed as too ideological by the Reagan administration, while at the same time, attract as many recruits as possible. These recruits originated from diverse ideological backgrounds and ideological traditions.

Rationales for whiteness

In questioning my participants about the rationale behind the whiteness of the organization, I differentiate two themes: whiteness as strategic tool, and whiteness as an unconscious force. In the first theme, the participants provide strategic reasons for why CISPES became a white space. In the second one, I observed that some of the U.S.-born activists assure that they were not aware of the influence of race in the work of the organization. This, I call unconscious rationale. Frankenberg (1993) argues that whiteness is a structural location that provides white people with a "standpoint" to look at themselves and at the same time, cultural practices that are "unmarked and unnamed" (p.1). In this case, I want to look at these two dimensions of whiteness and its role in CISPES organizing and communication. In CISPES, the strategic reasons were more

frequently mentioned that the unmarked ones.

Whiteness as a strategic tool

The sub-themes that define whiteness as a strategic tool for CISPES can be divided into three: 1) whiteness as a negotiated asset, 2) U.S. citizenship as a responsibility, and 3) whiteness as the only resource available.

Whiteness as a negotiated asset

In the eyes of Alvaro and Marco – the Salvadoran activists who arrived to the U.S. as refugees in the early 1980s – *whiteness in CISPES represented the privilege that U.S. citizens had to influence U.S. policy-making in favor of the revolutionaries in El Salvador*. Salvadoran radicals, including the FMLN, encouraged the formation of an organization exclusively for U.S. citizens, which in the 1980s meant it was a predominantly white organization. Alvaro gives a candid explanation about this:

> Remember that the circles of power respond to its constituency, but it is not the same as me, as a U.S. citizen or American citizen – whatever you want to call it – with my appearance as Latino, my capacity of influence is limited if you compare it with somebody who is blond, blue eyed and with white skin. The system is like this. You got me? The U.S. Anglo Saxons are very humane and sophisticated in the analysis about the wars that their government begins. Therefore, they tend to get involved in those causes. Please don't lose perspective that in anti-nuclear movements, the majority were whites, the same with anti-apartheid movements.

Marco agrees with Alvaro that whiteness was an asset for the Salvadoran cause. "They were more resourceful and they knew it was possible (to influence U.S. foreign policy).We had people that had already been in solidarity with Chile, with Nicaragua, and with Vietnam. They knew better than us, we didn't know these things," Marco reflects, who also added that he believed Americans liked "our commitment."

Marco also recognizes that the creation of CISPES was a deliberate decision to funnel the organizing capacities of U.S.-born activists. Salvadoran radicals felt

unprepared to organize American activists on American soil:

> In practice, we realized that they were more effective in organizing themselves but we were too small, we couldn't grow at the pace they did, if we were trying to have people. And also, we discussed among us and recognized that we could not look like we were conspiring against this country because we were not, so we wanted them to talk to other of their fellow citizens. We thought that it was more legitimate that Americans can talk to Americans. And also we learned a lot because we came with the same rhetoric that organizations had in El Salvador, so at times, we were not careful enough to convince anybody, to persuade anybody to help us. So they were more, and they also chose the speakers among us. Some of us were more tactful than others and also some of us started to learn to speak in English.

Alvaro and Marco argue that Salvadoran radicals, like themselves, faced two structural constraints in their organizing efforts against the U.S. government: being undocumented and a lack of fluency in the English language. "For some Anglo Saxons, it was harder to communicate, understand or believe in a Salvadoran who does not speak English and had a different skin color, hair type," Alvaro remembers. Marco reveals that the majority of people in the *comité* were undocumented with a few people "with (U.S.) citizenship."

Furthermore, Alvaro also acknowledged that Salvadoran radicals were aware that whites were more inclined to participate in solidarity movements than other racial groups.

> They (whites) had the appropriate spaces and conditions to get involved in these causes. Meanwhile, African Americans are struggling against racism and alleviating poverty. There are social limitations. Therefore, we always need to put in context the reasons of the predisposition of Anglo Saxons to participate in humanitarian mobilizations.

Morris and Barbara – both white and college-educated– agreed that they established a non-authoritarian relationship with the Salvadorans. Barbara says, "they (Salvadorans) told us what was going on down there… it wasn't a bunch of North Americans or Americans deciding to work with CISPES, it was based on the needs of the

Salvadoran people." She continues by stressing that Americans were clear about the "the role of our government" and "knew it was wrong". In her opinion, what made CISPES strong was the organization's relationship with Salvadorans. Between 1979 and 1980, Morris asked a Salvadoran about joining his organization but they responded, "there's this group that might be forming called CISPES."

Gabriela recalls that she was recruited in Los Angeles because her CISPES recruiter – who was a Salvadoran man – saw her as "middle class, white, educated". "We had some free time, we had some resources, discretionary income, not a lot, though as students. I mean students in general don't have a lot, but middle-class students are more likely than working class students," she evokes. Samantha gives an example of how her origins influenced her effectiveness as an activist: "New England has some culture really, and it was good to have someone who understood New Englanders, I mean these little rural towns with their Central American groups, they needed someone who could talk their language, it's a cultural thing." Laura argues that she was aware that the majority of CISPES was "white and middle class," but they worked hard to "bring in diversity." On September 20th, 1985, the CISPES Midwest regional office reminded the entire collective in its area (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin) that in all of its hiring will follow affirmative action guidelines "approved at the CISPES National Convention" of 1985. They referred to the national convention that took place on August 25th, 1985 (CISPES, 2018b).

In the same document, CISPES reminds them that the organization's effort should encompass three factors: "the needs of the Salvadoran people, the U.S. climate, and the capacity and interests of member committees." Focusing on "the need of the Salvadoran

people" differentiated CISPES from other organizations. For Samantha, CISPES' activists always felt a strong connection with Salvadoran radicals, especially with members of the FMLN. "I certainly felt like the best organizers I've known were Salvadorans and that I was organized, in the sense, by and with Salvadorans so I wouldn't discount any of the organizing they did to pull us in and make us very committed for the long haul," she explains. Vincent argues that CISPES' centering Salvadorans and the Salvadoran struggle meant that the organization was a "North American Front" of the Salvadoran "democratic struggle."

CISPES operationalized the Salvadoran people through their contacts with Salvadoran radicals and members of the FMLN-FDR. Marla remembers the instrument that crystalized the common binding with Salvadorans were the personal meetings with FMLN representatives. Almost breaking into tears, she recalls the profound emotions that meeting Salvadoran radicals provoked in the 1980s:

> Their visits were absolutely, absolutely, very, very important to making us feel that way, right. That we were part of something and that everything that we were doing – now remember, because we *weren't* Salvadoran and we weren't being – it wasn't our family members that were being picked up in the middle of the night, right. We weren't the one's being grabbed off the bus, but a connection to the Salvadorans in many ways in what kept that so, so… I mean we gave up everything, you know. In those years I worked 12-14 hours a day, you know. And you know, CISPES didn't pay you any money. It barely paid you enough to pay the bills, barely, but we were – this was a *labor of love.* And it was a love and a belief and a *connection.* I cry, I cry thinking about it, you know. And not just the FMLN representative in the United States, but the tours that we would do with people in the popular movement and the connections and the time that we spent together and listening was … and it was the way because we *couldn't* bring everybody to El Salvador to see, right.

Marco stresses that U.S.-born activists were truly "compañeros" (comrades). The word compañero is widely used in the Latin American left to refer to members of the same political organization or people with the same convictions for radical change.

Marco reminds us of this emotional bond that formed between Salvadorans and Americans:

> We loved them, we were very appreciative of them and they were very appreciative of us. Of course, we had our own personalities and our own chemistry but basically they really fought for us and helped us in a very genuine way, I would say. That is why I say that we came to this country and we entered from the front door to this country because the American people, and when I say American people I'm not limiting it to whites, but also to blacks.

The speeches of Salvadoran radicals were fundamental in increasing the "esprit de corps" in CISPES and also connected people in El Salvador to those in the United States. The organization used the voice of Salvadorans in two powerful public relations products: speeches in CISPES' internal activities, and testimonies for people in the Congress and in the media. Two examples of the first product are the ways in which CISPES highlighted the participation of teach-ins and conferences. In April 1981, CISPES organized a teach-in in Wisconsin that included the speech of a representative of the FMLN-FDR. The same can be read in the program of the 1985 CISPES Midwest Conference. At the conference, activists had the option to attend a lecture by a FMLN-FDR representative or a workshop on internal organization and street work.

Alvaro assures the deep ties between CISPES and Salvadoran radicals were a win-win situation for both sides:

> There was a close and permanent communication between the FMLN's Political Commission of International Relations in order to exchange analysis (and CISPES). The FMLN was interested in learning how to deal with the U.S. congress, which was each legislator, each governor, in order to adjust their policy of managing (U.S) intervention. From the other side, CISPES wanted to know how the revolutionary movement was advancing. Therefore, there was exchange of information and analysis that resulted in mutual

Another avenue of cooperation between Salvadoran and U.S.-born radicals was through the testimonies. CISPES contacted Salvadoran activists such as Marco or Alvaro

in order to find people who were ready to provide their life-stories to strategic audiences such as Congress people and the media. Marco recalls that American activists reached out to him to be part of a picket line in a hunger strike at an immigration detention center. “I was invited, myself and others, to be part of a reading station to start a program in Spanish to give the news in Spanish,” he evokes. Marco also remembers that U.S.-born activists bailed 100 refugees out from the detention center. Alvaro said that CISPES visit to Congress included “testimonies (of Salvadorans) and reports of human rights violations. There was a parallel between CISPES’ work on a national scale and what the Salvadorans used to do in their refugee organization.” Morris argues that the testimonies of Salvadorans “made all the difference” in influencing U.S. public opinion:

> “ We went to Reno (with) a Salvadoran refugee. We attracted a large crowd of folks – you know it was Lake Tahoe – and we stayed with a guy who was a blackjack dealer. I'll never forget it. He (the Salvadoran) was a passionate person who cared about things. We got in the local paper there in Lake Tahoe, but it wasn't just Los Angeles, San Francisco, you know standard places you go, you know, so the voice of the Salvadorans was *critical* to moving everything forward because it was the people to people connection.

Barbara explains that CISPES tried to recruit testimonies focusing on specific themes, but getting Salvadoran activists to the U.S. was a major obstacle. However, once they found a good testimony they were able to travel and put on events. “People in all these local events were so enthusiastic and interested and wanted to find out what was going on and support. It was like a shot in the arm for them because they could see the impact on the people in the country (El Salvador) in terms of what was going on down there,” Barbara remembers.

Marco recalls that a U.S.-born sympathizer in Los Angeles provided his organization of Salvadoran refugees with a mailing list of wealthy donors. Marcos was

doing fundraising in favor of Salvadoran refugees who were emigrating from El Salvador to Honduras to escape from military repression in 1982. "I saw donations coming from Bolivia. I was out of my mind. So they (U.S. activists) had power that we couldn't dream of!" he evokes.

U.S. citizenship as responsibility

Among U.S. activists, the sub-theme of *U.S. citizenship as responsibility* suggests the responsibility that many Americans felt to stop their government's behavior, which in turn contributed to the emergence of a white organization. Gabriela argues that CISPES was an opportunity to correct the trajectory of the U.S. government toward El Salvador.

> White people who were somewhat removed from what was going on, (got) a chance to *do* something. You know, we could see that things were not right, we were really opposed to the foreign policy of the United States, toward Central American countries. And we also felt like it was a people to people thing. We wanted a role, we wanted to reach out, we wanted to connect with people, and show our solidarity by doing what we could do to spread information, or collect money, or… things like that.

Claudia argues that the reason of the involvement of many U.S. citizens in CISPES was *"*the actions of our government that intervened in El Salvador, and so it was *our* responsibility then to fix that." Barbara says that the responsibility to stop the actions of the U.S. government was accompanied by the duty to respond to the Salvadoran people. "We just responded. We would have been idiots had we not responded," Barbara stated.

Whiteness as the only resource available

Robert explained that in places like the Pacific Northwest the only way to do activism in favor of El Salvador was through white people. Robert argues that the number of Salvadorans and people of color in general were dramatically small compared to where he used to live:

> There weren't that many people of color in town. I mean E. was voted the capital of the KKK in the 1930s and there were sun-down laws until the 1950s. And that's an interesting history. If you talk to anybody about the era or the NAACP, they can tell you better than I can. It was like the African American performers couldn't stay in hotels in the 1950s. They stayed in Willy N's house. So there weren't that many Latinos either. I used to know a guy by the name of Alfonso C. who worked here in the 60s and he has stories.

Whiteness as an unconscious force

Although the majority of U.S.-born activists offered strategic explanations about the demographic makeup of CISPES during the 1980s, Morris and Barbara also acknowledge that there was an unconscious behavior that facilitated the consolidation of CISPES as a white organization. After I asked Barbara why she thought CISPES became a majority white organization, she argues that there was "no conscious strategy to change that, to make that be different." She emphasized that as CISPES "got older, there was some, some legitimate criticism could be made." Morris made the observation that interaction between strategic and unconscious factors might have been the reason that CISPES was so white:

> Unless you are conscious about those dynamics, and you know you sort of follow what's the easiest, what sort of just happens to you. You start one way, it's hard to change an organization, because it started that way, and frankly part of it was to, Salvadorians reached out to white, college educated. It was also sort of the community and who they were trying to influence. So I don't know, it was a combination of factors and once something gets started that's pretty much all white, it's *very* hard to change it [laughs], I mean you know it's *very* hard to change, and so you know we would make outreach efforts and – but mostly that was done in coalition, so in other words it wasn't like we were like "hey, let's just organize white people", you know that wasn't what we were trying to do. But instead of trying to organize you know, it seemed what was going to be more effective was if we made alliances with other organizations. (…)

As I have exposed in stage 5, we can see how the formation of CISPES as a white organization was the product of the conflation of strategic decisions – actions and points of view of the Salvadoran conflict and how to solve it – as well as unconscious behavior.

Frankenberg (1993) explains how whiteness is a standpoint and uses "unnamed" factors in her analysis of white women in California (p.1). However, in CISPES, we can also observe that Salvadoran radicals also had the perception of whites as having more resources than racial minorities in the U.S. From the beginning of CISPES, Salvadoran radicals aimed at recruiting white college radicals who were perceived as strategic allies in the struggle to influence Reagan's foreign policy. In order to create a powerful organization, Salvadoran radicals preferred that U.S.-born activists form their own organizations, instead of joining organizations led by Salvadoran refugees, many of them undocumented.

The dialectic between strategic and unconscious behavior in CISPES is not isolated from the structural factors that surrounded the organization. As I mentioned before, in 1980, the year in which CISPES was formed, the percentage of racial minorities was 20.4% of the U.S. population, and 94% of the legislators were white (Bialik and Krogstad, 2017). In 1980, 6.4% of the population was Latino and there were only ninety-four thousand Salvadorans in the U.S. (Terraza, 2010). These numbers suggest that Salvadoran radicals had to influence white people in order to have political significance in the U.S. Furthermore, CISPES's birth and growth happened during a time in which the values of the Third World Left and the Black Power movement were relevant in radical movements in the U.S. (Pulido, 2006). The black power movement called for white radicals to organize themselves in radical organizations in order to dismantle white supremacy (Berger, 2006). As I show in the next stage of the process of intersectional recruitment, internal and external pressure eroded the foundation of CISPES as a white organization. By external, I mean all the domestic and international

events that influenced the changes in the nature of the organization.

Reconfiguration of a white organization: awakening to issues of gender and race

Before the CISPES national convention, that took place in Washington D.C, on January 13th, 1990, a group of women members of CISPES wrote a paper calling for the organization to foster a conversation about oppressive behaviors inside the organization, including sexist behaviors (C-Span, 1990; Newman, 2018). This was only the first out of two papers known in CISPES as the "hippo papers". Newman (2018) describes the paper as a document that "dealt primarily with the more typical problems of sexism in the left and therefore focused more on problems with white men, such as men being given more attention for their political ideas and dominating discussions, and the like." Claudia was 20 years old when she helped write the "hippo papers". Laura, in her late 20s, signed the document. Both worked as staffers for a CISPES regional office. Claudia argued that another reason for the "hippo papers" was sexual harassment inside the movement:

> (I)n particular, we talked about something, especially some of the negative dynamics between the Salvadorans and the people in the United States. In particular, some of the machismo and sexist attitudes of the Salvadoran men with the North American women, and both CISPES and the FMLN were very angry with this. The FMLN, I know that the high command discussed this paper. The FMLN high command was very upset with it because they felt like it wasn't reflexive and they felt like North American women would come and seduce Salvadoran men and that we weren't talking about that, and then they brought up exoticism of the Salvadoran revolution and Salvadoran fighters.

Laura illustrates the reason behind the documents:

> These FMLN representatives would speak in different communities, they were kind of like rock stars and a lot of the women would be attracted to them, but they didn't realize they were married or they had a girlfriend in every other town. I don't want to say that everyone was like that. I remember a couple of issues. Some of the people who came from El Salvador had inappropriate relationships and they were on tour and we had to actually get off the tour. Being in the national leadership, I had to deal with some of those issues directly. But we couldn't be saying we were against racism, sexism and homophobia and then had somebody

be sexually harassing someone and putting that person on tour.

Jeffrey believes that the "hippo papers" responded to the hegemony of white men in an organization that Claudia and Morris argue had a majority of women. "It was the women who started the conversation and from there it extended to look at issues of homophobia and racism, but it was started by the women in focusing on who held power in the organization and the fact that all through the 1980s there were very few women in our national administrative committee," Jeffrey expressed. Vincent recalls that the issue was not only harassment but also about managing sexual relationships in CISPES:

> There were quite a lot of sexual relationships with women in the organization. This is not unique to Salvadoran men. This is a problem in the left in general. Men might not even be attractive, but they are seen as being powerful or they're interesting, can have a lot of sexual relationships with women, but it compromises leadership in my opinion.

Claudia and Laura recalled that the document had a profound impact in the preparation of the convention. Claudia remembers that the director of CISPES, Angela Sanbrano, tried to stop the publication. "And we said no, and the national office refused to send this paper out and we said we would send it on our own. We would send it to all the committees if the national office refused to send it," Claudia evokes. At the 1990 CISPES convention, the organization committed itself to reviewing its practices regarding gender equality; protection for sexual minorities, and the marginalization of people of color (CISPES, 2018a).

Morris, in a position of leadership in CISPES at the time, also believed the convention was a turning point for CISPES, especially because addressed unnamed issues such as sexism and racism for the first time:

> Especially when it's primarily white and a lot of men in it, so you're dealing with sexism and racism. And you know not all of it explicit, a lot of it implicit or not,

> you know it's there and you've got to deal with it. So you know that came up, there were issues around women in leadership, that came up in the late 80s, early 90s, and then I think racism, how we were relating to the Salvadorean community, and how we were relating to other communities of color in the United States. And again, we did training in our national organization. And then did some local and regional training on undoing racism. Because we did have, you know we weren't an *all* White organization number one, two we did have a lot of women in leadership, and probably the majority of activists, so you know we had to struggle with all of those issues.

Claudia believes that "shifting the discussion from gender violence, sexual harassment *to* racism" was a strategic maneuver by the leadership to "have a discussion about different kinds of oppressions in a safe way that theoretically would not tear the organization apart." Alvaro indicates that the deepening of the discussion on race, gender and sexual orientation responded to the change of demographics inside CISPES:

> We reviewed the ethnic makeup of CISPES and we saw that it has varied in seven years, even though it initiated as a majority white. (By the end of 1980s), CISPES national direction had two Salvadorans and a Mexican and we already had support in the Afro- American and Asian communities. At the same time, there were outbreaks of alcoholism and we need to see ourselves.

Barbara believes that the organization never addressed those issues before the 1990s because of the urgency of their goal to stop U.S. intervention and to help Salvadoran revolutionaries:

> This is one of the struggles that took place, back in the 80s and early 90s is like, you know, I mean we could talk about feminism too, you know, what's the priority? Salvadorans are dying and being tortured and whatever down in El Salvador so do we work to deal with that or do we also you know, talk about, you know, the sexism going on, or the racism… or that we are primarily a white organization and we haven't done the outreach in communities of color to make that be different. And that's an important question. I don't have the answer to it. I know that in that point in time, a lot of us made decisions to focus in – well, plus the fact that we focused in, that we kept our focus in terms of the revolutionary struggle in El Salvador and the U.S. intervention, the fact that that was our focus is what made us effective. It also created some antagonism with other organizations and maybe individuals who felt that maybe we weren't dealing with civil rights issues going on, discrimination in our own country, racism, environmental stuff, and everything else. And so, it's a legitimate question to look

> at, I still feel pretty solid. We could have done it better, but I think in general, the way we were going it was the way it had to be.

I don't possess the information that proves the change of ethnic makeup inside CISPES between 1980 and 1990. However, a majority of CISPES activists perceived the convention in 1990 as a turning point in the organization's racial dynamics. These perceived changes occurred alongside other events that challenged the core of the organization's ideology that were stopping U.S. intervention and supporting the FMLN. In November 1989, the FMLN conducted a national military offensive which first goal was to overthrow the ARENA's government. Amidst the offensive, six Jesuits priests were killed by the Salvadoran military, which provoked inside Washington's establishment several calls for the suspension of U.S. military aid to El Salvador (Krauss, 1990). In February 1990, the U.S. government supported the intermediation of the Union Nations in the negotiations between the FMLN and the Salvadoran government (Goshko, 1990). This change in U.S. position happened five months after the fall of the Berlin Wall that marked the beginning of the end of the socialist block.

In 1990, the percentage of Latino in the U.S. had reached 9.0% from 6% in 1980 and the number of Salvadorans in the U.S. increased almost five times from 94 thousand in 1980 to 465 thousand in 1990- the majority of them located in the Texas, California and the Washington D.C. area. (Census Bureu, 2018; Terrazas, 2010). In 1990, U.S. Congress still reported that over 90% of its legislators were white and it wasn't until 2017 the percentage went down to 80% (Bialik & Krogstad, 2017).

As we can see in the last stage of the process of intersectional recruiting, the shift in CISPES responded to a three-dimensional shift at the organizational, national and international levels. Domestically, a new generation of members wanted the organization

to be more involved in debating social justice issues such as racism and sexism. As Claudia explained, the 1990 convention expressed the concerns of a new generation that did not aim at "making CISPES more diverse, but an anti-racist organization." At the same time, the leadership of CISPES had more Salvadoran-born activists or people from Latin American heritage in its ranks. At the national level, the demographic makeup of the U.S. had changed, as many undocumented immigrants had access to permanent residency or citizenship due to the Reagan immigration amnesty of 1986. In cities such as Los Angeles and Washington D.C. – metropoles where CISPES had a strong presence – an influx of Salvadoran immigrants started to become visible. In Congress, there was strong bipartisan attitude to stop the U.S. military assistance to El Salvador. Internationally, the Cold War was at its end and negotiations between the FMLN and the Salvadoran government began. As a result of these structural changes, the collective identity of the organization entered a crisis: CISPES as a white organization created in 1980 needed an ideological realignment.

Ideological identity model of public relations

After reviewing the history and discourses of CISPES from 1980 to 1990 and the many public relations strategies the organization used, I define CISPES' ideology as one that advocated for the end of U.S. assistance to El Salvador and in support of Salvadoran revolutionaries in the Third World. The materialization of this ideology was an organization led and comprised by an overwhelming white majority with strong connections to Salvadoran radicals who provided support and advice. CISPES' mobilizing organizational identity is the synthesis of these two dialectic forces. In the same fashion, CISPES shows other dialectic dynamics: Salvadoran radicals vs. U.S.-born

activists, mainstream vs. radical public relations strategies, and centralized vs. decentralized communications (Derville, 2005). Here I focus on the dialectic between ideology and materiality in CISPES and how their public relations strategies demonstrate that tension. In this dissertation, I present the first building block of **the ideological identity model of public relations** (Figure 13) based on the findings exposed in the previous sections. **The ideological identity model of public relations is** located between stage 5 (the construction of the white organization) and stage 6 (the reconfiguration of the white organization) **of the process of intersectional recruiting.** The **ideological identity model of public relations** is a work in progress that needs further theoretical reflection and empirical testing.

The ideological identity model of public relations centers the organization, but is surrounded by two layers: organizational ideology, understood as a particular view of the world that leads the organization, and the demographics of its practitioners, which I see as the material conditions of public relations. The unit of analysis of my model is the organization. My work draws on the work of Curtin and Gaither's (2005) cultural circuit and Hon's (2015) digital advocacy model. In both I appreciate the efforts to connect social contexts with the organizational realities. Mundy (2016) brings a multidimensional vision of why diversity faced so many obstacles in public relations practices. He shows proposals in which two types of dialectic forces take place: 1) structural and cultural and 2) internal and external dimensions. Edwards (2013) and L'Etang (2004) have provided strong arguments that race is still a factor in the practice of strategic communications from an organizational point of view, especially in the West.

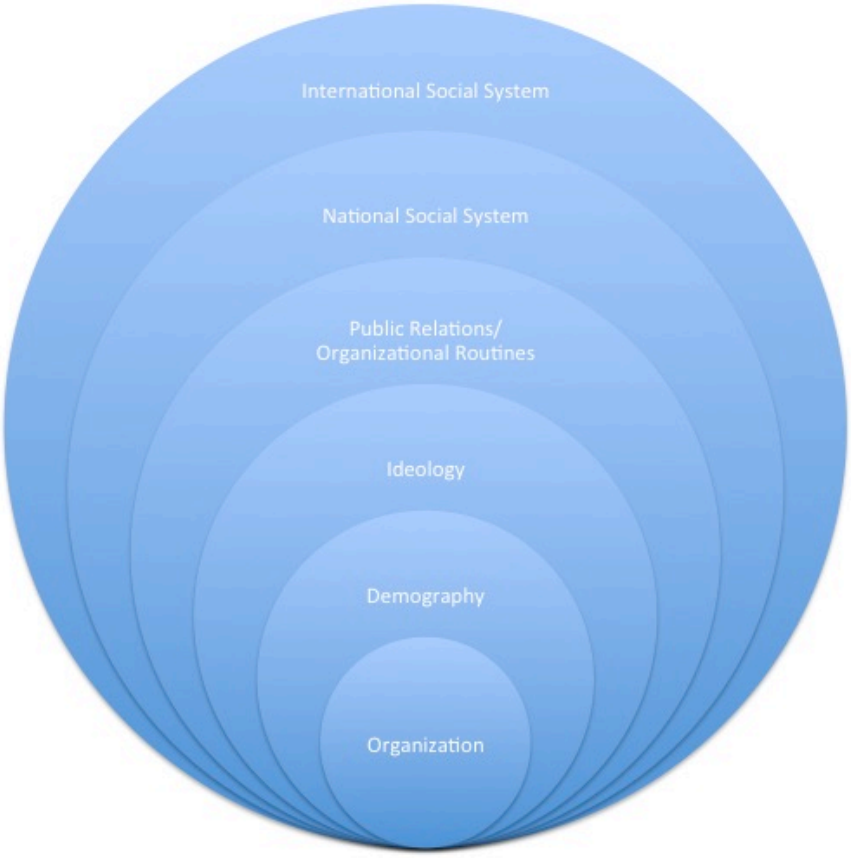
I am illustrating my model using a concentric model inspired by Reese and

Shoemaker's (2016) *hierarchy of influences* model. In their sociological model, Reese and Shoemaker argue that a five-layer concentric model describe the different levels of influence that people working in media have. The five-layer model has the following levels: 1) the individual, 2) the routines, 3) the organizational, 4) the social institutions, and 5) the social system. Reese and Shoemaker (2016) define the individual level as "the personal traits of news workers, news values they adhere to, professional roles they take on, and other demographic features (e.g., gender, race, class) (p. 398). The routines are "concerned with those patterns of behavior that form the immediate structures of mediawork" (p.399). The organizational level examines the influence on practices inside media organizations in the formation of the news. The social institutions level refers to the "concerns beyond any single organization" that lead to the "interorganizational field" (p.402). The authors define the most macro level, the social system, as the level "concerned with traditional theories of society and power as they relate to media" (p.403).

My proposal, the ***ideological identity model of public relations,*** has six levels: 1) the organization, 2) the ideology of the organization, 3) the demography (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation) of the organization, 4) organizational/PR routines (strategies, tactics, relationship building), 5) national social system and 6) international social system. Each level influences adjacent levels and at the same time, the macro level of international social systems and national social systems also affect the organization. The interactions between these levels create a **mobilizing organizational identity** that is historically located in specific contexts and, as I have showed in the **process of intersectional recruiting**, enters in crisis when social factors are changed. Changes in

social conditions do not provoke change in the public relations of organizations per se, but they facilitate or constrain the emergence of collective political subjects. Also, each level of the model should be seen as a mediation that filters the national and international social systems. In order for an international phenomenon to transform the organization, it should also exert pressure on the intermediate levels. I will illustrate each level of my model with examples from CISPES' history between 1980 and 1990.

Figure 13: The ideological identity model of public relations



The organization

Unlike Reese and Shoemaker (2016) who assume that individuals are "creative"

and internally possess demographic and identity markers, I argue that organizations are a direct byproduct of the tension between ideology and materiality. In this case, the tension lies between the communication discourses and the material conditions surrounding the organization, which are operationalized as the demography of the individuals who are part of the organization. In the organization, physical location is crucial. In the case of CISPES, as a U.S.-based organization, they must abide by U.S. laws. In early 1988, leaked FBI documents reveal years of an extensive surveillance of CISPES and other Central American solidarity movements. The FBI Director William S. Sessions, states that the surveillance aimed at determining whether CISPES was materially supporting the FMLN (Shenon, 1988). Shenon (1988) recounts that law-enforcement officials revealed that the investigations on CISPES' activities began in 1981 "after allegations that the group was acting as an illegal foreign agent for Salvadoran rebels; it became a counterterrorism investigation in 1983." According to U.S. legislation, if CISPES was serving as a representative of the FMLN, the organization must have registered at the Department of Justice. Finally, the FBI concluded that CISPES "was involved in political activities involving First Amendment rights – and not international terrorism" (Shenon, 1988).

Ideology

According to Hall (1996), ideology is a "(s)ystem of meaning, concepts, categories and representation which make sense of the world" (p.334). In this case, CISPES' ideology consisted of stopping U.S. intervention, and supporting the Salvadoran revolutionaries. In the midst of the conflict between a group of women and the national leadership in late 1980s, the organization attempted to solve their differences by stressing

the ideological "bottom line" of the organization. Barbara describes the bottom line as "the fact that we focused in, that we kept our focus in terms of the revolutionary struggle in El Salvador and the U.S. intervention, the fact that that was our focus I think is what made us effective." Based on that ideology, CISPES attempted to solve the difference in a "real constructive manner, it wasn't like you're the enemy," as Laura recalls. CISPES's ideology was based in a context where the war was the central element of their political praxis, rather than internal identity politics. In this war mentality, other conflicts inside the organization were secondary to ending the civil war and U.S. intervention in El Salvador. Claudia recalls the role of ideology in neutralizing conflict:

> Then the National committee of CISPES used the same line that the Salvadorans (the FMLN) used in El Salvador which is, we can't talk about sexism right now because it's too divisive and we need everybody united. *After* the war, we'll deal with sexism and sexual harassment and sexual violence, but not now.

The examination of themes in CISPES' discourse reveals that the organization had a transnational vision of the world (Figure 2). First, the organization heavily criticized the role of the U.S. in a foreign country for two main reasons: 1) being an accomplice of a brutal government and 2) wasting the money of U.S. tax payers. However, these themes also stress the similarity between U.S. intervention in Central America and the war in Vietnam. The transnational vision of CISPES coincides with the values of the U.S. Third World Left that expressed solidarity with revolutionary groups in Latin America, advocated for the end of U.S. hegemony in the region, and called for the dismantling of race and class hierarchies (Pulido, 2006, Hobson, 2016).

The example of CISPES' discussion about misogyny and racism illustrates how organizational ideology leads the debate in moments of crisis, but at the same time, orients the type of strategies and tactics that help achieve their goals. In the table of

strategies of tactic, the goal of stopping U.S. intervention by influencing policy-makers led CISPES to combine mainstream tactics such as writing letters to Congress with more radical tactics like street protests outside federal buildings. Ideology is not free-floating, but materializes through actions, strategies and tactics (Munson, 2001).

Demography

The layer of demography connects to types of individuals that participate in the organization in terms of race, class, gender, and other axes of social location. Unlike Reese and Shoemaker (2016), I don't believe that demographic markers are only ingrained in the individual, but are social forces that affect other elements of the organization. CISPES activists recall that between 1980 and 1990 at least 80% of its members were white. This data coincides with the findings of Smith (2010) who shows that over 90% of the activists involved in Central American movements where white with college educations. However, the racial and educational background of CISPES activists also coincide with the close relationship they had with Salvadorans. The demographic nature of CISPES as an organization with white college educated individuals, many of them from middle-class households, shaped the type of discourses and strategies that the organization employed. The majority of individuals joined CISPES in the aftermath of the Civil Right movements and of the protests against the war in Vietnam- a movement that originated on college campuses and with a majority of white activists (Fernandez & McAdam, 1988). The juncture of the civil rights movement and the anti-war movement instilled a culture among white radicals that understood the dismantling of racism and the end of U.S. "empire" as complementary parts of the same struggle (Berger, 2006). This culture among white radicals, which is illustrated in stage 4 of the **process of**

intersectional recruiting (rehearsals of radical politics), shaped the creation of an organizational ideology.

Public Relations/Organizational routines

Reese and Shoemaker (2016) define routines as "concerned with those patterns of behavior that form the immediate structures of mediawork" (p.399). In this case, organizational/PR routines are the public relations strategies that tie the organization with other organizations and their internal audiences. Following the different intended audiences of the organizational routine, I categorize routines in two ways: internal and external. Internal public relations routines have a goal to inform and strengthen the relationship with staffers and volunteers inside the organization. External public relations attempts to affect audiences who are not formally connected to the organization.

An example of external public relations is CISPES' public relations strategy to influence the electoral process in the U.S. Morris recalls that in 1986, CISPES organized a campaigned that attempted to influence the electoral result of swing districts:

> We did a whole campaign around trying to stop US Aid to El Salvador and doing some work in specific legislative districts in 1986 that we considered swing districts, and so we sent organizers into those communities, some of which had an El Salvador committee. There was one in Wisconsin, the head of the Latin American Committee, Latin America sub-committee, the foreign affairs committee of the house, a powerful democrat, whose name I'm forgetting, starts with an O, her last name starts with an O. His was one of the districts. It was basically what we considered the key people, who were calling the shots, and I think at the time the democrats – they did – they had control of the house. Even though Reagan was president, they had control of the house. And so we were trying to move them on to be more sort of against aid to El Salvador.

Barbara complemented Morris' vision by stating that CISPES toured across the U.S., which helped the organization to get free press coverage that improved the possibility of having positive political outcomes. "We would go around to college

campuses and community events and did press work, you know local press work, in small towns or whatever, so that was a big thing. And then there were the different material aid campaigns and the delegations," she stated. Morris, Barbara, Jeffrey and Vincent recall that by the late 1980s, CISPES had already hired a person who was in charge of pitching stories to the mainstream media. "I was on Nightline (with Ted Koppel) because we had the strategy and had somebody who knew how to *do* that. Local level people were just very creative and had fearlessness about just calling up local reporters and making connections."

Morris explains that CISPES provided its activists with "media training" on "how to reach your local press." CISPES' archives reveal how the organization monitored the U.S. media closely and documented those monitoring by using paper clips. For the 1985 CISPES Midwest regional conference, the CISPES regional office organized a media-training workshop that taught activists "how to organize a media campaign" and "how to get their message across most effectively". CISPES wanted to teach them how to "prepare a statement and a speaker who will turn the short media moments into a valuable projection of time."

As part of its external public relations, CISPES established strong organizational relationships with external activist organizations. CISPES' archive shows that the organization kept in its record press releases, newsletters and internal documents of friendly organization such as Committee for the Freedom of Political Prisoners and Disappeared Persons in El Salvador, Voice on the Borders, the General Association of Salvadoran University Students. At the same time, CISPES also closely followed the material of conservative activist organizations such as the CARP, Committee to Save El

Salvador. In a CARP flyer, this right-wing association called for the Soviet Union and Cuba to get "out of El Salvador." In April 1985, CISPES participated along other organizations in four days of demonstrating against Reagan Administration foreign policy in Central America and South Africa and about the state of unemployment in the U.S. The New York Times revealed that the coalition "includes the American Indian Movement, the Congress of National Black Churches, the Gray Panthers, the National Gay Task Force, the National Lawyers Guild, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the United States Students Association and Women Strike for Peace" (Franklin, 1985).

Beyond the media work, informing and educating internal audiences was CISPES' priority. The most important instrument was the El Salvador Alert. Jeffrey, who was the editor of the newsletter, explains, "our primary audience was our own activists in terms of giving them information they could use to reach more members in the community. The Alert was a more activist tool or activist-oriented publication." Jeffrey also recalls that the media landscape in the 1980s was different than ours today. El Salvador Alert brought information that was not available to people in the mainstream media. Some of this news had a point of view of the FMLN and Salvadoran radicals about U.S. foreign policy. Along with El Salvador Alert, CISPES' public relations strategy to reach internal audiences was using its own members as the messengers of information. "Telephone was part of that as we did do a lot of phone banking, sure. But also, we did a lot of house meetings and door-knocking, canvassing door to door,' Jeffrey describes.

These public relations routines reveal that to participate in CISPES efforts, especially on the strategic side, activists needed to have a level of education that allowed them to reach political allies, monitor opponents, write press releases and articulate a message in English to the media. These activities are "color-blind" in appearance, but in the historical context, they are precisely the types of tasks that white, college-educated activists could deliver (Bourdieu, 1984). This demonstrates how demography and organizational routines shape one another. In the case of CISPES, the conflation of demography and organizational routines was not automatic but resulted from strategic decisions made by U.S. and Salvadoran activists to hold North American activists responsible for targeting Congress.

National Social System

The national social system consists of all the events that directly or indirectly influenced the organization's work and vision. Between the 1980's and 1990's, there was a strong increase in the number of Latinos and Salvadorans in particular in the U.S. Changes in the demography of the U.S. affected organizational strategies that were aimed at influencing policy, rather than debating about racial and gender dynamics.

In addition to that, at the beginning of the 1980s, CISPES' strategy aimed to contain U.S. military assistance by influencing Congress, but by the late 1980s, the strategy changed to prioritize the legitimization of the FMLN as a reliable partner in the negotiations. The change in strategy was influenced by changes in the national social system: Reagan left the presidency in 1988 and George H. Bush assumed it. As the goal of CISPES was influenced by U.S. foreign policy, any change in national social system would affect their strategy.

International social system

The international social system consists of all the events that affect the country and, at the same time, the transnational project in which the organization was embedded. The fall of the Berlin Wall influenced the change in the position of the U.S. regarding the negotiations in El Salvador. In February 1990, the Bush administration accepted a negotiation, which was brokered by the United Nations and that should take place between the FMLN and the El Salvador government. In the same month, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN in Spanish) lost the election against an "aristocrat democrat" (Uhlig, 1990).

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION

The topic of this dissertation emerged from questions about why CISPES, along with other Central American solidarity organizations, were so white. Smith (2011) and Pearce (2012) argue that CISPES was not only white, but was also comprised of college-educated activists. How did CISPES become a white organization with a penchant to recruit college-educated members? What were the implications of a white organization in its public relations strategies? These overall questions led me to elaborate three research questions that attempted to unveil the role of race in activist public relations. I believe that racial dynamics are crucial forces to understand the formation of collective identities. Collective identities are the products of the relations between ideology and social conditions, and they are ingrained in history. To study this phenomenon, I looked at CISPES' recruiting routines through the examination of public relations material and in-depth interviews. Like many social movement organizations in the 1980s, CISPES comprised mostly of white, college-educated activists and its history was directly tied to resistance against the war of Vietnam and the civil right movement. Due to the contradiction between having a mostly white membership and its radical ideology, CISPES was an ideal site to understand the relationship between organization members and organization ideologies. In short, this dissertation shows how organizations form an ideological identity. To find these mechanisms, I develop a methodology that examines the dialectic between ideology-production (public relations material) and social conditions incarnated in the identities and life stories of CISPES' activists.

I followed the same logic in my three research questions. The first RQ1 explored

the most prevalent discursive themes between 1980 and 1990, but also how the discourses changed every year during that period. The second tried to understand the types of public relations strategies that CISPES used and how they revealed the organization's strategic goals of simultaneously containing a white political elite and recruiting radical whites. The third question understands how CISPES became a white organization, especially looking at the relevance of the relationships between U.S. activists and Salvadoran radicals. In the next section, I will recapitulate the core findings of my dissertation and how relevant they are to expand the research on public relations and social movement theory and praxis.

CISPES' discursive system- answering RQ1

CISPES' public relations material had eight themes that ran through 1990:

1) U.S. government wasted U.S. taxpayer money

2) U.S. government is an accomplice of the Salvadoran government

3) The U.S. has a long history of intervention in the region

4) El Salvador has a brutal government

5) U.S. government is creating another Vietnam

6) U.S. government is escalating its participation in El Salvador

7) Salvadoran people are politically active

8) CISPES is a multiracial organization

These eight themes represent the core of CISPES' discursive system and give the organization a thematic arc over the course of ten years. The themes reveal that CISPES created polarization with the U.S. and the Salvadoran government on one side, and the Salvadoran people and CISPES on the other. The organization's discursive system responded to Reagan's messaging which tied the FMLN and CISPES with Cuba and the Soviet Union (Peace, 2012; Smith, 2011). However, the eight themes also show the amplitude of CISPES' ideology. The organization framed international issues like the conflict in El Salvador as a domestic problem through the use of war of Vietnam as a proxy theme. At the same time, the discursive system stressed the diverse nature of CISPES or, at least, its aspiration to be diverse. The ability of CISPES to frame an international issue as a domestic issue reveals the transnational scope of the organization. Della Porta and Tarrow (2005) argue that there are three processes of transnationalization in social movement organizations: 1) diffusion (spread of movements ideas, frame one country to other), 2) domestication (planning out of domestic territory of conflict that origin externally) and 3) externalization ("playing challenge to supranational institution to intervene in domestic problems of conflicts") (p.2). Through discourse analysis, I argue that the framing of international issues as domestic problems was the most important force in the devising of CISPES' public relations.

The eight themes of CISPES discursive system represents the organization's roadmap that anchored its practice, but also initiated the formation of a collective identity that I call **mobilizing organizational identity**. The **mobilizing organizational identity** proposes a way to define the nature of its members and its political goals. Mobilizing organizational identities answers the question of who we are and who are our friends and

foes. In CISPES' discursive system, the "we" is transnational and clearly tied to the events in both El Salvador and the U.S.

The large picture of CISPES' discursive system demonstrates the trajectory of themes by year. The themes in CISPES' public relations changed every year with the purpose of updating the discursive system in relation to the most recent world events. The study of themes led me to create seven different historical episodes in CISPES' public relations system (Table 2). They are:

1) 1980: Creating the polarization and defining the struggle
2) 1981: The emergences of the allies
3) 1984: The closing of the congressional path
4) 1985-1986: Stop the Bombing
5) 1987: The National Referendum Campaign
6) 1988: The Legitimation of the FMLN
7) 1990: The End of the War is Near

The historical episodes in isolation do not represent more than mere labels to understand the background behind the discourses. However, by establishing relations between each other, I recognize that the historical episodes were telling a general history of CISPES that I call *narrative plots*. The three CISPES' narrative plots were: 1) 1980-

1981: the presentations of characters in CISPES' discursive system (friends vs. foes) and the problem (reducing damage from Reagan and advocating for the FMLN), 2) 1984-1987: CISPES's definition of its primary spaces for political action (Congress and the streets), and 3) 1988-1990: CISPES finds a solution to its problems by moving its focus from reducing the damage to framing the FMLN as a responsible and influential actor in the political negotiation with the Salvadoran government.

The three *narrative plots* reflect how events shaped the organization's discursive system. Ellgson (1995) shows how the discourses of race in Cincinnati were fundamentally modified after the occurrence of riots. A similar argument can be made of how, at the end of 1980s, CISPES played down the theme of fighting U.S. intervention in favor of embracing a commitment to legitimize the FMLN as an indispensable player in a political settlement of the Salvadoran government. Although CISPES had a core of themes that guided its praxis, the organization was able to redefine them according to the changing reality.

These three types of thematic categories (discursive system, historical episodes, and narrative plots) can be divided into two groups: historically consistent discourses (CISPES' discursive system) and the juncture-based discourses (historical episodes and narrative plots). In line with previous research on media framing (Iyengar, 1990; An & Gower, 2009, Aarøe, 2011), historically consistent discourse resembles what media and public relations scholars have called "thematic frames." Thematic frames are media interpretations "that focus on political issues and events in a broader context and present collective, abstract, and general evidence" (Aarøe, 2011, p. 209). Juncture-based discourses are consistent with what Aarøe (2011) defines as "episodic frames" that

describe particular event and cases. Unlike the episodic and thematic frames, the historically consistent discourses and the juncture-based discourses are seen from the activist organization's perspective instead of that from the media practitioners' view. Historically consistent discourses and the juncture-based discourses represent the dialectic tension between an organization that wants to maintain a consistent message, but at the same time, must modify its discourses to adapt to the U.S. political reality. CISPES initially focused on the immoral and inconvenient alliance between the U.S. and El Salvador governments, but eventually, in the late 1980s, the organization played down the anti-intervention elements of its ideology to elevate the FMLN's profile on the negotiation table.

Decentralized-centralized PR -Answering RQ2

The "centralized-decentralized" public relations approach consisted in concerted strategies designed and lead by the organization's headquarters in Washington D.C., and decentralized executions by regional and local chapters throughout the U.S. This "decentralized-centralized" approach included five types of public relations strategies (media, street, political, fundraising, and tours). Each one of the strategies had a series of tactics that coalesce around the idea of challenging the U.S. government through the use of resources in possession of CISPES. Amongst these resources were whiteness and college credentials.

I argue that CISPES' overall strategy targeted two types of sources of political power: directs sources of political power and indirect sources of political power. The political and the street strategies were oriented to exert continuous pressure on the direct

sources of power (legislators, U.S. officials, and El Salvador officials). CISPES' goal was to inundate the Congress with letters and telegrams and to saturate the telephone lines of U.S. legislators and government officials. CISPES wanted to keep the U.S. government off-balance through the combination of militant tactics such as mass demonstrations and legislative instruments such as letters and telegrams. The organization sought to make the Salvadoran consulates feel the brunt of the civil war while on U.S. soil. These strategies were the nails in the movement that scratched the epidermis of the U.S. government.

On the other hand, the media, fundraising, and tour strategies attempted to harness power by targeting secondary sources of political power such as newspapers, potential donors, and recruits. If the news outlets give more space to CISPES' discourses, they believed the U.S. public could become more aware of the legitimate role of the FMLN as the organization that represented the Salvadoran people. They also believed media coverage would make it easier for CISPES' framing of the U.S. assistance to El Salvador as ineffective and immoral. The fundraising strategies provided CISPES with the capabilities to continue with its actions and to promote a new alternative vision of international aid. The tour strategy was a hybrid of media-oriented events and recruiting tools. The tours aspired to "win" American souls that could later turn their economic and social capital in favor of CISPES' cause. The speakers and the delegations of U.S. citizens to El Salvador gave CISPES access to networks of people – especially those who were college educated – and could provide the organization with specialized skills and resources. Furthermore, connections with local networks of activists could eventually serve to influence local and state elections.

By reviewing CISPES' strategies and tactics, it is clear that the organization

aimed to attract college-educated activists who had the time, resources, and abilities to execute tasks that were required by an organization in struggle against a powerful and savvy U.S. government. Their tactics were not designed to integrate disenfranchised populations, but rather to maximize the available resources in order to influence policy. Writing press releases, producing a radio show, sending telegrams and letters to legislators and officials, and monitoring Congress required advanced knowledge of the centrality of media in the U.S. public sphere and the political opportunities in the Congress. Attending demonstrations in government buildings or protesting in front of consulates – which are places protected by international law – entailed the assumption that the image of massive arrests of "innocents" could produce political harm to the government's image. This goal is more difficult to achieve if you organize protests that might harm already criminalized groups such as undocumented "brown" immigrants. As Claudia asserted regarding the delegations of U.S citizens that CISPES used to send to El Salvador, the threat of harm to U.S. citizens -especially if they are white and well educated- had the power to discourage violent government actions and sheltered local folk in Latin America.

There were two main audiences of CISPES' discourses and strategies: a white political elite and U.S. progressives. Both audiences had English as their first language (Smiths, 2011; Peace, 2012). As we have revealed through this study, CISPES knew from the beginning that their main goal was to recruit "North Americans." CISPES' discursive system appealed to the sensitivities of people who had direct or indirect experience with the war in Vietnam and other U.S. actions in foreign countries. The same rationale informed CISPES' public relations strategies and tactics. CISPES's double objective was

to put pressure on white political elites and, at the same time, persuade college-educated activists to join the organization. However, as Goodwin and Jasper (1999) show, CISPES created themes and public relations strategies that resonated in white college-educated radicals not only for "instrumental" or "strategic" purposes (p.49), but because that reflected the collective identity of the organization. In other words, the messages and tactics of a public relations campaign are not only shaped by the type of public the organization wants to influence, but, in high degree, by the kind of people who develop them.

The theoretical implication of this dissertation is that the lack of diversity in public relations organizations, as other scholars have revealed (Edwards 2013, Logan 2011, Mundy, 2016; Pompper, 2005), is not merely due to poor results of recruitment and retaining strategies. The lack of diversity in public relations is a reflection of the social dynamics that privilege some groups over others, and in some cases may consciously or unconsciously be used as a public relations strategy. Structural factors such as class, race, and gender cannot be remedied only through organizational guidelines, but by a profound transformation of the U.S. society. Although CISPES had a radical agenda against all types of oppression, their praxis did not avoid the reproduction of structural factors and organizational routines that kept CISPES as a white college-educated setting until the organization had a profound crisis in early 1990s.

The process of intersectional recruiting and the ideological identity model-answering RQ3

I found that the majority of my participants followed a six-stage model to join

CISPES. These stages were:

1. The foundations of the radical individual
2. The racialization of political life stories
3. “Despertar de la conciencia” (awakening of consciousness) triggered by an event
4. Rehearsals for radical politics
5. The formation of the white organization
6. Reconfiguration of the white organization: the awakening to gender and race

These stages constitute the process of intersectional recruiting founded on a dialectic contradiction: a white organization heavily influenced by Salvadoran radicals who believe whiteness was an asset to achieve the political goal to stop the intervention and improve the image of the Salvadoran insurgency. From this process, a collective identity for the organization was born. CISPES’ collective identity was not only defined by the organization’s leftist ideology but by the social conditions that drove white college-educated radicals into the organization. In this dissertation, collective identities are not only a rhetorical operation, as Nepstad (2001) de Volo (2000) and Gamson (1991) suggest, but the synthesis of a dialectic process between the organization’s ideology and the social location of its members.

These social conditions are historically located and provide activists with a horizon for its praxis. In the 1980s, white elites dominated politics in the U.S.; therefore, any political effort to contain U.S. foreign policy required white college-educated individuals as front-runners against Reagan. These findings are in line with Viterna’s

(2013) model that highlights that structural factors reshape collective identities. Unlike Viterna, I argue that power dynamics are behind the reasons some identities are more valuable than others in social movement organizations. Previous research in social movement theory in the U.S. (Della Porta &Tarrow, 2005; McAdam, 1986; McAdam 2010; McCarthy & Zald, 1977) proposes models to understand the ways organizations mobilize; some encompasses ideological and structural factors (McAdam, 2010) and other more ideological (Goodwin & Jasper, 1999). The theoretical implications of the process of intersectional recruiting is that, racial dynamics- in combination with class markers such as level of education are centrifugal forces that explain the crafting of discourses and strategies, as well as the co-creation of collective identities. Smith (2011) and Peace (2012) demonstrate that the Central American solidarity movements in the U.S. struggled to attract minorities to their overwhelmingly white ranks. Peace (2012) shows that the Central American Solidarity movements were supported by white religious organizations, in part, because black churches were focused on the fight against apartheid in South Africa. However, this dissertation is one of the rare examples that show the process behind the formation of white spaces.

The case of CISPES reveals that its nature as a white organization was a byproduct of the negotiations between U.S. activist and Salvadoran radicals. The fact that CISPES was a majority white organization does not imply that people of color were absent. On the contrary, there is evidence that having white college educated people as the face of CISPES was a deliberate decision promoted by Salvadoran refugees with ties to the FMLN. Salvadoran refugees knew that whiteness was an asset that they did not possess. Chicanos, at least at the beginning of the 1980s, seemed to play the role of

intermediary between whites and Salvadoran activists (Almaguer 2009; Pulido 2006). With this in mind, I theorize that CISPES between 1980 and 1990 was a **purposive white setting**. A purposive white setting is the one in which the resources of a white-majority organization, in conjunction with the participation of people of color, are put in favor of a larger political goal. The major assets of a **purposive white setting** are the affluence and racial advantages of its leadership and members. CISPES was not merely "white," but also college-educated. These ideas emerge through a qualitative method inspired by the historical recounts of Thompson (2016) and D'Emilio (1983). In my opinion, it is tautological to argue that white organizations produce white strategies and white discourses. To move forward, social movement theory and public relation should understand the formation of social movement organization as part of a historical continuum where race and other demographics are at the core.

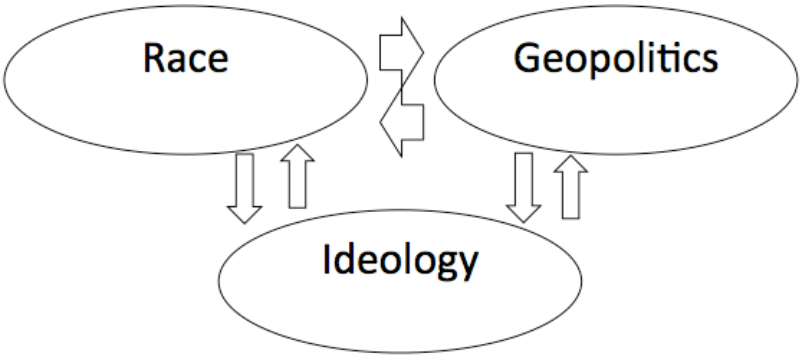
Likewise, the process of intersectional recruiting led me to observe the relevance of ideology in keeping CISPES alive despite its internal contradictions. CISPES' goals consisted of two principles: CISPES wanted to end U.S. intervention in El Salvador and CISPES support revolutionary movements in El Salvador. Any conflict between internal factions was settled by returning to these two principles. These principles produced a profound contradiction. On the one hand, it encouraged a continuous dialogue with Salvadoran revolutionaries under the premise that U.S.-activists were to respond to the needs of the Salvadoran process. On the other, it confronted the rising of debates about sexual harassment, race, and homophobia inside the organization. When this ideology entered into crisis at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, the organization updated its ideology in order to align itself with new challenges created by a post-Cold War world

and a country with more people of color and a more open acceptance of gender diversity. The crisis in CISPES coincides with the emergence of intersectional vocabulary in U.S. academia and activism (Crenshaw, 1989). CISPES's emphasis on stopping the intervention over solving internal intersectional conflict shows the theoretical limits of its political praxis.

I argue that the vision of U.S.-activists in CISPES was shaped by race and their ideological view of geopolitics. Here there is dialectic: racialization becomes political ideology, and political ideology becomes a racial perception. People's ideological identity matter in how one understands racism and its origins. Slobodian (2015) shows that the East Germany communist regime delineated race through the principle of "socialist chromatism" that "relied on skin color and other markers of phenotypic difference to create (overtly) neat divisions between social groups within a technically nonhierarchical logic of race" (p.24). Slobodian connects the vision of the State in communist countries with the management of racial dynamics by the communist states: "Socialist chromatism in East Germany was an outward extrapolation of a model that was originally an imperial, and later Soviet model of representing multiethnic territory under a single administration" (p.30). Slobodian reminds us of the difficulty of isolating "racial thinking" from "geopolitical thinking" and political ideology. CISPES reveals that the connections between anti-imperialistic ideology and anti-racist praxis occurred through the activists' participation in many causes ranging from anti-apartheid platforms to workers-rights organizations. While liberals in the 1960s and 1970s saw racism as a phenomenon that needs to be fixed within the limits of a capitalistic society, radicals understood racism as one of the many failures of the capitalistic society (Hobson, 2016).

As I have exposed before, CISPES discourses and interviews reveal deep links between geopolitical perceptions, racial views, and political ideology (Figure 14). Research on postcolonial theory have reiterated that race was a category cultivated by Western colonizers in the Third World (Hall, 1996; Fanon, 2008; Gilroy, 1993 Mohanty, 1991, Said, 1978;Wekker, 2016). In other words - using Omi and Winan's (1994) terminology - race is a political project that is shaped by people's views about how society and the world should work. With this in mind, I am not suggesting that there are no commonalities in the formation of identities that can connect white nationalists and white anti-racist activists through a common "hegemonic whiteness" (Hughey, 2010, p.1289). I am arguing that geopolitical views and political ideology significantly influence people's perception of race and vice versa (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Relations between views of race, ideology, and geopolitics



The six levels of **ideological identity model of public relations** (the organization, the ideology of the organization, the demography, organizational routines, national social system and international social system) probe that national and

international structural factors constrain public relation praxis. It is impossible to discuss the lack of diversity in public relations and not debate about the social conditions that perpetuate a profession with a strong penchant toward recruiting white upper-middle class practitioners in the U.S. (Edwards, 2013; Logan, 2011; Pompper, 2005). The model understands organizations as international actors and suggests that the difference between domestic and international public relations is as ideological as it is methodological. Postcolonial public relations (Dutta, 2015, Munshi & Kurian, 2015; Curtin & Gaither, 2005; Molleda et al, 2017) show that organizations ranging from corporations to social movements rely on networks that sometimes extend beyond the border of nation-states.

The **ideological identity model of public relations** is a historically based explanation that stresses the need of combining methodologies used in history such as document analysis with sociological tools such as qualitative interviews. A historically based explanation understands CISPES as a moving phenomenon and not as a fixed reality. Public relations scholarship is inclined to divide its research into snapshots of an organizational phenomenon (e.g., Grunig & Huang, 2000) or historical accounts of the past (e.g., Murphree, 2004; Munshi et al., 2017). Historical methodologies have the ability to explain the present because organizations, along with other social issues, are not objects but processes. By explaining these "processes," we can understand the journey of organizations to become something depending on their social conditions. Becoming an organization is a never-ending struggle between what the organization wants to be and what the context allows it to be. In this dialectic process, power is central because it opens or closes possibilities to modify social phenomena such as the formation of public opinion and policy-making.

Ewen (1996) describes how public relations in the U.S. emerged as a corporate response to progressive populism and muckraking journalism. Later, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt used public relations as a tool to bash corporations opposing the New Deal. In other words, public relations born as a power-grabbing strategy, led by a white elite, that had the goal to alter the political balance in U.S. society. In the **ideological identity model of public relations**, organizations are subject to national and international forces and they possess a limited ability to transform those forces. In the struggle to transform U.S. society, organizations such as CISPES used race and class markers as resources in attempting to contain Reagan's anti-communist agenda. Paradoxically, by relying on whiteness and the educational background of its members, CISPES reified the power that it despised. This is not because CISPES' activists were not committed allies. Rather, the use of whiteness and college education occurred because they were convenient avenues to challenge Reagan; these were unconscious recruiting behaviors and an aspiration held by Salvadoran radicals.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The central finding in this dissertation is the **process of intersectional recruiting**. As I have discussed, this model reveals a pattern of political mobilization in CISPES in which a privileged population -white and college-educated- negotiated a collective identity with members of a vulnerable population –Salvadoran refugees. This type of organization can be called **white purposive settings** and their goal is to use the activists' privilege to influence policymaking on behalf of a weaker group. As a **white purposive setting,** CISPES entered in crisis due to transformations in the demographic makeup of the organization, the emergence of a feminist agenda, the growth of Latinx populations in U.S., peace talks between the Salvadoran government and FMLN, the end of the Cold War and change in the geopolitical priorities of the U.S. government.

The second relevant finding is to propose an **ideological identity model of public relations** with six concentric levels (the organization, the ideology of the organization, the demography, organizational-PR routines, national social system and international social system). This model proves that ideology and demography are the core elements in the formation of collective identities and public relations strategies. In the case of CISPES, the organization had a "decentralized-centralized" public relations approach in which the strategy was developed by the headquarters in Washington D.C. – with inputs from the local chapters- and the execution relied heavily on the creativity of the local and regional chapters. CISPES' public relations strategies reveal that they were designed to match the skills and resources of its white college-educated membership. Likewise, the **ideological identity model of public relations** stresses that all

organizations are influenced in different degrees by the national and international social system that surrounds them.

The events analyzed in this dissertation occurred in the context of the Salvadoran civil war in which the U.S. government supported military and political efforts of the Salvadoran government against the leftist insurgency of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). This occurred when there was a resurgence of a Third World Left perspective in the minds of U.S. radicals. In the 1980s, CISPES was embedded in a context in which a combination of anti-racist and anti-imperialist discourses helped build solidarity in favor of the Salvadoran people and the FMLN. This situation is different today when the struggle for racial equality and anti-imperialistic agenda appears to run in parallel dimensions with few intersections. While in the 1980s, the anti-racist struggle had anti-imperialistic undertones (i.e., Black Power, Chicano movement); today, race is circumscribed as a domestic issue that only can be fixed through the burgeoning of diversity efforts in public and private institutions. A similar phenomenon can be seen in the discussions on Central America in the U.S., especially about El Salvador. For most of the liberal establishment, the only viable approach to solve social inequality, gender violence and homophobia seems to be supporting intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations, funding local NGOs and shaping the U.S. economic assistance policy. The idea that the best way to help Salvadorans and Central Americans was to support local radical organizations that will achieve profound transformation is gone. The weakness of an anti-imperialistic agenda in the U.S. and the growth in numbers and educational achievements of Latinx communities makes it less likely to replicate CISPES' model today. Latinx populations have more political power now than in the

1980s, and the intermediation of whites seems less appropriate than before.

However, there are lessons from CISPES that are still relevant today. CISPES shows us that geopolitical views and political ideologies heavily influence race perceptions in collective mobilization. People do not only "see" race, but their views of racial hierarchies implies a vision of how the world should be structured (e.g. U.S. as a leader or as a follower) and the type of society that must be pursued (e.g., the community at the center or the individual). Racial political projects are also ideological and geopolitical. The idea of race as a domestic category is reified by a trend in social science that locates race analysis within the boundaries of nation-states, especially in the U.S. and western countries. We need to bring to the examination of radical public relations a vision of race that is transnational and flexible. The formation of race and the status that race may provide can change when the subject crosses borders (i.e. a "white" middle class educated Salvadoran could easily become racialized as an undocumented brown or person of color immigrant in the U.S. context). For decades, the humanities have published groundbreaking works on the connections of race, postcolonialism and decoloniality. Social science approaches need to explore them and use them in their effort to build sociological views of local and transnational activism.

CISPES' case also sheds light on how undocumented activists engage in a relationship with individuals with more economic and cultural capital. In CISPES' case, white activists were able to play the role of leaders and followers at the same time. The same happened to Salvadoran refugees who were aware of their limits in influencing U.S. audiences. With this antecedent, future research should explore what the racial dynamics in the DREAMERS movements are. How do they interact with white upper-middle-class

activists? What are the boundaries of that relationship? The examination of the DREAMERS can reveal new facets of the complex nature of inter-racial activism. Can people detach themselves from their social conditions when they are resisting a greater power? No, but they can start the journey to become "something" in alliance with like-minded individuals. Political mobilization is not for puritanical minds, but for pragmatic activists who can understand their contradictions.

APPENDIX A

ABBREVIATED REFERENCES OF PRIMARY DOCUMENTS

Undated

CISPES Madison (undated). El Salvador update review.

1977

Committee for a Free Chile (1977). Wanted for murder General Pinochet.

1980

CISPES D.C. (1980). El Salvador: A people in struggle.

CISPES D.C. (1980). U.S. military involvement in El Salvador 1947-1980.

1981

Carp (1981). U.S. policy Challenge in El Salvador.

CISPES Boston (1981). Resolution of the Boston labor conference against the U.S. intervention in El Salvador.

CISPES Boston (1981). Press statement of Boston labor leader in U.S. intervention in El Salvador.

CISPES Chicago (1981). Letter for a dinner to discuss crucial issues for American workers behind the crisis in the Central American country of El Salvador.

CISPES Madison (1981, December 16). Letter to support people's book.

CISPES Seattle Labor Task (April 25, 1981). Invitation to union to take a strong stand against U.S. intervention in El Salvador.

El Salvador Alert (June 1, 1981). One hundred thousand voices.

1984

CISPES South East Regional Office (1984). Fourth quarter SE regional report.

Medical Aid for El Salvador (August, 27, 1984). Report on El Salvador bombings.

1985

CISPES D.C. (April 17, 1985). Urgent letter about 1986-87 foreign Aid Authorizations bill (Central America aid).

CISPES D.C. (June 6, 1985). Letter about Q86-8T foreign aid authorizations Bill (HR 1555).

CISPES Midwest Regional Office (September 21, 1985). Letter about the recent shipment of twelve additional attack helicopters to the Salvadoran Air Force.

CISPES Northwest Regional Office (October 1, 1985). Letter for up the campaign to Stop the Bombing.

CISPES Midwest Regional Office(October 20, 1985). Midwest CISPES regional conference Update.

CISPES Midwest Regional Office (October 24, 1985). A call to participate in the 1986 National Coordinators Conference.

1986

CISPES D.C. (1986) Report of delegation of U.S. citizens for peace a friendship with El Salvador.

CISPES D.C. (1986). Strategy for the 1986-1987 foreign aid authorization.

CISPES Chicago (1986). Chicago Alert.

CISPES Midwest Regional Office (1986) 6th annual Midwest CISPES conference.

CISPES Midwest Regional Office (1986) CISPES Midwest Regional Report.

CISPES New York (1986). El Salvador, six years of struggle.

CISPES Southwest Regional Office (February 14, 1986). Summary of response to Guazapa offensive.

CISPES D.C. (June 6, 1986). Human rights attacks update.

CISPES D.C. (October 15, 1986). Earthquake update.

CISPES D.C. (October 20, 1986). Analysis of the current conjectures brought about and heightened by the earthquake.

CISPES D.C. (October 20, 1986). Urgent action alert.

CISPEs D.C. (October 20, 1986). Earthquake update.

CISPES D.C. (October 24, 1986). Army offensive continue in aftermath of Salvadoran earthquake.

CISPES D.C. (October 25, 1986). Letter informing fundraising of $30,000 as a response to the devastating earthquake.

CISPES D.C. (November 6, 1986). Earthquake relief update.

1987

CISPES D.C. (1987). National Referendum to end the war in Central America.

CISPES Chicago (1987). Transcription of presentation by Rep. Stephen Solarz.

CISPES D.C. (January 8, 1987). Congress update.

CISPES D.C. (February 5, 1987). Call for the National Referendum to End the War in Central America.

CISPES D.C. (February 12, 1987). Congressional update.

CISPES D.C. (February 27, 1987). Congressional update.

CISPES D.C. (March 25, 1987). Congressional update.

CISPES D.C. (March 13, 1987). Congressional update an timeline on Central America.

1988

Steps to Freedom (1988). Letter with information in last minute information on the October 17 Pentagon Action.

Center for Constitutional Rights (March 10, 1988). Second round of FBI files raise new question of FBI misconduct in Central America probe.

CISPES New Jersey (July 1, 1988). Fiesta de Solidaridad con El Salvador, the people will win.

CISPES Midwest Regional Office (December 20, 1988) Letter about the 7th Annual Midwest CISPES Conference-E1 Salvador, on the threshold of victory.

1990

Center for Constitutional Rights (January, 1990). FBI field office files: New Haven.

CISPES D.C. (October 23, 1990). The Senate vote on El Salvador.

National Agenda for Peace in El Salvador. (June 5, 1990). Washington Update.

CISPES D.C. (June 35, 1990). Update on Congress and Appropiation bill.

CISPES D.C. (Abril 4, 1990). Congressional action alert.

CISPES D.C. (March, 27, 1990). Congressional floor votes on El Salvador likely soon.

CISPES D.C. (March 22, 1990). Urgent action on El Salvador legislation.

CISPES D.C. (March 22, 1990). Early vote on El Salvador likely in House.

CISPES D.C. (February 9, 1990). Congressional update.

CISPES Southwest Regional Office (April 7, 1990). Southwest region report.

APPENDIX B

TIMELINE

September 11, 1973: Coup d'état in Chile against the constitutional government of President Salvador Allende.
November 7, 1973: Congress and Senate approve federal law War Power Resolution that controls the ability of the President to send troops to foreign wars.
August 4, 1974: President Richard Nixon resigned.
January 14, 1975: End of the House Un-American Activities Committee in the Congress.
January 20, 1977: Inauguration of President Jimmy Carter
July 17, 1979: Sandinistas entered Managua after months of struggle against the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza.
March 24, 1980: Archbishop of San Salvador Oscar Arnulfo Romero is killed while he was celebrating mass in San Salvador.
October 10, 1981: Birth of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN)
October 1980: Birth of CISPES as a network of a grassroots organization.
December 2, 1980: Four Catholic nuns are raped and killed in El Salvador by the Salvadoran Army.
December 12, 1980: The FMLN called for a democratic alliance, a foreign policy of non-alignment, and supports a democratic government that includes "business people."
January 3, 1981: Two U.S. land reform consultants Michael Hammer and Mark Pearlman and the Director of the Salvadoran Land Reform Institute, Jose Rodolfo Viera are killed by death squads in San Salvador.
January 10, 1981: First military offensive of the FMLN.
January 20, 1981: Inauguration of President Ronald Reagan
February 23, 1981: State Department published the white paper "Communist Interference in El Salvador." The U.S. government "reveals" the contacts between the FMLN and governments of the socialist block.
March 2, 1981: Reagan sent $20 million in military aid to El Salvador using his emergency power.
March 24, 1981: The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations approves $5 million in military loans to El Salvador (8 votes in favor and seven against)
May 3, 1981: At least 20,000 demonstrators marched on the Pentagon to protest the United States military assistance to El Salvador
April 1, 1981: the U.S. stops economic assistance to Nicaragua. President Reagan promises to restart it if Nicaragua halts their support of the FMLN.
May 3, 1981: CISPES march to the Pentagon against U.S. aid to El Salvador.
August 12, 1981: U.S. Assistant Secretary of Inter American Affairs, Thomas Enders, met with the Nicaraguan government and reaffirmed Reagan's opposition to Sandinista support to FMLN)

August 28, 1981: The governments of France and Mexico recognize the FMLN as a "representative political force."
December 11, 1981: The Salvadoran army killed hundreds of civilians during what it has been called the Mozote Massacre that occurred in the department of Morazán.
December 9, 1981: The International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1981 (H.R.3566) requires that the President certifies the Speaker of the House of Representative and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that El Salvador's Government is not violating human rights. If the certification is not made, the military aid can be halted.
January 28, 1982: The New York Times report for the first time the Mozote Massacre and at the same time, President Reagan certified to the U.S. Congress that the government of El Salvador had fulfilled the condition to receive more military assistance.
December 14, 1982: The House approves $81.3 million in U.S. military aid to El Salvador for the fiscal year of 1983.
November 2, 1982: the people of Multnomah County, Oregon, voted 134,859 "yes" and 44,663 "no" to approve an initiative calling on the federal government to end all military aid to the government of El Salvador and to withdraw all military personnel from that country.
December 19, 1982: Senate approves $81.3 million in U.S. military aid.
September 30, 1983: House votes bill HR 4042 which ban on military aid to El Salvador if the president does not certify the Congress on improvement on human rights. Sponsored by Rep. Michael Barnes (MD) (8th district) Takoma Park, CISPES.
November 8, 1983: the people of San Francisco voted in favor of Proposition N, which call the federal government to "end all military aid to El Salvador and withdraw of military personnel from El Salvador."
November 17, 1983: Senate voted in favor of HR 4042 with no changes
November 30, 1983: Reagan vetoed a bill (HR 4042), which would have prohibited military aid to El Salvador unless he certified to Congress every six months that of progress on human rights in El Salvador.
May 9 1984: The Studds amendment, which would have ended U.S. military aid to El Salvador, was defeated by a 2-to-l margin in the House. Republican version was adopted, and this did not need human right certification.
June 1985: first CISPES convention and the organization is transformed from a coalition of grassroots organization to a unified organization.
February 19, 1986: Reagan says that a Nicaraguan public relations campaign to influence U.S. public opinion is "a campaign of lies."
March 27, 1986: Republican-controlled Senate narrowly approves $100 million for Contras (53-47). Among the Democratic Senators who supported was Bill Bradley (New Jersey).
August 13, 1986: Congress approved a $100 million packages to fund contras in Nicaragua.
January 23, 1988: Concert "Blues for Salvador" organized by New El Salvador Today (NEST) in Oakland California. Carlos Santana, Jerry Garcia, and Bonnie Ratt played it the event.

June 1, 1989: The newly elected President of El Salvador, Alfredo Cristiani, started his five-year tenure as head of state. Cristiani belongs to the right-wing party Republican National Alliance (ARENA).
November 11, 1989: FMLN launches its final offensive.
November 16, 1989: Four Catholic priests and two Salvadoran women are killed by the Army.
February 27, 1990: FSLN lost elections in Nicaragua.
October 19, 1990: The Senate voted 74-25 to withhold 50% of U.S. military aid to the El Salvador government.
January 12, 1992: The Salvadoran government and the FMLN signed a peace agreement at the Chapultepec Castle in Mexico City.

Sources: CQ Press Library (http://library.cqpress.com), The New York Times, The Washington Post and Los Angeles Times. Bibliography: LeoGrande, W. M. (1998). *Our Own Backyard: The United States in Central America, 1977-1992*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press. Grandin, G. (2006). Empire's workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the rise of the new imperialism. New York City: Metropolitan Books.

APPENDIX C

ABBREVIATIONS

BPR	Bloque Popular Revolucionario *Popular Revolutionary Block*
CISPES	*Committe in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador*
FDR	Frente Democrático Revolucionario *Democratic Revolutionary Front*
FMLN	Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional *Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front*
FSLN	Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional *Sandinista National Liberation Front*
FPL	Fuerzas Populares de Liberación Popular Forces of Liberation
NOMA:	Non-Aligned Movement
UR-19	Universitario Revolucionarios 19 de Julio Revolutionary Students 19th July

APPENDIX D

BRIEF HISTORY OF REVOLUTIONARIES

BPR: the Popular Revolutionary Block (BPR) was the FPL 's mass organization. It was created in 1975 and coordinated the union and peasant organization associated with the FPL.

FDR: In April 1980, a coalition of Social Christian and Social Democratic parties formed the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR). On November 27, 1980, a paramilitary group killed six members of the FDR leadership. Later that year, the FDR formed an Alliance with the FMLN and became the political wing of the Salvadoran guerrilla. In 1988, the FDR transformed itself into the political party Democratic Convergence (CD) and participated in the legislative elections in that year.

FMLN: the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) was founded in October 1980 as a coalition of five insurgent groups: Salvadoran Communist Party (PCS), Popular Forces of Liberation (FPL), the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), the National Resistance (RN), and the Revolutionary Party of the Central American Workers (PRTC). In January 1992, the FMLN and the Salvadoran government signed in Mexico City a peace agreement that ended a 12-year civil war. On September 1st, 1992, the FMLN became a political party and in 1994 participated in its first elections. In June 1995, the FMLN dissolved the structures of the five organizations and became a unified party.

FPL: In 1972, teachers and former members of the Salvadoran Communist Party (PCS) founded the Popular Forces of Liberation (FPL). In 1979, the FPL joined forces with the PC and RN to create the Unified Revolutionary Directory (DRU), which was the antecedent of what later became the FMLN.

UR 19: the Revolutionary Students 19th July (UR-19) was a college activist organization with ties with the BPR and the FPL. The organization's name commemorated the date in which the army intervened at the University of El Salvador and took away the university's autonomy.

APPENDIX E

RECRUITMENT EMAIL SCRIPT

Hello,

I appreciate your interest in answering some questions. I am a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Oregon, so this project will be a part of my doctoral dissertation.

I am doing research on the perspective of former CISPES activists about CISPES political communication strategies and tactics between 1981-1991. I am interested in interviewing you because you were part of the organization and worked actively in the design and implementation of campaigns. Additionally, this research seeks to have your perspective of the changing demography in he U.S. between 1981-1991 and its impact in CISPES' political work.

If you agree to participate in this study, first you will be asked to engage in an in-person interview or a phone/Skype interview (your preference) that will be audio recorded at the location of your choice. If you decline to be audio recorded, you may choose to participate using a "notes only" option in which I will simply take handwritten notes while you speak. Either way, this interview will last for about 40 minutes and will include various questions regarding your experiences as CISPES activists. After that, you will be asked to complete a survey in which you will provide us confidential information about your age, racial background, yearly income, level of education, marital status and place of residence and birth.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time there will be no penalty.

With all this in mind, would you be willing to participate in this in this research? If so, would you prefer to meet in-person or speak via phone?

If not, thank you very much for your time and consideration!

Best,

Ricardo Valencia
PhD Candidate
School of Journalism and Communication
University of Oregon

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol
Semi-structured interview
CISPES

Background
Could you tell me more about your background? How would you describe yourself racially or ethnically?
What was the occupation of your parents?
Where did you study your college?
When did you realize for the first time you were white? When did you realize for the first time your social class and gender?
Do you speak Spanish?

Enrolling in CISPES
When was the first time you were involved in activism?
How would you define yourself politically in your time you were involved in CISPES?
Could you describe me the time you decided to join CISPES?
I would like to know more about your relationship with CISPES
How long were involved with CISPES? Where?
How did you get involved with CISPES? How and who recruits you?
Why did CISPES? Why El Salvador?
How would you describe CISPES' ideology?
Who were you close friends in CISPES? Could you tell me their backgrounds?
What were the long-term plans of CISPES? Medium-term? Short-term?

CISPES STRATEGIES
What did you do during your time in CISPES? Staff or volunteer?
How did you plan the demonstrations?
How did you define the objectives?
How did CISPES assign the roles of communicating with external and internal audiences?
Who were your imagined external audiences? And potential recruiters?
How did you select the politicians you wanted to influence?
Who were the key politicians you wanted to influence?
How did you relate with the media?
Does speaking Spanish help your work?
How did your skills help you in your job to influence U.S. policy toward El Salvador?
Do you think that the fact that you were white (Latino) was an advantage or disadvantage for you? How did you see that your racial or ethnic background was disadvantage or advantage?
How often did you bring people connected to the FMLN to talk to your activists? Why? How was the process?
How did you communicate with each other if you feel you were under surveillance?
How did you define the campaigns you worked with?

Members of CISPES were creating other organizations. Why?

How were the organizations you worked with the best? Why did you choose them?
How were your relationships with Salvadoran nationals?
CISPES MESSAGES
How did you define the type of message you will use?
What was the relevance of Vietnam as part of the message?
How did you try to frame the FMLN?
How did you react to Reagan's association of the FMLN with communism, Cuba and the Soviets?
What was the difference between the discourse for the outside audience and the one you used for your activists and supporters?
What was the idea of the Salvadoran people you wanted to challenge? How did you do it?
Tell more about your work translating Venceremos, the FMLN's newspaper?

Historical Moment
Could you tell me what were the political defining moments your tenure in CISPES?
Do you remember a big debate about CISPES strategies and tactics? Any contention?

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