

indigenous origin. After this bloodbath, began a period of modernization and military rule. (Christian, 1986: 94)

Endemic Structural Violence

In Rupesinghe's description of the Continuum of Peace and Conflict, he identifies five stages of conflict and hostility that can exist between parties. He also recognizes that in reality there are no clear demarcations between various stages of conflict. (Rupesinghe, 1998: 63) Rather, his *Continuum of Conflict* analogy provides a useful framework to examine El Salvador's

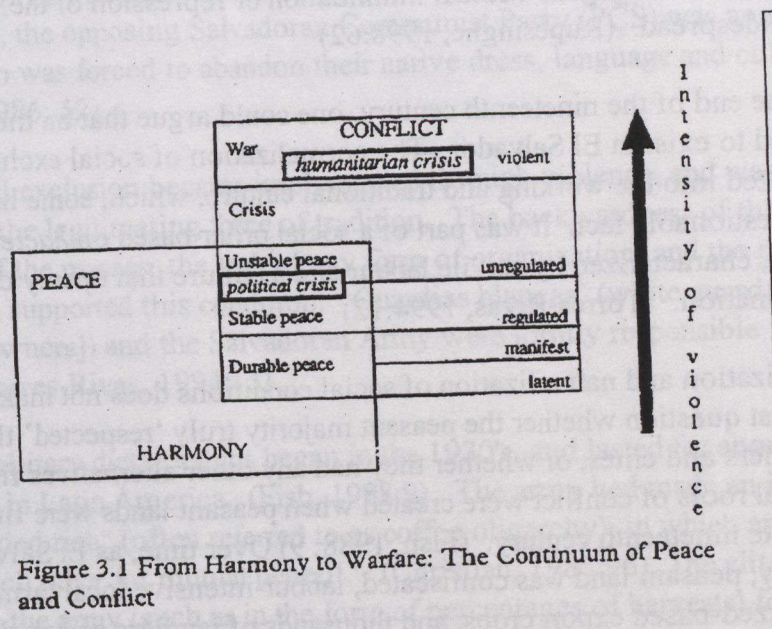


Figure 3.1 From Harmony to Warfare: The Continuum of Peace and Conflict

history. As the diagram indicates, the first and most ideal stage is *durable peace*, where societies exist in complete peace and harmony, without any social tensions or conflicts. The ruling elite have political legitimacy, and values and interests are sought within a legitimate framework. Conflicts of interest exist, but do not degenerate into violence, and the intensity of hostility and aggression between parties is not high. (Rupesinghe, 1998:61) This scenario would be an *ideal* target for El Salvador to pursue, in its struggle towards establishing stability and a *legacy of peace*. However, given El Salvador's long history of military based political power and its present conditions, reaching this stage will be a long and ambitious process. Ever since its independence from Spain in 1821, El Salvador "has almost always been governed by men whose right to power was based on guns." (Torres-Rivas, 1994:11)

The second stage described by Rupesinghe is *stable peace*. In this instance, levels of hostility are higher; groups are mutually distrustful of each other, yet a state of stable peace exists. However, a political crisis may cause tensions to rise, and extremist or marginal political movements to appear, which emphasizes the differences between groups. The relationship between the ruling political elite and opposition groups may become more laden. Small degrees of violence and oppression can occur, but the rule of law remains and is still respected by all sides. (Rupesinghe, 1998:61)