Resilience Beyond Rebellion: How Wartime Organizational Structures Affect Rebel-to-Party Transformation

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Abstract

Scholars have established that the best prospects for long-term stability and democratization in war-torn states occur when former rebels compete in post-conflict elections. However, only half of the insurgencies with political aspirations successfully reinvent themselves as lasting opposition parties. Why are some rebel groups able to seamlessly transition into political parties while others revert to violence or die trying? My dissertation draws on insights from organizational sociology to model the process and risks of rebel-to-party transition. I identify three wartime domains that I call *proto-party* structures: shadow governance, political messaging, and social service wings. Proto-party structures represent a surprising dimension of rebel organizational diversity. Crucially, however, not all insurgencies have them. I demonstrate that these structures—by mirroring the key components of political party organizations—provide insurgencies with two decisive advantages when attempting to transition into a party: (1) relevant experience that translates into the political arena, and (2) an easier path to transition by repurposing existing structures rather than building a party from scratch. I use a mixed-method approach—combining statistical analyses on a novel dataset with process tracing in three cases—to test my organizational theory of transition.

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Confronted with life's hardships, some people snap, and others snap back.
–Diane Coutu (2002)

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[1]The mission statement of the Annals of Improbable Research and the Ig Nobel Awards.

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[2] most

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Chapter 1

The Puzzle of Rebel-to-Party Transformation

1.1 Motivating Puzzle

In October of 1992, after eighteen years of fighting against the ruling party in the Mozambican Civil War, the Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Renamo) laid down their weapons and signed a cease-fire and power-sharing agreement with the central government. In the eighteen months following the UN peace accords, RENAMO ostensibly morphed from a militant rebel group into a legitimate political party: they successfully ran campaigns, mobilized constituents, and won parliamentary seats under the same name once used to recruit combatants and terrorize civilians. To date, RENAMO has held their post as the main opposition party in the Mozambican government.

Yet if we look to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone, a very different story emerges. Faced with nearly the same opportunities for power-sharing as RENAMO, the RUF failed to mobilize sufficient political resources or support and the group fractured. Though failure to transform into a political party is unquestionably the *less* surprising of the two outcomes, it is also the most consequential. Research on civil war termination is beginning to converge on a critical insight: civil wars that end by incorporating former rebels into new political institutions are far less likely to relapse into conflict. As such, the divergent trajectories of RENAMO and the RUF raise an important question regarding the operations and capabilities of rebel groups: *Why are some rebel groups able to seamlessly transition into political parties on the heels of war while others die trying?*

As a field, we have a decent grasp of what conduces to survival on the battlefield, but why are some insurgencies more resilient than others when the fighting stops? I argue that the answer lies in the surprising diversity of rebel organizational structures. Insurgencies are conventionally portrayed as homogeneous, combat-centric organizations made up of unemployable foot-soldiers. Yet, nearly half of the groups attempting to transition muster the administrative skills and civilian support required to succeed in the electoral arena. The empirical record flies in the face of expectations from the literature,

and existing theories lack criteria for parsing success from failure.

My dissertation represents a major shift in modeling rebel-to-party transition by placing the insurgent organization at the center of the analysis. Drawing on organizational sociology, I identify three wartime domains that I call proto-party structures: shadow governance wings, social service wings, and political messaging wings. Proto-party structures mirror the key elements of party organizations; but not all rebel groups have them. I argue that these organizational similarities provide some insurgencies with two decisive advantages when it comes time to transition into a political party: (1) relevant experience that translates into the political arena, and (2) an easier path to transition by repurposing existing structures rather than building a party from scratch.

Delving into the Puzzle

Rebel-to-party transformation is a puzzle any way you turn it. If we start from the conventional wisdom about rebels, we must ask how "full-time members of armed groups" (Kalyvas 2006), who are only engaged in "low-skilled work" (Berman et al. 2011), and necessarily involved in active battle (Humphreys & Weinstein 2008) suddenly acquire the skills to write campaign platforms, mobilize constituents, and enact policy. Alternately, if we start from the analytic standpoint of insurgencies as organizations and ask about the process of transforming a rebel organization into a party organization, we find that the theoretical and empirical insights from organizational theory only intensify the mystery. Organizational transformation is difficult, risky, and costly. The core of the problem, however, is not that change is impossible, but that major structural changes are often "rare and costly and seem to subject an organization to greatly increased risk of death" (Hannan & Freeman 1984, 156).

Of course, not all scholars share the view that organizational change is detrimental by necessity. As Haveman argues, "organizational change may benefit performance and survival chances if it occurs in response to a dramatic environmental restructuring and builds on existing routines and competencies" (1992, 48). However, according to modal characterization of insurgent groups as homogenous, combat-centric organizations, we should have no reason to believe that they have "existing routines" or "competencies" in the domains needed to make this transition. Indeed, as Hannan and Freeman pithily observe, "failing churches do not become retail stores" (1977, 957). Yet, in the face of these challenges, nearly fifty percent of insurgencies given the opportunity to transition into parties at the cessation of war manage to do so successfully.

1.2 Significance and Contribution

The questions driving this dissertation have wide-ranging implications across scholarship and policy alike. At the most specific level, my research suggests that our conventional approach to rebel-to-party transformation is fundamentally incomplete. On the one hand, some explanations focus too heavily on individual motives and incentives: citing cease-fire agreements, battle fatigue, and disarmament and demobilization

programs as the drivers of transition (Nindorera 2008). These explanations, however, only account for rebel-to-*non*-rebel transformation. But it is far easier to quit one's job than it is to change careers. On the other hand, a different set of explanations focuses too heavily on external conditions, citing institutional opportunities for participation (Shugart 1992, Berti 2013), third-party sponsorship (Acosta 2014), and the end of the Cold War (Matanock 2013, Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz 2016). This brand of explanations accounts only for the *opportunity* to transition, but not the *capacity*. Consequently, they remain generally incapable of parsing success from failure. Moreover, no accounts to date address the transition process.

By identifying wartime organizational structures as the locus of future party capacity, my research gives shape to the transitional phase and lays the foundation for a more comprehensive understanding of militant organizations. On the first point, I demonstrate that groups with structures associated with civilian administration and local embeddedness have an existing political skill-set and, thus, an easier time building a loyal constituency as they transition. This insight contributes to the post-conflict scholarship by parsing success from failure, and to the party formation scholarship by identifying how rebels reorganize to become lasting participants in a democratic polity.

My dissertation also has key implications for our understanding of civil war termination. Scholars at the frontier of civil war research have demonstrated that incorporating former rebels into post-conflict elections is one of the most tenable paths toward stability and democratization (Hartzell & Hoddie 2007, Matanock 2013). Together with a handful of high-profile success cases—such as Lebanon, El Salvador, and Mozambique—these insights have made rebel incorporation the name of the game in conflict negotiation. However, the corresponding policy recommendations that derive from this research unjustifiably assume that all rebel groups are equally well-equipped to transition into functioning parties. In reality, only about half of these political aspirants succeed at reinventing themselves as lasting opposition parties, while the others fracture or revert back to violence. Failed transitions not only come with a risk of renewed conflict, but they also may pave the way for "reformed" autocrats to return to single-party rule when their competition erodes. As such, rebel-to-party transition represents an important yet delicate opportunity for post-conflict democratization.

Moving beyond a purely academic understanding of rebel-to-party transition, my research addresses critical policy questions regarding post-conflict democratization, electoral participation, and the construction of democratic institutions. First, by understanding the organizational features that make some insurgencies more viable candidates for transition, policy-makers can alter the terms of negotiated settlements to better exploit opportunities and mitigate risks in a given context. This insight can help us move away from one-size-fits-all conflict-resolution strategies, and toward custom solutions based on identifiable traits of the former insurgency. Where post-conflict democratization is a less viable solution, policy-makers can create negotiated settlements that focus more on disarmament, demobilization, and other strategies that mitigate the risk of conflict resurgence.

1.3 An Organizational Approach

The central argument of my dissertation starts from a single premise: at its core, rebel-to-party transition is an organizational phenomenon. This process involves taking an insurgent *organization*—a group with a pre-existing structure, repertoire of actions, and set of goals—and transforming it into a new organization of a fundamentally different type. Success and failure happen at the organizational level: the insurgent group transitions into a party, reverts back to violence, disintegrates, or turns into something else entirely. I argue that getting traction on rebel-to-party transition requires a new analytic focus that places the insurgent organization at the center of the analysis. This shift raises three central questions that underly my theoretical framework: *What changes? How does it change?* and *Under what conditions can change occur?*

Drawing on insights from organizational sociology, I develop a three-part framework of rebel-to-party transition that addresses each question in turn. First, I address what changes: what needs to happen to a rebel organization to make it a party organization? I present a novel conception of insurgent organizational structures that reveals an unforeseen diversity in the roles and activities in which rebels engage during wartime. In addition to the structures that support combat, some rebel groups have a variety of political and administrative structures that constitute integral parts of the organization. By comparing the structure of insurgent organizations to that of political parties, I identify three wartime organizational domains that constitute what I call *proto-party structures:* shadow governance wings, social service wings, and political messaging wings. Functionally, proto-party structures in rebel groups mirror the key roles of party organizations; but not all rebel groups have them. My central argument is that these organizational similarities grant insurgencies two decisive advantages when transitioning into a political party on the heels of war. First, proto-party structures imbue rebel groups with relevant political experience needed to function as a political party. Second, for these proto-party insurgencies, transformation only involves augmenting existing structures, which is less taxing on the organization than building new structures from scratch.

Following from this insight, the second part of my framework models the *process* of change. How do rebel groups undergo transformation into a party? How do proto-party structures factor into the process? Current explanations of transition rely on an assumption of structural novelty: the post-war period is characterized by a scramble as former-rebels quickly acquire the personnel and resources to build a party from scratch. I show, however, that—depending on their organizational structure—rebel groups face two paths to transition: rebuilding (as the literature posits) and reprioritization. The latter path occurs when organizations change by personnel and resources to existing structures (rather than building structures anew). This path is easier and and it significantly reduces the chances of organizational death (March 1991, 71). As Stark demonstrates in his exploration of post-socialist reconstruction in Eastern Europe, actors are best able to build new organizational forms in unfamiliar contexts by "redeploying available resources" and "improvising on practiced routines" (1996, 995). I argue that rebel groups with proto-party structures face an easier path to transition by repurposing politically salient departments. In contrast, more homogenous, combat-centric insurgencies must proceed

by building a party from scratch.

Finally, since rebel groups neither emerge nor operate in a vacuum, the third part of my framework addresses the external conditions affecting organizational change. I identify three environmental or institutional factors that shape the path to legitimate politics: weak governance, lootable resources, and post-war political institutions. I argue that weak state governance provides opportunities for many proto-party structures to take root. Crucially, this is not a functionalist argument; I do not assume insurgencies will fill in administrative structures wherever needed. I do, however, expect that civilian engagement is easier where state oversight is minimal. Conversely, I argue that the presence of lootable resources[1] acts as a spoiler to transition—incentivizing rebels to support the organization through extraction and sales, rather than through social and political engagement. Finally, since electoral institutions shape the barriers to entry into the political arena, I argue that proportional representation systems present fewer obstacles as small, nascent parties get off the ground.

1.4 Data, Methods, and Scope

My empirical work proceeds in three parts. First, I evaluate previous analyses of rebel-to-party transition, which in turn motivates the construction of a novel dataset. Then I use a two-stage mixed-method research design to test my theoretical framework. The evaluation I present addresses severe problems with the inclusion criteria of existing datasets used to examine rebel-to-party transitions: all militant non-state actors. This criterion produces overly-inclusive datasets in which the number of failed transitions is artificially inflated by groups (e.g. the Animal Liberation Front) that differ systematically from plausible candidates for political transition. I develop a set of theory-driven principles for case inclusion, which I use to construct an original dataset to ensure that the failure cases are a relevant comparison set: the Insurgent Structures and Outcomes (ISO) data (1975–2012). Drawing on primary and secondary sources, I code detailed organizational traits (proto-party structures, size, cohesion, and previous adaptations) of seventy-eight unique insurgencies. ISO includes all insurgent groups worldwide that had the legal opportunity and expressed a desire to transition into political parties.

To test the two dimensions of my theoretical framework—the nature and process of rebel-to-party transition—I develop a two-stage mixed-method design. Using my ISO dataset, the first stage consists of a cross-national statistical analysis to test organizational structure against conventional explanations. My analysis yields two important results: (1) proto-party structures are associated with a substantial increase in the likelihood of successful transition, (2) previous results appear to be driven more by artifacts in existing datasets than by real-word trends. I am in the process of revising this chapter into an article manuscript addressing the need for better standards of inclusion criteria

[1]Lootable natural resources specifically refer to those resources that do not require major infrastructure to extract, such as alluvial diamonds, gold, and coca. These resources are distinct from infrastructure-intensive resources like coal and hydrocarbons, which insurgents are unlikely to be able to leverage in their favor.

and dataset creation. I anticipate submitting the manuscript to the Journal of Peace Research by mid-2017.

My second stage uses within-case analysis to test my hypotheses about the process of change. Using process tracing in three cases—Mozambique, Sierra Leone, and El Salvador—I show that the transition sequence unfolds differently for proto-party insurgencies. Evidence from the ground reveals that wartime structures are often repurposed to take on similar roles in the new party, thus corroborating the central role of organizational structures in rebel-to-party transition. In the Salvadoran case, I exploit geographic variation in the FMLN's wartime structures to test my theory at the sub-national level. I find that the cadres with more established proto-party wings not only form the core of the nascent party, but regions with more developed governance structures also cast more votes for the former-rebels. The theoretical framework and findings have clear implications for our understanding of post-conflict democratization, political participation, and the construction of negotiated settlements and state-building policies.

1.5 Resilience or Metamorphosis?

Before I delve into an exploration of the variables that facilitate insurgent resilience and transition into political parties, I address a potential critique concerning the nature of transition. Specifically, the very idea of a resilience framework raises the question of whether rebel groups that successfully transition are truly exhibiting resilience, or whether they are instead exhibiting something more akin to metamorphosis. In the former case, rebel groups transition in response to an exogenous (or semi-exogenous) shock; while in the latter case, rebels would be expected to transform into political parties at some optimal stage in their lifecycle. In other words, might it just be that rebels transition into political parties when they are *ready* to do so?

If it is true that rebel groups choose only to come to the negotiating table when they are ready to become parties, then a resilience framework would be misguided. The "readiness" alternative implies a fundamentally different set of questions and variables than those put forth here. We would instead want to ask, *At what point or age does a rebellion become "ready" to transition?* The end of a civil war would not constitute a shock to the insurgent organization—or at least, it would constitute much less of a shock—since the leadership would have planned for it. So, the question becomes, how can we tell resilience from metamorphosis? And furthermore, are successful cases exhibiting one or the other or a combination of both? This section tests a fundamental assumption of the theoretical model: that the process of transition comes with an increased risk of organizational death. I begin this section with a discussion of the type of evidence that would allow us to evaluate the metamorphosis (i.e. the readiness) hypothesis as well as the resilience hypothesis. I then turn to the empirical record, drawing on both case-specific evidence in Mozambique and El Salvador as well as broader empirical trends in civil war termination to argue in favor of resilience.

Discerning Metamorphosis from Resilience

What kind of evidence would allow us to evaluate whether metamorphosis is a more plausible alternative? If transitioning organizations were doing so at the point of readiness, the voluntary metamorphosis would have a variety of empirical implications. First, at the organizational level, we would likely observe evidence of party-planning even before the war ends. Rebel groups with explicit plans to transition into political parties—who do so at their optimal time—would likely engage in preemptive civilian outreach, preemptive candidate selection, and internal political negotiations regarding the nature of the future party apparatus. Second, at the aggregate level, we would expect civil war termination—at least for success cases—to be distributed relatively uniformly across time. Conversely, there are a variety of empirical outcomes we should *not* expect if rebel groups are transitioning when they are ready to do so. Insurgent leaders should show little to no sign of panic or scrambling related to party-building on the heels of war. Additionally, any substantial clustering of civil war terminations (or rebel-to-party transformations, more specifically) would constitute evidence against metamorphosis.[2] Finally, we should not expect to see major fractures within post-conflict insurgencies *after* they have registered as a party. Presumably, were the organization ready to transition, internal conflicts would have been resolved prior to attaining party status.[3]

Empirical Evidence and Implications

Evidence from both the Salvadoran and Mozambican cases simultaneously run counter to the metamorphosis hypothesis and corroborate interpreting civil war termination as a shock to the system. Mounting evidence suggests that both organizations endured a great deal of stress as a direct result of initiating an organizational transformation earlier than they would have otherwise preferred. In the case of the FMLN, the organization registered as a legal political party by the end of 1992 in accordance with the settlement terms. Yet, it was not until 1993 when the organization held its *first* political convention to discuss campaign strategies (Wade 2008) in anticipation of the 1994 elections, which were already postponed at the FMLN's request (Wood 2000). Furthermore, shortly after registering as a party, two of the five composite groups of the FMLN split off due to a political schism within the organization that arose during the transition period. Had the FMLN transitioned when they were "ready," such major issues as campaign strategies, policy stances, and internal divisions would likely have been worked out prior to official

[2]The only case in which we should expect clustering of rebel-to-party transitions is, perhaps if all of the insurgencies-in-transition also emerged at the same time. Yet, even where we do find clustering of attempted transitions, insurgent groups range from just a few years old, to upwards of thirty years old.

[3]One could also argue that were rebels transitioning only when they felt ready to do so, we might observe fewer failures. This line of reasoning raises the question, how many fewer failures should there be? Certainly, we should not expect zero failures, since that expectation runs contrary to the organizational theory literature, which tells us that change is difficult, regardless of how well-planned it is. Since organizational transformation is difficult and always comes with a risk of failure (Hannan & Freeman 1977, Hannan & Freeman 1984), this argument is too ambiguous and too difficult to specify to constitute decisive evidence against the metamorphosis interpretation.

registration as a party.

If the FMLN's transition was a bit rocky, then RENAMO's was a mudslide. While RENAMO worked tirelessly toward gaining eventual recognition as a political party, no one could argue that they were ready to transition during the final round of the Rome Talks in 1989. Extreme poverty and resource scarcity in Mozambique hampered the development of RENAMO's political wing, which Manning (2002) describes as "skeletal" even at the time of the talks. She goes on to argue that RENAMO would use financial nitpicking (i.e. quibbling over resources and services promised to the nascent party) to stall the negotiations process while they searched for trained staff to fill positions on the peace commissions (2002, 108). Furthermore, even if RENAMO's scramble were only about resources (in addition to personnel), Dhlakama (RENAMO's leader) makes it clear that the organization is not adequately equipped to to transition when expected.

> This transition is a hard task, because the means we need have changed. During the war, we could attack an enemy position and capture enough material. In this work of transition things have changed; we need offices, fax machines, financing. And the means we have are not sufficient. The only problem we have in transforming ourselves is this one, of resources.

In addition to the case-specific evidence cited above, broader trends in civil war termination (and the ensuing rebel-to-party transformations) provide ample evidence against the metamorphosis interpretation. The most compelling piece of evidence in favor of interpreting civil war termination as an exogenous shock to insurgent organizations is the drop-off in active civil wars that accompanied the end of the Cold War. Since 1989, 231 civil wars have ended. Yet, just over a third of those, are clustered in a four year span from the time the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 to two years after the collapse of the Soviet Union.[4] Since many of the ongoing civil conflicts were proxy wars between Western powers and the Eastern Bloc, the end of the Cold War precipitated a sharp decline in international funding of the opposing sides, which, in turn, led to a corresponding decline in state and rebel capacity to continue fighting (Kalyvas & Balcells 2010). Figure 1.1 illustrates the clustering of civil war terminations marked by the end of the Cold War.

The implications of this trend are crucial for this study. The end of the Cold War represents an exogenous event that prompted the end of many civil conflicts and nonetheless, numerous successful rebel-to-party transformations happened in this same period. As such, for many transitions, at least, the empirical data suggest that many rebel groups were faced with an inevitable end to the war that did not correspond with a self-assessment of readiness to transition into political parties.

1.6 Outline

Chapter 2 asks two questions: (1) What *is* rebel-to-party transformation? and (2) What *explains* rebel-to-party transformation? Thus, from an analytic standpoint, the purpose

[4]These figures are based on the UCDP PRIO Dataset.

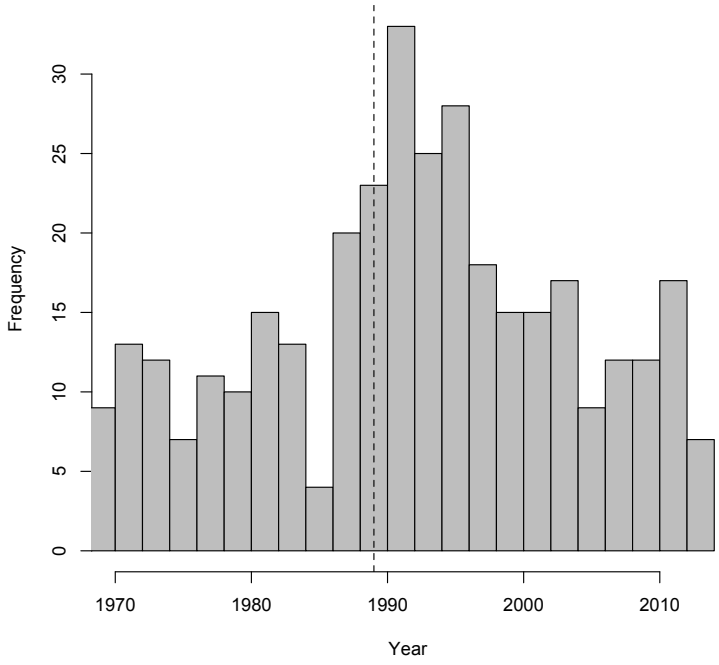


Figure 1.1: Civil War Terminations by Year (1970–2013)

of Chapter 2 is to engage previous work in a debate about conceptualization and explanations of the outcome. I argue that the binary conceptualizations used in previous work erroneously lump systematically different groups under a single heading, thereby obscuring results. To rectify this problem, I propose a four-stage conceptualization of the outcome in which each stage represents an observable and incrementally higher benchmark for success: (0) No transition, (1) Party registration, (2) One-hit wonders, and (3) Persistent opposition.

The second part of Chapter 2 presents and evaluates alternative explanations of rebel-to-party transition in the literature. I demonstrate that existing frameworks tend to rely on at least one of two problematic assumptions regarding the process and locus of change. Moreover, a significant amount of work on the subject identifies broad correlates of transition, such as the end of the Cold War, that provide no analytic traction in parsing success from failure. I synthesize the shortcomings in existing work to motivate the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 develops a novel framework by recasting rebel-to-party transition in an organizational light. I identify three wartime domains that constitute what I call *proto-party* structures: shadow governance wings, social service wings, and political messaging wings. Proto-party structures in rebel groups mirror the key roles of party organizations; but not all rebel groups have them. My central argument is that these organizational similarities provide insurgencies with two decisive advantages when it comes time to

transition into a political party: (1) relevant experience that translates into the political arena, and (2) an easier path to transition by repurposing existing structures rather than building a party from scratch. I derive a set of hypotheses concerning the factors that contribute to overall resilience, the organizational attributes that make party transition more (and less) likely, how the process of change unfolds, and the environmental factors that both facilitate and inhibit transition.

Chapter 4 is the first of four empirical chapters. The purpose of Chapter 4 is twofold: first, I engage in a critical debate about dataset construction—addressing inclusion criteria and the operationalization of rebel-to-party transformation. I demonstrate that previous coding rules have led to misleading and sometimes biased results. To rectify these problems, I introduce a theory-driven set of inclusion criteria, which I use to motivate the introduction of my original dataset on rebel-to-party transition, the *Insurgent Structures and Organizations (ISO) Dataset*. This dataset not only improves upon previous datasets in terms of the inclusion criteria and coding of the outcome, but it also includes nuanced coding of insurgent organizations' structural characteristics. The second part of this chapter conducts statistical analyses on the ISO data testing the extent to which proto-party structures predict transition success in the aftermath of civil war. My findings are consistent with theoretical expectations and vastly out-perform alternative explanations.

While the statistical analyses in Chapter 4 test whether organizational characteristics are associated with success on the outcome, the empirical work chapters 5, 6, and 7 test my hypotheses concerning the *process* of change using three case studies. I use primary and secondary sources gleaned through archival research, scraping news reports, and scholarly accounts of the conflict. Chapter 5 examines a difficult success case: Renamo's transformation in Mozambique. I trace the development of Renamo's organizational structures under Rhodesian command, then South African command, then full autonomous command once their sponsors finally cut the strings in the late 1980s. I find, contrary to many accounts, that the autonomous political legacy of Renamo goes back further than many acknowledge and that these structures facilitated Renamo's transition into a political party in the aftermath of the Mozambican Civil War.

Chapter 6 examines the transitional failure of the RUF in Sierra Leone. Although the economic and governance conditions during the Sierra Leone Civil War were comparable to those in Mozambique, the RUF was not able to make muster as a party. I trace the structure of the RUF and demonstrate that their funding structure (primarily through the sale of diamonds) fostered organizational homogeneity and disincentivized the creation of proto-party structures. I corroborate this argument by showing how the organization developed in a different and more politically-engaged direction in the eastern portion of Kailahun District where alluvial diamond mines were not present. In this area, RUF cadres exhibited a more diverse and more politically and socially active structure than in other areas of Sierra Leone. After the war ended, citizens of Kailahun were over eight times more likely to vote for the RUF than citizens anywhere else in the country.

Chapter 7 examines another success case, the FMLN in El Salvador. This case differs in important ways from the Mozambican case and I use those differences to demonstrate

the extent to which the theory travels. The FMLN is an umbrella organization comprising five distinct rebel groups that operated in different parts of the country. Each sub-group had a distinct structure and different ways of interacting with civilians. While the FMLN was considerably more organizationally diverse than Renamo, their composition also put them at high risk for organizational fracture. Moreover, since different groups were operating in different parts of El Salvador, this case allows me to test my theory at the sub-state level. I demonstrate that areas with more developed proto-party structures received considerably greater vote-share in post-conflict elections.

Finally, Chapter 8 concludes by summarizing my findings, examining current crises relevant to this research (including post-Arab Spring countries and the FARC in Colombia) and suggesting future directions for research.

Chapter 2

Conceptualizing Rebel-to-Party Transformation

This chapter addresses two major questions that lay the foundation for this project: (1) What *is* rebel-to-party transformation? (2) What *affects* rebel-to-party transformation? The first question demands a proper specification of the outcome; the second demands a proper specification of the conditions under which we should expect to see it.

The first section engages in an overdue evaluation of how we do—and how we *should*—define rebel-to-party transition. Despite a recent explosion of scholarly work examining the instances (Wood 2000, Manning 2002), causes (Manning 2007, de Zeeuw 2008, Acosta 2014, Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz 2016, Manning & Smith 2016, Lyons 2016), and effects (Allison 2010, Matanock 2013) of rebel-to-party transition, shockingly little ink has been spilled on evaluating how scholars and policy-makers should conceptualize this phenomenon. A closer look at this corpus reveals that "rebel-to-party transformation" is a highly contested concept. Definitions differ, operationalizations differ, and consequently, analytic results differ. To make matters worse, no one has engaged in a critical evaluation of the merits, pitfalls, and tradeoffs that come from different conceptualizations of "successful transition." Thus, scholars coming to the literature anew are left with widely varying definitions of the phenomenon, and no guidance on how to adjudicate among them.

The second part of this chapter summarizes and evaluates the conventional wisdom on rebel-to-party transformations. The absence of a unified definition of the outcome is mirrored in a corresponding lack of agreement on how to approach rebel-to-party transition analytically. Indeed, a significant portion of the work on this subject is exploratory, and thus atheoretical in nature. Those who do posit theoretical frameworks for understanding or predicting rebel-to-party transition tend to make major assumptions about the nature of the phenomenon that do not hold empirically. I demonstrate in this section that—due in large part to under-specifying the unit of analysis—many frameworks exhibit at least one of three problematic assumptions. I refer to the first as the *structural novelty assumption:* the assumption that the process of transitioning into a political party begins only when the war ends, and entails building entirely new organizational (party) structures from scratch. The second assumption is what I call an *agential bias:* the assumption

that leaders of rebel organizations have the power to "decide to adapt" to party life. The third assumption—following from the first two—is the *organizational plasticity assumption:* the assumption that major overhauls of an established organizational are possible as long as the leadership desires these changes.

2.1 What *is* rebel-to-party transformation?

At first glance, *rebel-to-party transformation* appears to be a relatively intuitive concept: insurgent groups transition from a militant opposition group into an electable political actor. And with only one exception,[1] scholars conceptualize transition as a dichotomous phenomenon: either the rebels transform into a political party, or they do not. Yet, when we dig a little deeper, rebel-to-party transformation becomes significantly more intractable. When does a group stop being an insurgency and start being a political party? Is it a moment or an evolution? Until now, too many scholars have relied on what we might call the Justice Potter Stewart approach: despite the absence of a clear definition of the phenomenon, we nevertheless "know it when [we] see it."[2] This approach has led to massive disparities across different analyses of rebel-to-party transition. I argue that conceptual disparities are likely to have cascading repercussions into how we theorize, operationalize, and analyze rebel-to-party transition.

To illustrate the extent of these disparities, consider three cross-national datasets that scholars have used to analyze rebel-to-party transition: the MGEP Data (Matanock 2013), REVMOD (Acosta 2014), and a modified version of the UCDP data (Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz 2016). Although each dataset covers roughly the same time period, the number of "successful transitions" varies by nearly 60% (from 33 cases on the low end, up to 52 cases in MGEP).[3] Moreover, these disparities—illustrated in Table 2.1—are not simply the result of more or less permissive coding criteria. Rather, a deeper examination of the three datasets reveals that the respective authors only unanimously agree on *eight* cases.[4] The contested cases are either coded differently or omitted entirely from the other datasets. Indeed, sixty-seven cases are fully disjoint—that is, only one of the three datasets codes the case as a successful transition.

[1] de Zeeuw offers a multi-categorical conceptualization that sorts cases according to the extent to which the group disarms and the extent to which they adopt an internally democratic decision-making structure (2008, 17–19). I address this scheme in greater detail later in the section.

[2] The Supreme Court case of *Jacobellis v. Ohio* revolved in large part around pinning down definitions of "obscenity" and "hard-core pornography." In his opinion, Justice Potter Stewart famously wrote, "I shall not today attempt further to define the kinds of material I understand to be embraced within that shorthand description; and perhaps I could never succeed in intelligibly doing so. But I know it when I see it, and the motion picture involved in this case is not that." (*Jacobellis v. Ohio* 1964, J. Stewart, concurring)

[3] The MGEP data spans (1980–2010) and records 52 instances of transition, REVMOD spans (1980–2012) and records 46 instances of transition, and the UCDP data spans (1975–2011) and Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz (2016) record 33 instances of transition.

[4] The full pool of contested cases and how they are coded in each dataset (including my own) is delineated in Appendix A, and I explore coding issues across these datasets in greater depth in Chapter 4.

Table 2.1: Summary of Existing Rebel-to-Party Datasets

Data	RtP Transitions	Total Cases
MGEP (1980–2010) (Matanock 2013)	52[†]	652
REVMOD (1980–2012) (Acosta 2014)	46	406
UCDP (1975–2011) (Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz 2016)	33	93

[†]Matanock later notes that Angola returned to conflict after participating once, re-entered peace negotiations, and then began participating a second time.

From both a conceptual and analytic standpoint, such disparities are non-trivial. Nailing down a precise conceptualization is crucial when research on this subject is being used to inform how warring sides craft settlements and post-conflict policy. For instance, the major takeaway of Matanock's (2013) study is that peace is more durable when former rebels participate in post-conflict elections. Yet if these results are a function of conceptual artifacts then the policy recommendations that follow are unlikely to bring about the desired result. If our research is going to appear to have such crucial and directly applicable policy implications, it is absolutely vital that we ensure ahead of time that our results are not a function of questionable operationalization or spurious correlations in or data.

This section engages in a long overdue debate about conceptualizing rebel-to-party transformation. I characterize and evaluate the variety of prior definitions used to measure success. Existing conceptualizations of successful rebel-to-party transition are based on some combination of the following three criteria: 1) the extent of participation in the political arena, 2) the extent to which the group has disarmed, and 3) the extent to which the group has democratized *internally*. The following discussion engages not only these criteria, but also the broad choice to conceptualize it as a dichotomous phenomenon. I show that existing conceptual definitions are problematic along both theoretical and analytic dimensions, which in turn, motivates a new conceptual framework. I propose a novel, four-stage conceptualization of rebel-to-party transition and discuss its merits and tradeoffs relative to the conventional approaches.

Criterion 1: Participation in Democratic Politics

Many scholars define rebel-to-party transition in terms of "participation in democratic politics" (Matanock 2013, Acosta 2014). While—again—seemingly intuitive, this conceptualization raises an important question. To what extent must a rebel group participate in electoral politics before it is appropriate to call it a "successful party?" *Participation*, it turns out, is a slippery concept in its own rite. Indeed, participating in democratic electoral politics can range from formally registering as a political party to winning seats

in multiple elections. Moreover, even among scholars who agree that (1) rebel-to-party transformation is dichotomous, and (2) it is defined in terms of participation, we can observe disagreement in terms of how much participation is sufficient to constitute a full transition into a political party. In other words, while the *conceptual* definition of rebel-to-party transition is consistent, the *cut point* of what constitutes participation varies. I categorize existing benchmarks for the proper extent of participation into *Minimalist Participation*, *Electoral Participation*, and *Relevant Participation*.

Minimalist Participation

If a given conceptualization (or coding scheme) does not require any electoral victory to be considered a successful rebel-to-party transition, I file that definition under *Minimalist Participation.* The benchmarks for success vary even among scholars who opt for minimalist criteria. Matanock, for example, codes success based on the implementation of an agreement that includes an electoral participation clause (2013, 90). Thus, provided the negotiated settlement had a clause *allowing* for political transformation of the insurgents, a given rebel group scored a 1 on successful transition. This conceptualization is the most severely minimalist in that former insurgents needed only the opportunity to participate in order to be counted among successes. Acosta (2014) offers an alternative and slightly stricter measure. He argues that we should conceptualize a militant group as having successfully transitioned if the group "participates in competitive electoral politics" (2014, 671). Thus, every group that at least registered as a political party qualifies as a success case.

The minimalist conceptualizations of "successful rebel-to-party transformation" have two serious drawbacks. The first is specifically associated with Matanock's coding scheme, in which the group is considered to have "successfully transitioned" if a negotiated settlement included a clause permitting rebel-to-party transition and the settlement was implemented. Relying on stipulations in negotiated settlements is potentially problematic, however, because they are neither necessary nor sufficient to ensure participation. Critically, rebel-to-party clauses represent an important policy choice, yet they are unlikely to parse out success from failure. Furthermore, some groups may be artificially omitted if they transitioned in the absence of a participation clause, and other groups may be artificially included if they were given the *opportunity* to transition, but never did.

The second and broader drawback of using a minimalist participation requirement to assess successful transition is that it results in severe variation across success cases. At one end of the spectrum, are groups that only get as far as formally registering as a political party, but never win seats or even make it to the first election. The RUF in Sierra Leone, for example, registered as a party at the war's end and participated in the first post-conflict elections, but fractured after failing to secure even 1% of the vote. At the other end of the spectrum, are former rebels with longstanding careers in politics as major parties. On this end we find parties like Renamo in Mozambique, the FMLN in El Salvador, and Hizb'allah in Lebanon—each of which has held a sizable proportion of legislative seats since their respective entries into politics. This variation is problematic

for two reasons. From an analytic standpoint, a conceptual distinction based on minimal participation fails to distinguish *aspiring* opposition from *lasting* opposition. Groups that disintegrate prior to or just after the ballot stage may be systematically different from groups that consolidate a party organization and win seats in multiple successive post-conflict elections. Second, from a practical standpoint, if the political goal of rebel incorporation is to promote stability and democratization, this coding prevents us from putting rebel-to-party transition on the right-hand side of an analysis to investigate the effects of successful transition on important post-conflict outcomes. Specifically, we might expect different prospects for peace in a country in which rebel groups have transitioned into a legal and stable opposition party than in a country in which they tried and failed. When former-rebel participation in post-conflict elections is understood as one of the primary determinants of enduring peace, it is crucial that scholars have a fine-grained conception of *participation*.

Electoral Participation

While Allison's (2006) work on former-rebel party vote share does not explicitly address the process of rebel-to-party transition, we can nonetheless infer an alternative to minimalist conceptualizations of success. Since his goal is to measure how wartime performance affects post-conflict vote share, he is restricted to considering groups that have at least made it onto the ballot in successive elections. For Allison's purposes, party registration is an insufficient criterion to constitute a former-rebel party. Taken to its logical conclusion, Allison's piece would imply a cut point at electoral victory. I argue that this benchmark represents an improvement over minimalist conceptualizations by setting the bar at *integration* into democratic politics as opposed to the mere aspirations espoused by party registrants. Moreover, requiring some level of electoral victory reduces the potentially problematic level of variation among success cases evident in the minimalist dichotomization.

Relevant Participation

Shugart (1992) sets the highest bar for successful transformations on the basis of political participation. Drawing on Sartori's (1976) concept of *relevant parties*, Shugart argues that participatory success should refer only to groups that attain either coalition or blackmail potential in the political arena (1992, 122). In other words, the party should either have the ability to gain executive power, or prevent another party from gaining executive power unless they agree to form a coalition. By not only requiring electoral victory, but moreover, requiring that the party win enough seats to affect policy, Shugart's conceptualization imposes the most stringent participatory requirements for success.

Once again, this benchmark represents improvement over minimalist definitions by decreasing variation among success cases. However, the high standard of *relevance* has two drawbacks. First, it increases variation among failures by including among them former-rebel parties that successfully hold seats, but are too minor to affect executive outcomes. Second, it is likely that factors other than group-level characteristics will

affect how large the party becomes (such as institutional choices and the number of other parties in the system), but these characteristics may be unrelated to the stakes of transition: enduring peace and democratization. Consequently, the relevant participation benchmark is likely overly restrictive for the purpose of understanding what facilitates rebel-to-party transformation more broadly.

Criterion 2: Full Disarmament

In addition to considering the extent of participation, some scholars contend that the organization must entirely abandon the armed struggle for their transition to be considered successful (de Zeeuw 2008, Klapdor 2009, Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz 2016). They contend that for a rebel-to-party transition to be considered 'successful" the struggle must be entirely waged "through active participation within the political system," otherwise the transition is deemed "incomplete" (Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz 2016, 7). Thus, an insurgent group that registers as a political party, runs in an election, and wins seats, but retains an armed wing is not considered as having undergone a complete rebel-to-party transformation. For scholars in this camp, groups like Hizb'allah in Lebanon are omitted from the set of success cases since part of the movement is still armed.

While disarmament is an important issue from both an analytic and practical perspective, including it as a defining feature of rebel-to-party transition is problematic for three reasons.[5] First, this criterion, though commonly used, has more of a normative justification than a theoretical one. To suggest that disarmament is a requirement for full transition is to suggest that the party is in some way deficient if it retains an armed wing. However, scholars who adopt this requirement do not provide empirical evidence demonstrating that the continued existence of an armed wing compromises political effectiveness. Engaging in activities in addition to the pursuit of goals through policy channels does not inherently compromise the organization's status as a party unless these other channels are supplanting the political process.[6] Rather, this criterion is founded on an unjustified (and untested) assumption that by retaining an armed wing, insurgent parties may be circumventing the political process to achieve their goals.[7]

The second theoretical problem with a disarmament requirement is that it is only partially applied to actors in the conflict, which creates a double standard for rebel groups on the one hand, and governments on the other. Specifically, numerous governments retain control over paramilitary organizations—which are essentially extrajudicial armed wings of the government—yet the governing parties are not considered "incomplete." Thus, while actors on both sides of the civil war sometimes retain additional armed wings, scholars only assess it as a detractor for the former insurgency.

[5]N.b. This argument does not mean to suggest that negotiated settlements should not include disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) requirements. The issue at hand is whether disarmament is a necessary defining feature of a political party.

[6]Hizb'allah, for example, owns and operates restaurants, cafes, and even a museum. Do *those* activities make them less of a party? During the war, did those activities make them less of a rebel group?

[7]In reality, former militant organizations may retain an armed wing to provide basic policing and security to areas of the country that the central government cannot reach.

The final problem is both theoretical and analytic because this requirement conflates the formation and transition into a political party with the long-term cessation of hostilities, which represent two empirically distinct outcomes.[8] This conflation, in turn, distorts the mechanism at work. If former-rebel participation in politics has important implications for the long-term cessation of hostilities, then the argument is that something intrinsic about participation in the political process drives enduring peace—in which case, the *existence* of an armed wing should not matter. If, instead, the mechanism is about disarming, and becoming a political party is just a route to disarming, then the scholarship should be focused on the effectiveness of different disarmament programs—in which case the political party should not matter beyond being one potential route to disarmament. To be sure, whether a former-rebel party retains an armed wing (and under what conditions) is an interesting and important question in its own rite. Yet the transition into a political party and whether the group retains an armed wing remain analytically distinct outcomes and should be conceptualized as such.[9]

Ultimately, disarmament is not a requisite feature of a political party. Although prior measures of rebel-to-party transition have included this condition, the analytic purchase of bundling transition and disarmament remains unclear, yet the analytic drawbacks are stark. Since transition and disarmament are two distinct outcomes, they warrant distinct measures. One can easily indicate with a binary control variable whether an organization retained an armed wing after transitioning into a party and then test the implications of this characteristic.One can then test whether and under what conditions organizations with both legitimate political wings and unsanctioned armed wings are prone to use violence. Or, one can test whether former-rebel parties that retain a military apparatus are more likely to resort to coercive tactics over political tactics because they have the opportunity. Crucially, these questions are empirically testable and they open numerous avenues for future research once we adopt nuanced and separate conceptualizations of each outcome.

Criterion 3: Internal Democratization

The final conditions scholars have put forth as a defining features of rebel-to-party transition is the internal democratization of decision-making structures within the party. De Zeeuw (2008), Wade (2008), and others contend that a former-insurgent group cannot fully transition into a political party unless they move away from the hierarchical and/or personalistic order that defined the insurgency (de Zeeuw 2008, 14). De Zeeuw even goes

[8]The irony of this conflation is that much of the post-war peace and democratization literature views the former as a condition that facilitates the latter. As such, defining party transition in terms of disarmament essentially places this condition on both sides of the equation.

[9]Disaggregating party transition from retention of armed personnel allows for a series of additional lines of investigation. First, one can test whether so-called *hybrid* organizations are more likely to resort to violence than groups that formally disarm and would thus have to assemble an ad-hoc militia to do the same. On the other side of the same coin, an analysis of the conditions that instigate or curtail a return to violence would benefit from a separate conceptualization of whether the post-war organization built a party apparatus.

so far as to call this requirement the "most problematic aspect of the transformation" since few people inside the rebel organization participate in leadership choices (2008, 14).

This criterion poses two problems—one theoretical and one practical—that call into question its analytic utility as a defining feature of rebel-to-party transformation. First, insisting on an internal democratic requirement for former-rebel parties necessarily raises questions about whether the multitude of existing personalistic parties are not true parties either. Parties—regardless of their origins—vary considerably in both their levels of bureaucratization and their internal decision-making procedures (Levitsky 2003). Consequently, this standard is both excessive and tangential to the central issue: whether the organization meaningfully participates in politics. The second problem is one of measurement. Though de Zeeuw argues that internal democratization is important, he does not provide a concrete way of measuring this dimension. Of course, the absence of a good measurement strategy is not to suggest that the concept itself is unimportant. Yet, when intractable measurement is combined with ambiguous theoretical utility, the added value of this dimension becomes minimal.

Dichotomous Conceptualizations

As with many complex phenomena, relying on a dichotomous conceptualization of rebel-to-party transition comes with a set of important tradeoffs. On the one hand, a binary conceptualization (and corresponding coding scheme) is parsimonious and has a minimal impact on degrees of freedom in quantitative analyses of the outcome. This method would also be acceptable if we could identify a single cut point that sorted cases according to important empirical implications. For example, if one could show that once a former insurgent group registers as a party—regardless of their electoral success—the prospects for peace increase dramatically, then this cut point would be both analytically and prescriptively useful. To date, researchers in this field have conducted too few analyses with rebel-to-party transformation on the right-hand-side of the equation to explore how different measures of successful transition predict important outcomes like peace and democratization.

On the other hand, this conceptualization method introduces a number of theoretical and analytic problems that call into question its utility. First—from a theoretical standpoint—dichotomizing the outcome treats rebel-to-party transition as a discontinuity, rather than an evolution. Specifically, it de-problematizes the *process* of transformation and instead incentivizes scholars to focus only on measurable behavioral benchmarks like "registration," "electoral participation," or "electoral victory." While these observable cut points are useful from a practical standpoint, it is also important not to reduce the process of transformation to these actions. In reality, transformation is a complex process involving both internal and behavioral changes that cannot clearly be reduced to one behavior or another. Rebel groups *attempting* to transition make a variety of changes to the organization and go through multiple legal stages (including registration, participation, and holding office) as they work to complete their transition into a political party. By reducing transition into party registration, the literature forces up analytic

blinders that disincentivize researchers from examining and problematizing the slower evolutionary process of party transition and the inhibitors thereto.

The second issue arising from dichotomous conceptualizations of rebel-to-party transition is analytic and concerns the identification of an appropriate cut point. In the previous section, I sorted analyses into three broad categories based on where scholars draw the line at successful transition: minimalist participation, electoral participation, and relevant participation. I argue that each choice introduces important considerations but also gives rise to unique problems that potentially hinder the amount we can learn from analyses using those definitions. In almost every case, the sorting is just too rough. With minimalist participation standards, scholars group together groups that formally register as a party and never actually compete in elections with groups that have held their post as the primary opposition party in a country for decades on end. Yet, there is good reason to believe that those groups are systematically different from one another.

It is worth noting that one scholar, Jeroen de Zeeuw, does propose a multi-stage conceptualization of rebel-to-party transformations. In the introduction to his 2008 edited volume on this topic, de Zeeuw proposes that former rebels can achieve one of four outcomes: *failed transformation, façade transformation, partial transformation,* and *full transformation* (2008, 16–18). While a multi-stage conceptualization of transition can overcome the cut point problems I discuss above, the particular breakdown he proposes is wracked with other issues. His transition framework is built around four recommendations that he argues must be implemented before a militant group can become a political party: two attitudinal changes – democratization of decisionmaking and adaptation of strategies and goals, and two structural changes – demilitarization and development of a party organization (de Zeeuw 2008, 12–15). For de Zeeuw, former rebel groups can be sorted into his ideal types of rebel-to-party transformation according to the degree to which they have succeeded in implementing these changes. This typology, however, runs into the same problems discussed earlier in the section. Namely, demilitarization and internal democratization are not defining features of party organizations. As such, de Zeeuw is implementing a standard that may be normatively desirable, but is not analytically necessary. As a result, it results in weird artifacts in coding. For example, the RUF in Sierra Leone—which fully demilitarized, registered, and ran in one post-conflict election—would be considered a *full transition* even though they lost at the ballot and fractured almost immediately thereafter. Whereas Hizb'allah in Lebanon—which did not fully demilitarize, since it still runs a police force in the south of the country—is considered only a *partial transformation* even though they have held a significant portion of legislative seats for nearly twenty-five years.

2.2 Rebel-to-Party Transition in Four Acts

Transitioning from a militant insurgency to a functioning political party involves a major organizational upheaval. The group needs new roles to fulfill new duties with an eye toward new goals. Moreover, most groups need to trim the fat of what has now become a vestigial militant wing of the organization. I address the full nature of the underlying

organizational process of rebel-to-party transformation in detail in Chapter 3. While rebel-to-party transformation is a complex, evolutionary process involving both internal organizational changes as well as discrete behavioral changes, for the sake of analytic tractability I propose a conceptualization based on four observable transition benchmarks. As I argue in the previous section, reducing the outcome to any one political achievement (be it registration, electoral participation, or attaining relevant party status) would likely deprive analyses of crucial nuance as systematically dissimilar organizations are forcibly lumped together. To overcome these issues, I identify four discrete outcomes that capture both analytically and pragmatically important distinctions in rebel-to-party transformation: (1) no transition, (2) minimalist participation, (3) single electoral victory, and (4) persistent opposition. This section presents each outcome and discusses the tradeoffs of adopting a four-stage conceptualization of transition. I discuss the operationalization of each category in greater detail in Chapter 4 when I introduce the Insurgent Structures and Outcomes (ISO) dataset. This discussion focuses primarily on conceptualization.

The choice of cut points is motivated by both the process and stakes of successful transition. Specifically, when we talk about rebel-to-party transition, what we are talking about is a potentially lasting solution to a state beset by civil conflict. As such, political scientists and policy-makers alike should strive for understanding why some groups are more successful in the electoral arena than others. Since the ideal endpoint of rebel-to-party transition is a successful party that integrates into a stable political system, I sort groups according to how much success they achieve as a political party. Lumping together groups that register as parties and promptly fracture (thereby inciting the risk of a country returning to single-party rule) with groups that become lasting opposition parties can severely obscure analytic results and the policy implications we draw from it.

1) No Transition

The first category represents groups that were given the opportunity to transition into political parties, but failed to meet even minimalist standards of participation. Specifically, groups in this category must still have had a legal path to transition and they must at some point have expressed a desire to participate in the political arena. The trajectories of groups that failed to transition vary. Some groups revert back to violence, as in the case of the ELN in Colombia. Some dissolve after the war is over, which is what happened to the LURD in Liberia. Others transition into something *other* than a political party. The Kosovo Liberation Army, for example, transitioned into the Kosovo Protection Force—a civilian organization tasked with emergency and disaster response as well as post-war reconstruction.

Establishing *no transition* as an analytic category is crucial because it forces researchers to define failure. While the existing literature varies widely on what constitutes a successful transition, it exhibits even less consensus on what constitutes a failed transition. This debate is currently implicit as scholars have yet to engage in an outward discussion about how to conceptualize success and failure. A brief examination of empirical analyses reveals the variation in conceived failures. de Zeeuw (2008) is one of very

few authors to explicitly define failure, which he describes as "only surviving nominally as some kind of political organization" (18). He goes on to note that they "lack the organizational structures, resources, and popular support to establish [themselves] as a viable political party" (2008, 18). Others take a considerably more broad approach and implicitly define failure as any militant group that did not transition into a political party.

2) Minimalist Participation

One step up from a failure is *minimalist participation.* In this category, former rebel groups achieve a minimal benchmark for transition by either registering as a political party or appearing on a ballot in a post-conflict election. Analytically, this category is meant to separate out the groups that manage to attain legal recognition and then falter from those that successfully participate in the political system in the long-term. This choice allows me to separate out groups that experienced even single electoral victories from those that did not, thereby opening the door to conducting future analyses on whether the factors that affect registration are distinct from those that affect electoral success.

3) One-Hit Wonders

The third category captures a unique class of insurgent electoral victories that I refer to as *one-hit wonders.* Former-rebel parties in this category mange to register, get on the ballot, and win some seats in the first post-conflict election; but they ultimately fail to pass muster as a political party in the long term. Typically, they win very few seats in the first one or two elections, and subsequently withdraw from electoral politics, fracture, or drop their name and merge with another party. In Cambodia, for example, the Khmer People's National Liberation Front registered as the Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party and won ten legislative seats (out of 120) in the 1993 elections. Then, in the 1998 elections, their vote share dropped to a margin insufficient to hold onto any seats and the party almost immediately disbanded.

My choice to distinguish between *one-hit wonders* and *persistent opposition* parties is motivated by the stakes of this analysis. Again, if rebel-to-party transition is a favorable civil war outcome because it conduces to stability and democratization (Matanock 2013), then the scholarship should have something to say about what makes those parties endure. As such, I opt to single out an analytic category of parties that breakdown even after they attain political office. This separation opens the door to future analyses that explore rebel-party longevity and whether survival (as a political party) is associated with other important post-conflict outcomes. For example, groups that won some seats in single post-conflict election may have been unwitting victims of their constituents voting for *peace*, rather than voting for *parties.* Specifically, if a particular group was especially violent toward civilians during the civil war, voters may fear that electoral loss would lead to renewed fighting. As a result, they cast votes for former rebels not out of policy preferences but out of hope that electoral victory will keep the peace.

4) Persistent Opposition

The final rebel-to-party outcome I distinguish is when former insurgents win legislative seats in multiple post-conflict elections, thus becoming *persistent opposition* parties. I argue that we should only consider a rebel-to-party transformation successful only if the organization actually functions as a political party. As per Sartori, a political party is defined as a "political group that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections, candidates for public office" (1976, 56). Thus, consistent electoral victory is a defining feature of political parties, and I argue that distinguishing persistent opposition groups from those that attain party status temporarily or only nominally, enables researchers to get crucial analytic traction on this phenomenon.

2.2.1 Tradeoffs

As with any analytic schema, the four-stage conceptual framework I propose comes with a set of tradeoffs. On the one hand, I maintain that breaking down rebel-to-party transitions into successive stages has analytic purchase that improves upon dichotomous conceptualizations in numerous ways. First, breaking down the outcome into four stages adds an unprecedented level of conceptual nuance. Sorting groups based on discrete indicators of party success allows us to search for systematic differences among former insurgencies that might be associated with qualitatively different outcomes. Moreover, this system allows for more detailed comparisons between groups that experience different levels of success. I anticipate, for example, that different factors will affect legal recognition than those that affect successful long-term participation. Thus, creating separate categories for minimalist participation and persistent opposition status allow for these more nuanced analyses.

This conceptualization, however, is not without drawbacks. First and foremost, it adds a layer of complexity for which I must demonstrate the added analytic purchase. I return to this issue throughout the book in both my theoretical and empirical discussions. I demonstrate using both quantitative and qualitative evidence that insurgent organizations in different outcome categories exhibit systematic differences in their pre-settlement organizational structures. The second and related issue that comes with a multi-stage conceptualization is the corresponding reduction in degrees of freedom in the context of a quantitative analysis. While I address this issue in further detail in Chapter 4 when I introduce my dataset, I maintain that the sacrifice in degrees of freedom is worth the amount we learn about the factors that affect whether a group moves from one stage to the next.

Ultimately, I argue that this conceptualization optimizes between nuance and tractability. Disaggregating rebel-to-party transformation into a set of four observable benchmarks of party success enables researchers to distinguish among important outcomes without adding too much additional complexity. Furthermore, the four stages could easily be collapsed into two-stage or three-stage measures of rebel-to-party success, whereas existing dichotomous frameworks cannot easily be separated.

2.3 What *affects* rebel-to-party transformation?

Armed with a more nuanced conceptualization of what rebel-to-party transformation *is*, I move on to evaluate the conventional explanations of what conditions bring it about. In lieu of providing an exhaustive list delineating every explanation of rebel-to-party transition, I focus on general theoretical trends in the existing literature. Rebel-to-party transformation is a complex organizational phenomenon that unfolds over time. As such, a comprehensive theory of transition must account for two things: (1) what catalyzes or facilitates the transition process, and (2) what the process itself looks like. As it stands, current theorizing on the topic falls short on both counts. I show that while the explanations posited vary widely, the actual process of transition remains systematically undertheorized. Very rarely do scholars address how the rebel-to-party process unfolds and to the extent that they do, they make two problematic assumptions that ignore empirical trends.

2.3.1 What facilitates rebel-to-party transition?

The first set of explanations identifies a set of conditions that correlate highly with rebel-to-party transition, yet fail to explain the nature of the process. Scholars have cited everything from battle fatigue (Nindorera 2008, 116), to regional pressure (ibid.), to the presence of third-party signatories on peace agreements (Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz 2016, 4), to the end of the Cold War (Matanock 2013, Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz 2016) in order to account for the trend of former rebel groups showing up on electoral ballots. These explanations, however, are only sufficient to account for rebel-to-*non-rebel* transformations. While they perform well in explaining the end of the conflict, they fail to provide the analytic follow-through needed to explain how the insurgents put down their guns and picked up party slogans.

For example, it is widely known that the end of the Cold War precipitated a slew of civil war terminations. In the 1970s and 80s conservative states and political groups in the West and communist governments in the Eastern Bloc were providing often explicit funding to different sides of the same civil conflict. Once the Cold War ended, however, neither the US nor the USSR had any remaining vested interests in Mozambique or El Salvador (or many others). With both sides of the conflict relying heavily on external funding, once the supplies dried up, the wars came to a stalemate—the rebels lacked the power to overthrow the government, but the government also lacked the power to stamp out the rebellion. A negotiated settlement became the only choice. While the end of the Cold War explains the cascade of civil wars ending in negotiated settlements, it does nothing to explain why—in the wake of these settlements—some former rebels were able to transition into political parties and others failed.

The explanations discussed here tend to exhibit at least one of two broad problems: overlooking the correct level of analysis and/or under-specifying the nature or the mechanism of the transition process. The first major problem with the existing explanations is that many fail to address the appropriate level of analysis: the insurgent (and party) organization. Extant theories address the individual level (e.g. battle fatigue and leaders'

desires to transition), the domestic level (e.g. post-conflict electoral institutions and the terms of the settlement), the international level (e.g. regional pressure to end the conflict or the presence of third-party signatories on the settlement), and the systemic level (e.g. the end of the Cold War). Regional pressure and third-party signatories, for example, explain some part of the phenomenon from an international level, but they do not explain why some rebel organizations have the capacity to operate as a party in the wake of a settlement. Similarly, battle fatigue explains why an individual solider would want to drop out—and it might even explain why the soldier wants to pursue something else—but it does not explain how or under what conditions a rebel organization transforms into a party organization. But it is far easier to quit one's job than it is to change careers; and our job here is to explain the latter. This is not to say, of course, that individual, domestic, and international factors are inconsequential. Rather, I argue that in addition to external conditions, we must consider the variation across insurgent organizations.

More recently, scholars have proposed some organization-level factors affecting transition, but these explanations come with problems of their own. Manning (2007) posits a resource mobilization story: rebel groups seeking to enter the political arena differ in their capacity to mobilize sufficient resources to transition into and operate as a party. She predicts that those groups able to mobilize more resources will be more likely to transition. While this explanation only addresses a necessary condition for the outcome, it moves in the critical direction of treating rebel organizations as variable entities. Ishiyama & Batta (2011*a*) go a slightly different route arguing that rebel-to-party transition is more likely to succeed when the organization has a cohesive leadership structure. The marked contribution of this theory is that it implicitly acknowledges the risks of major organizational changes: fracturing and potential spoilers.

Finally, de Zeeuw (2008) and Manning & Smith (2016) offer another explanation in this vein, arguing that if the organization operated as a political party prior to the war, they have a better chance of transitioning into a party once the war is over. This explanation represents an improvement over many previous ones because it acknowledges differential levels in political skill across insurgent organizations. Neither work goes into great detail about the mechanism by which party transition would occur, though it is heavily implied that the *latent* party would resume governing responsibilities once the war comes to a close. Though this explanation is headed in the right direction, I argue that both works put forth too rigid of a conceptualization of "political history." By limiting their analyses to rebel groups that once operated as legal political parties, de Zeeuw and Manning and Smith discount a wide variety of other types of political experience that might facilitate the rebel-to-party process. Moreover, neither work addresses the issue of timing. One would expect that the longer an organization goes without operating as a party, the more likely those skills are to atrophy.

2.3.2 What does the transformation process entail?

One of the primary shortcomings of the rebel-to-party literature is a nearly uniform tendency to under-specify the *process* of transformation: how a militant insurgent group

actually turns into a political party. While some scholars have ventured to address the process, numerous questions are left unanswered. What does a transformation look like from the inside? What are the risks? What makes some groups more likely to succeed than others? Furthermore, scholars who do take up questions of the rebel-to-party process, lean too heavily on at least one of two problematic assumptions (though they typically show up in tandem). The first concerns an over-attribution of power to rebel leaders—the insurgency will morph into a political party if the leaders want to adapt (Manning 2007, de Zeeuw 2008, Ishiyama & Batta 2011*a*). The second assumption concerns the frequency and ease with which party structures can be built from scratch at the end of the war (Manning 2004, Manning 2007, Close & Prevost 2007, de Zeeuw 2008, Berti 2013).

Agential Bias

The first major pitfall in extant theories of rebel-to-party transition is what I refer to as an *agential bias.* Put simply, explanations that exhibit this problem assume without empirical justification that adaptation and transformation are decisions. For example, the driving question of Berti's work is, "why do armed groups decide to establish political wings to compete in elections?" (2013, 1). Manning likewise asks, "what factors influence [rebel] parties' decisions to adapt to or subvert the rules?" (2007, 55).

While no one will deny the importance of understanding the incentives and detractors driving leaders' decision-making, these questions presume that making the *decision* to adapt is sufficient to explain the full scope of adaptation. Ishiyama and Batta (2011) take the assumption a step further. In their exploration of rebel-to-party transition from the standpoint of post-conflict peace duration, they frame successful rebel-to-party transition in terms of rebel leaders "sticking to the deal" (2011, 438). This framing implies that both success and *failure* to transition into a longstanding political party are a function of choices made by the movement's leaders. Is it enough, however, for a leader to *want* to adapt? Many frameworks impart too much power to decision-makers without considering the factors that might inhibit adaptation irrespective of the *desire* to transition into the political realm.

Crucially, agential explanations are not problematic through and through. After all, if the rebel leadership does *not* want to transition into a party organization, it would be difficult to imagine a viable path to political incorporation for that group. Indeed, I argue that the desire to transition is a critical scope condition for assembling a proper universe of *potential* or attempted transformations.[10] Rather, the problems lie in the way agential explanations are deployed. Reducing successful and failed transitions to a "decision to adapt" or a "decision to obstruct or spoil" neglects the inherent difficulty of organizational transformation. Such explanations fall short when it comes to explaining the numerous failed transitions in which the rebel leadership expressed a desire to transition into a political party. They also potentially put up analytic blinders to external factors that affect the process, progress, and timing of transitions. For example, Acosta (2014) argues

[10] I expand on the theoretical and methodological importance of this condition in Chapter 4.

that "organizations time transitions to capitalize on recent or concurrent success" (669). This claim attributes to the leadership not only the ability to decide to transition, but moreover the ability to decide *when* to transition. Acosta, however, does not provide any empirical evidence that leaders can intentionally time transitions. Given the role that international factors (e.g. regional pressure) and structural factors (e.g. the end of the Cold War) play in the timing of civil war termination, it is unlikely that rebel leaders have more than a marginal capacity to affect transition timing.

Structural Novelty Assumption

While the literature is not completely devoid of theorizing on the *process* of rebel-to-party transformation, most scholars who address it depict the transition process as a scramble to build a political party from scratch once the war concludes. However, because this depiction of the rebel-to-party process is implied rather than empirically tested, I refer to it as the *structural novelty assumption*—the assumption that all party structures must be built anew on the heels of war. Even those who claim to explicitly deal with how transformations unfold, nonetheless treat the transition process as a sudden occurrence that takes place in the wake of signing a peace agreement.[11] Close and Prevost, for example, argue that at the end of war "insurgents have to learn the art of nonviolent politics" (2007, 4). Similarly, de Zeeuw (2008) posits that "for a former rebel organization to be able to operate as a credible political organization, it needs to develop new political tactics and strategies in exchange for its old wartime military tactics" (2008, 15). He goes on to argue that groups must "design political strategies," "formulate new goals," and engage in "post-conflict institution building" after the war ends (16). Manning (2008) exhibits this assumption in her analysis of the Mozambican case when she argues that upon signing a power-sharing agreement with the FRELIMO government, RENAMO had to "create entirely new organizational routines and relationships within the organization" in order to function in a democratic society.

While it is true that all former rebel groups will have to engage in *some* amount of party building as they ramp up to compete in post-conflict elections, the assumption that all political action begins only after the war ends is empirically inaccurate and analytically misguiding. The most straightforward problem is simply that this assumption is not empirically tested.[12] By instead accepting the structural novelty assumption as truth, researchers—knowingly or not—make a host of other assumptions that together misrepresent and oversimplify the process of rebel-to-party transformation. Again, while a structural novelty assumption is not entirely inaccurate, relying on it without testing the extent to which it holds from one case to another is problematic for three reasons that I discuss below.

The first problem with this assumption is that it discounts the relevance of wartime

[11]For examples, see Manning (2004), de Zeeuw (2008), and Ishiyama & Batta (2011*b*).

[12]This is not to say, however, that it is not empirically *testable*. To the contrary, if the rebel-to-party process truly unfolds between the peace agreement and the first election, then researchers have a clearly demarcated timeline across which to trace the process of party formation. Both the exploratory and theory-testing variants of process tracing are well-suited to this task.

organizational legacies. For the most part, scholars begin their analyses of the transition only once a settlement or cease-fire agreement is signed. In the introduction to de Zeeuw's edited volume on rebel-to-party transition, he explicitly states that "the case studies in this book concentrate on what has happened inside and outside rebel movements in the period *after* the war" (2008, 3 – emphasis in original). This scope condition raises important and under-explored questions: should we believe that the capacity to transition is solely a function of what happens once the war is over? Do all rebel groups come to the negotiating table with equal propensity to transition? In its current state, the rebel-to-party literature fails to address these questions empirically, and analyses proceed as though the answer is "yes." [13]

The second and related problem with the structural novelty presupposition is that it both derives from and reifies another problematic assumption in the rebellion literature: organizational homogeneity. Specifically, militant groups are conceptualized as groups of men with a single role (full-time soldiers) engaged in a single task (combat) (Weinstein 2007, Humphreys & Weinstein 2008, Staniland 2014). Most conventional accounts of insurgencies depict these organizations as though they vary only in terms of cohesion (the extent to which the group is unified or factionalized) and centralization (the extent to which the group has a hierarchical chain of command). The *roles* of the organization, however, are often treated as invariant. Infrequently do scholars acknowledge non-combat roles within the organization—(e.g. propagandists, accountants, etc.).[14] This treatment of rebel organizations as generally homogenous structures indeed suggests that all rebel groups look the same when they come to the negotiating table. If, in contrast, an insurgency had built politically-oriented structures during wartime, or had established a network of civilian support, these organizational variations might factor importantly into the transformation process.

The final problem with the structural novelty assumption is that it downplays the difficulty of organizational change. Existing frameworks of organizational change tell us what needs to be done for transition to succeed (i.e. "we argue that two interrelated sets of changes...are required for rebel-to-party transformations to succeed" (de Zeeuw 2008, 12)), but not *how* those tasks are accomplished. How do groups find viable candidates? What does "developing a party organization" entail? The actual process of finding candidates, building party structures, and reorganizing the insurgency tends to be relegated to resource mobilization and a blackbox of "internal negotiations."[15] However, reducing the rebel-to-party process to a story of resource mobilization and elite bargaining, these frameworks are liable to over-predict successful transition.

Empirically, organizational transformation is about a lot more than resources. To understand why resources are insufficient to ensure successful change, we can examine the

[13]To the extent that scholars do acknowledge the role of pre-settlement political experience, it is generally limited to whether the rebellion-in-transition operated as a political party prior to the war. de Zeeuw exemplifies this perspective when he argues that unless a group had a "pre-war history as a party...[the insurgency] requires the development of a party organization from scratch" (2008, 13).

[14]Mampilly (2011) and Parkinson (2013) are notable exceptions to this trend.

[15]Manning (2007), for example, frames her analysis of transition in terms of "opening the black box" of the organization to observe how rebel elites bargain.

problem at the limit. Apple Incorporated has more cash on hand than any company on the planet—and certainly more than any rebel group. Moreover, putting aside the mutiny of 1985 when Apple's board ousted company's founder, Apple also has a notoriously cohesive leadership. Should we expect them to be able to successfully transform into a political party? There is good reason that this scenario is difficult to imagine—and it has little to do with their resources. Due to both their internal operations and environments, organizations are subject to structural inertial (Hannan & Freeman 1984). Put simply, organizations are likely to operate and behave in the future according to the routines they have used in the past. Any break from these is difficult and comes with increased risk of organizational death. To return to the example, Apple cannot reliably change into a political party in large part because it lacks the organizational routines to operate in this way. Attempts at reorganizing into a party organization would be disruptive to a near-fatal point. Acknowledging the myriad of challenges that accompany organizational transformation—rather than assuming them away—must form the foundation of any comprehensive framework of rebel-to-party transition.

2.4 Discussion

The literature on this topic is far from sparse, yet existing frameworks fall short when it comes to both conceptualizing and accounting for rebel-to-party transition. The purpose of this chapter is to unpack the severity of these shortcomings and, in doing so, to demonstrate the need for a new analytic framework. I began by evaluating existing conceptualizations of the outcome variable. I show that most definitions, by relying on a binary conceptualization of the outcome, forcibly lump qualitatively different insurgencies together (either as successes or as failures). This loss of nuance has multiple deleterious effects for our understanding of the outcome. First, from a conceptual standpoint, we are left with a handful of studies that use the same concept to refer to different levels of political achievement, which in turn, potentially have different prospects for long-term peace and stability. Second, from an empirical standpoint, lumping insufficiently similar groups together is likely to introduce misleading artifacts into quantitative analyses, thereby pointing to misleading conclusions about the factors affecting transition. I engage this problem in greater depth in Chapter 4.

To help get conceptual traction on the outcome, I introduce four-stages of rebel-to-party transition: (0) No transition, (1) Party registration, (2) One-hit wonders, and (3) Persistent opposition. This novel conceptualization serves two purposes vital to the enterprise of modeling the outcome. First, by critically engaging a debate over what constitutes a "failed transition," the new definition has a built-in scope condition that makes for a more realistic comparison set of insurgent groups. To foreshadow my analyses in Chapter 4, I show that in the absence of minimal criteria for failure, scholars are potentially prone to over-inclusion (particularly in quantitative analyses of rebel-to-party transformation). Second, this conceptualization identifies a set of discrete political achievements *within* the transition process. I argue that these achievements not only represent important differences in rebel-to-party success (e.g. registering as a party versus

winning seats in an election), but the different outcomes potentially lead to variation in other post-conflict outcomes that are of interest to civil war scholars. Thus, while the new conceptualization increases the level of complexity, I argue that it does so with the benefit of adding important nuance to our understanding of the outcome.

The second part of this chapter presents and evaluates alternative explanations of rebel-to-party transition. I show that existing scholarship tends either to focus on providing broad correlates of transition that fail to account for the actual transformation process, or they attempt to address the process with an incomplete conceptualization of organizational change. Correlates of transition like the end of the Cold War or third-party sponsorship are problematic in that they do little to parse success from failure and they do not address how transition unfolds (and what facilitates or inhibits it). On the other side, while some scholars of rebel-to-party transition have begun to embrace organization-level explanations, they do so in the absence of a proper *organizational approach* (Parkinson & Zaks 2017). However, a phenomenon that takes place at the organizational level demands a theoretical framework that address the full scope of how organizations run, change, and die. Collectively, these shortcomings in the literature motivates the framework I develop in the next chapter, and the empirical approach I develop in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3

Organizational Theory of Insurgent Resilience

Organization is the weapon of the weak in the struggle with the strong.
—Robert Michels (1911)

At its core, rebel-to-party transition is an organizational phenomenon. This process involves taking an insurgent *organization*—a group with a pre-existing structure, repertoire of actions, and set of goals—and transforming it into a new organization of a fundamentally different type. Success and failure happen at the organizational level: the insurgent group transitions into a party, reverts back to violence, disintegrates, or turns into something else entirely. I argue that getting traction on rebel-to-party transition requires a new analytic focus that places the insurgent organization at the center of the analysis. This shift raises three central questions that underly my theoretical framework: *What changes? How does it change?* and *Under what conditions can change occur?*

Drawing on insights from organizational sociology, this chapter develops a three-part framework of rebel-to-party transition that addresses each question in turn. First, I address what changes: what needs to happen to a rebel organization to make it a party organization? I present a novel conception of insurgent organizational structures that reveals an unforeseen diversity in the roles and activities in which rebels engage during wartime. In addition to the structures that support combat, some rebel groups have a variety of political and administrative structures that constitute integral parts of the organization. By comparing the structure of insurgent organizations to that of political parties, I identify three wartime organizational domains that constitute what I call *proto-party structures:* shadow governance wings, social service wings, and political messaging wings. Functionally, proto-party structures in rebel groups mirror the key roles of party organizations; but not all rebel groups have them. My central argument is that these organizational similarities grant insurgencies two decisive advantages when transitioning into a political party on the heels of war. First, proto-party structures imbue rebel groups with relevant political experience needed to function as a political party. Second, for these proto-party insurgencies, transformation only involves augmenting existing structures, which is less taxing on the organization than building new structures from scratch.

Following from this insight, the second part of my framework models the *process* of change. How do rebel groups undergo transformation into a party? How do proto-party structures factor into the process? Current explanations of transition rely on an assumption of structural novelty: the post-war period is characterized by a scramble as former-rebels quickly acquire the personnel and resources to build a party from scratch. I show, however, that—depending on their organizational structure—rebel groups face two paths to transition: rebuilding (as the literature posits) and reprioritization. The latter path occurs when organizations change by personnel and resources to existing structures (rather than building structures anew). This path is easier and and it significantly reduces the changes of organizational death (March 1991, 71). I argue that rebel groups with proto-party structures face an easier path to transition by repurposing politically salient departments. In contrast, more homogenous, combat-centric insurgencies must proceed by building a party from scratch.

Finally, since rebel groups neither emerge nor operate in a vacuum, the third part of my framework addresses the external conditions affecting organizational change. I identify three environmental or institutional factors that shape the path to legitimate politics: weak governance, lootable resources, and post-war political institutions. I argue that weak state governance provides opportunities for many proto-party structures to take root. Crucially, this is not a functionalist argument; I do not assume insurgencies will fill in administrative structures wherever needed. I do, however, expect that civilian engagement is easier where state oversight is minimal. Conversely, I argue that the presence of lootable resources[1] acts as a spoiler to transition—incentivizing rebels to support the organization through extraction and sales, rather than through social and political engagement. Finally, since electoral institutions shape the barriers to entry into the political arena, I argue that proportional representation systems present fewer obstacles as small, nascent parties get off the ground.

This chapter proceeds in five sections. Section 1 provides an analytic foundation for my theory by couching rebel-to-party transition in terms of organizational resilience. I provide a set of conceptional tools for modeling resilience and adaptation, which I then use as a springboard to advance my theory. Next, I develop the three prongs of my theoretical framework in turn: the content, process, and context of rebel-to-party transformation. Section 2 focuses on content (i.e. *what* changes). This part of the framework maps out the organizational structures of rebel groups and party organizations and then identifies the specific attributes that facilitate transformation from one into the other. Section 3 focuses on process (i.e. *how* it changes). Building on insights from Section 2, this section presents a typology of pathways by which rebel-to-party transition may occur. I argue that the different paths entail significantly different risks of failure—but the easier path is only available to some insurgent groups. Finally, Section 4 models the context of change. I explore environmental and institutional factors that shape key obstacles to transition

[1]Lootable natural resources specifically refer to those resources that do not require major infrastructure to extract, such as alluvial diamonds, gold, and coca. These resources are distinct from infrastructure-intensive resources like coal and hydrocarbons, which insurgents are unlikely to be able to leverage in their favor.

and affect how insurgent organizations develop.

3.1 Organizational Resilience: New Analytic Insight into Rebel-to-Party Transition

From the outside—and from many places on the inside—the end of civil war represents a welcome cessation of violence and turmoil. For the insurgency, however, this time is rife with uncertainty. While civil war is a turbulent environment for both civilians and participants, it is nonetheless the environment in which the insurgency is designed to thrive. Thus, the sudden cessation of war—even by peaceful means—represents a severe shock to the rebel organization. Without a battle to fight, their primary raison d'état (or at least their primary activity) is disrupted. The simultaneous end to conflict and opportunity for power-sharing represents a fundamental change in the (former) insurgency's opportunities and constraints; in response the organization must either adapt or die trying.

Insurgencies that absorb the shock of war cessation and then successfully re-emerge poised to compete in the political arena exhibit organizational *resilience*. Resilience theories seek to explain organizational perseverance and adaptation in response to environmental jolts (Sutcliffe & Vogus 2003). These analytic tools are built specifically to uncover the dynamics at the nexus between organizational traits and shifting environmental conditions. Conceptualizing rebel-to-party transformation in terms of resilience affords an opportunity to get unprecedented traction on this phenomenon by integrating the organization, its dynamic environment, and its capacity for adaptation into a unified framework. In this section, I discuss three organizational features that facilitate resilience: size, repertoires of prior flexibility, and diversification.

3.1.1 When Size Matters

The size of an organization affects a wide variety of outcomes relevant to organizational resilience and adaptation. Yet, because size impacts so many organizational attributes—including the level of bureaucratization (Haveman 1993), the extent of "slack resources" (Minkoff 1999), and organizational diversification (Blau 1970)—there are competing views on whether it facilitates or inhibits resilience. On the one hand, organizational size contributes to stability because larger organizations require well-established rules, which in turn create stable routines, procedures and expectations (Weick 1979, Hannan & Freeman 1984). Furthermore, larger organizations tend to be more flexible under stress because they have what Minkoff refers to as "slack resources" (1999, 1675). She predicts, in turn, that larger organizations may be able to "undertake core changes without suffering negative consequences." On the other hand, size may contribute to "bureaucratic rigidity," which may stifle an organizations' flexibility and adaptive responses (Haveman 1993, 24).

In the context of insurgent organizations and their prospects for resilience, I expect

size to factor positively into the outcome—at least for initial stages of change. During the process of transition, the nascent party organization must hang together long enough to register as a party, select candidates, and wait for the first post-conflict election to come around. At early transition stages, rebels-turning-parties must have the slack resources to withstand defection and loss of interest in the waiting period. Furthermore, since organizational flexibility is a critical resource *on* the battlefield (Parkinson 2013, Staniland 2014), bureaucratic rigidity would have worked against these organizations prior to the cessation of the conflict. As such, I anticipate that overly rigid groups are prone to earlier defeat and are thus selected out before transition into a party is even an option. Finally, size contributes to the trait at the heart of the resilience framework: diversification, which I discuss in greater detail below.

3.1.2 Prior Flexibility

The extent to which insurgent organizations have undergone major organizational changes in the past is the extent to which they are better poised to adapt and overcome new obstacles in the future. In short, resilience begets resilience. Prior to transition into a political party, many insurgencies undergo significant organization shifts (either by force or strategic choice). These changes may arise from any of the following circumstances: a change in sponsorship or funding, the decision to build new wings of the organization to cope with new obstacles or exploit new opportunities, a turnover in leadership, or anything else that disrupts the way the organization functions.

Surviving previous organizational transformations—or, in Minkoff's (1999) words "developing a repertoire of prior flexibility"—confers two notable advantages on insurgencies facing major changes in the future. First, organizations with a history of change and resilience are better able to seek creative or novel solutions to problems (Amburgey, Kelly & Barnett 1993, 54). Essentially, while low levels of bureaucratization combat *structural* rigidity, previous flexibility combats *intellectual* rigidity. The second benefit of prior flexibility comes in the form of organizational cohesion. This argument runs counter to Hannan and Freeman's (1984) proposition that organizational change necessarily comes at the risk of jeopardizing organizational cohesion and identity. While a single change undoubtedly increases uncertainty and poses some risks, once an organization has survived the change, future transformations are likely to be both less risky and less difficult. With a history of change, flexibility becomes a *routinized part* of insurgent identity, rather than a threat to it.

3.1.3 Diversification / Domains of Activity

Diversification or the number of *domains of activity*[2] refers to the variety, goals, and strategies of different roles within an organization. A single domain of activity is a col-

[2]Elsewhere in the organizational theory literature, this concept is alternately referred to as *heterogeneity* (Clemens 1993), *repertoires* (Nelson & Winter 1982, Hannan & Freeman 1984) and *departmentalization* (Gulick & Urwick 1937). I prefer domains of activity and will continue to use that phrase throughout the dissertation.

lection of roles with a dedicated purpose: combat, for instance, is one of many possible domains in an insurgent organization. While it is unfathomable that rebellions might vary in terms of whether they have a combat domain, the extent to which they have branches dedicated to civilian outreach and political messaging, for instance, varies considerably from one insurgent organization to the next. The literature, however, almost never acknowledges this key dimension of variation. Indeed, Padgett and Powell (2012, loc. 653) correctly observe that "social science tends to only analyze one domain of activity at a time."

Bringing organizational diversification into the analysis sheds crucial light on why some insurgencies are better equipped to adapt and transform than others. As Amburgey and his coauthors note, "beyond defining what an organization can do, routines define what the organization knows" (1993, 52). A wide variety of knowledge and skill-sets on which to draw mitigates the risks of major organizational change (Minkoff 1999, Sutcliffe & Vogus 2003). Faced with the pressure to change, more diversified rebel groups can leverage relevant skill-sets as the organization transforms.

Thus, even if the rebellion's primary raison d'état is militant, varied roles within the organization imply a built-in flexibility. Parkinson (2013) observes this trend in Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). She argues that the PLO's resilience during wartime—particularly when the militant wing of the PLO incurred an uptick in state-sanctioned violence—was largely a function of their ability to repurpose other roles and linkages in the organization to compensate for the damaged branches. Multiple domains are thus conducive to resilience because for diversified groups, the obstruction of one domain does not necessarily imply the obstruction of the entire organization. Organizational diversification is simultaneously one of the most crucial factors affecting resilience and adaptation, and—at least in rebellion literature—the most consistently overlooked.

3.1.4 Directed Resilience as a Guiding Framework

Recasting rebel-to-party transformation in terms of organizational resilience and adaptation sheds crucial light on where we should look to explain the phenomenon. Since organizational traits affect the capacity for resilience, the rebel organizational structure must become the focal point of the analysis. While the traits detailed in this section broadly facilitate resilience, explaining the transition into a political party requires a more elaborate organizational framework capable of accounting for *directed* change. Rather than simply accounting for whether an organization can withstand a major restructuring, a comprehensive theory of rebel-to-party transition must account for whether an organization of type X can undergo a major restructuring into an organization of type Y.

The organizational trajectory of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) illustrates the need for this level of theoretical specificity. In the wake of the Kosovo War, the KLA neither transformed into a political party, nor completely disbanded. Instead, the organization transformed into the Kosovo Protection Force (KPF): a civil emergency-response and humanitarian assistance organization. As with many rebel-to-party transitions, Manning (2007) notes that the KPF's structure (i.e. the structure of the outcome organization)

"mirrored almost exactly that of the KLA's war-time military organization." Thus, the KLA's transition into the KPF was not merely a demobilization that afforded former members a similar job. It was a major organizational transition into something *other* than a political party. Understanding rebel-to-party transitions requires a framework that parses out a very specific adaptation from mere survival.

The following three sections draw on insights from organizational theory, theories of insurgency and rebellion, and theories of party-building to construct a unified framework of rebel-to-party transformation in terms of *directed resilience*. Couching rebel-to-party transition in terms of directed resilience further emphasizes the need for a theory centered around the three questions I pose at the start of this chapter: *What changes? How does it change?* and *Under what conditions can change occur?*

3.2 What Changes?

Proto-party Structures and the Content of Transformation

This section addresses the first question by modeling the *content* of change. Doing so requires a detailed comparison of the organizational structure before and after transformation (Barnett & Carroll 1995, 219). Put simply, the analytic starting point is a specification of insurgent structures, party structures, how they differ. Broadly, organizational structure captures three dimensions of a group's operations: what they do, how it is decided, and how it is executed. On the surface, insurgencies and political parties differ most drastically on the first dimension: rebels fight wars; parties contest elections. This simplified—though common—characterization leads many to assume that rebel groups and political parties have fundamentally different structures engaged in fundamentally different activities. Indeed, this assumption is so comfortably ingrained that it explains why we find rebel-to-party transformations puzzling in the first place.

However, assuming that each actor operates in a single domain (combat and electoral politics, respectively) puts up analytic blinders, obscuring both the content and process of organizational transformation. In this section, I step back from that assumption and treat rebel organizational structures as diverse within insurgencies and variable across insurgencies. Drawing on empirical evidence and models of party-building, I map out the range of domains in which rebels and parties operate. By exploring domains of activity, I am able to identify the range of structures that make up insurgencies on the one hand, and parties on the other. This conceptualization moves beyond the conventional understand of organization-as-hierarchy, and toward a more nuanced understanding of the diversity these organizations exhibit.

This comprehensive picture of the structures and roles in each organization invites a more critical, methodical conceptualization of each actor, which in turn reveals why transition is more likely in some cases than in others. From an analytic standpoint, a more nuanced conception of party organizations and rebel organizations will therefore allow us to move beyond abstract questions like, *How do rebel groups transition into political parties?*, and toward a set of more specific questions like, *Which wartime activities prepare*

insurgent organizations to operate in these party domains? and *Which, if any, rebel group structures are best suited to being repurposed into party structures?* and *Which, if any, structures act as barriers to transition into a party?*

This section proceeds by first drawing on Mair's (1994) disaggregation of party structures to map out the different domains of political parties. Next, I map out the various domains that comprise insurgent organizations. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, empirical evidence suggests that many rebel groups include well-developed structures for non-combat activities, such as political messaging and civilian administration. The reality of insurgent diversification both calls into question the simplifying assumption that rebels engage solely in combat, and highlights a new avenue of research on the causes and effects of operating across many domains. Together, these organizational maps permit a more incisive comparison of insurgencies and parties, laying the foundation for identifying structures that facilitate a successful transition and structures that impede that goal.

3.2.1 A Map of Party Organizations

Though many scholars conceptualize parties as organizations, their discussions exhibit a trend similar to that found in the rebellion literature: the organizational structure of parties is often characterized only in terms of hierarchy, institutionalization, and the locus of decision-making (Svåsand 1994, Pierre & Widfeldt 1994, Levitsky 2003). However, in setting out to model the changing role of parties, Mair (1994) argues that the conceptualization of party organizations needs to be expanded in order to specify the nature of change. Indeed, he observes a set of shortcomings in the party literature akin to those identified in Chapter 1. Namely, the conception of the party organization is limited to one structural variant, which in turn creates "severe limits to the comparative understanding of how party organizations work, about how they change, and about how they adapt" (1994, 2). To overcome this problem, Mair disaggregates the party into three principle domains of activity (what he calls "faces" of the party): the party in public office, the party on the ground, and the party in central office (1994, 4).

Each of Mair's domains represents a different set of roles and skills needed to function in a competitive political environment. According to Mair, the party in public office represents the governing apparatus (i.e. the sect of the party in parliament and government). The party in public office gains access to resources and confers legitimacy to the party. The second domain, the party on the ground, represents the party's linkages with society. This domain manages the membership organization, allowing the party to build a loyal constituency. Finally, the party in central office is responsible for the formation and reproduction of party identity. This domain covers the construction and articulation of the party platform, and "organizes and is representative of the party on the ground" (1994, 4). Armed with a content-specific map of political parties, we can begin to build a more nuanced model (and set of hypotheses) about what in rebel groups must change to take on these roles and how that process may unfold. The next step is to do the same for rebel organizations.

3.2.2 A Map of Rebel Organizations

Many conventional accounts depict insurgent organizations as though they exclusively comprise a combat domain. Groups of men with a single role (full-time soldiers), engage in a single task (combat), toward a single goal (wrestling power from the state) (Weinstein 2007, Humphreys & Weinstein 2008, Staniland 2014). Indeed, In Weinstein's seminal work on insurgent organizations, he argues that "a clear understanding of the micropolitics of rebellion is achieved by focusing on how groups organize violence" (2007, 37). But what if rebel groups do more than this? While most insurgencies have a limited set of goals, not every facet of the organization works toward these goals in the same way. I argue that reducing insurgent organizations to the hierarchical composition of combat structures not only misrepresents the complex and variable nature of rebel groups, but it also forces scholars to overlook the most critical factors that affect rebel-to-party transformation.

To get traction on the variety of possible domains in which rebel groups operate, I organize this discussion around four goals. These goals range from core needs—like staging an armed resistance and acquiring resources—to more peripheral and variable needs—like spreading the ideology of the rebellion and providing shadow governance. I then outline the corresponding set of possible organizational structures or domains that work in the service of each goal. What emerges is a diverse picture of insurgent organizations that differs markedly from conventional depictions of rebel groups. Some groups, like the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, prefer to operate in isolation and focus on mobile combat strategies; as such, their organizational structure is relatively unidimensional. Yet others, like Hezbollah, exhibit intense organizational diversity with whole branches dedicated to administrative duties and social service provisions.[3] The range of structures comprising rebel organizations are depicted in Table 3.1 and expanded upon below.

Table 3.1: Goals and Corresponding Domains of Activity in Insurgent Organizations

Core Goals		Peripheral Goals	
Resistance	**Resource Acquisition**	**Ideological**	**Governance**
Combat	Natural resource exploitation	Political messaging	Administrative structures
	External sponsorship	Political education	Social service provisions
	Civilian taxation		Community groups

[3]The extent to which rebels have an active "choice" in this matter is of course limited by the constraints and opportunities of the environment. A dearth of natural resources, for example, makes operating the in that domain untenable, thereby constraining the organization to relying on external sponsorship, taxation, or looting.

Armed Resistance

Rebels fight. This defining feature of militant groups illustrates the one similarity across insurgent organizations: a combat domain. All rebel groups have a set of roles and personnel dedicated to combat. While the composition of platoons, the command structure, and the rules governing promotion and advancement vary across insurgencies, the existence of this domain remains constant. But rebel organization does not stop here. Even a group that fights solely for the sake of fighting still requires resources: weapons, ammunition, communication equipment, lodging, food, clothing. Thus, our conceptualization of rebel organizations must at least expand to include a domain for resource acquisition.

Funding and Resource Acquisition

To sustain the organization, insurgencies must dedicate time and personnel to securing, managing, and allocating funding and other resources. Resource acquisition can be managed in a few (non-exclusive) ways, each of which has different structural implications for the organization: (1) natural resource exploitation, (2) external sponsorship, and (3) civilian taxation.[4] From an organizational perspective, relying on natural resource exploitation requires additional wings dedicated to extraction and sales. Securing external sponsorship requires a wing of diplomats or representatives to stay in communication with their sponsor. Relying on civilian taxation requires structures for administrative and territorial control.

Ideological Dissemination

In addition to combat and resource acquisition, some insurgent organizations have wings dedicated to various methods of disseminating their ideology. Political messaging wings are broadly dedicated to articulating the group's ideology through media. Tactics range from the use of pamphlets and magazines (as in the case of the M-19 in Colombia), to operating clandestine radio stations (as in the cases of RENAMO in Mozambique and the FMLN in El Salvador), to broadcasting rebel-owned television stations (as in the case of Fatah in Palestine).[5] Another common ideological domain is the construction and management of political education and community groups (e.g. youth organizations and women's organizations). Operating in this domain provides insurgencies with the opportunities to build up a base of civilian support.

[4]A notable omission from this list is a reliance on looting. From an analytic standpoint, I omit looting because it generally does not require a dedicated structure. In the case of RENAMO, for instance, soldiers were left to their own devices to find food and resources, which they mainly procured by pillaging homes and villages. Furthermore, almost every insurgent organization engages in looting to some degree.

[5]More recently, insurgent groups have begun to rely heavily on social media outreach as well. Yet very few groups in this study have used this tactic, since the scope is limited to cases that ended long enough ago to have experienced at least one post-conflict election.

Shadow Governance

Though scholars routinely acknowledge variation in the strength of territorial control (Cunningham, Gleditsch & Salehyan 2009*a*, Cunningham, Gleditsch & Salehyan 2013), few acknowledge the variation across *how* groups administer their territorial strongholds. Even minimally equipped rebel groups that emerge in a state with a weak central government are able control territory.[6] However, of the insurgencies that preside over territory, some move beyond policing rebel encampments and choose to engage civilian populations by setting up shadow governance structures where the state cannot reach.[7] In these latter cases, insurgent organizations operate in a wide variety of administrative domains that depart markedly from combat. For example, groups such as the FMLN, the MPLA, and many others set up sophisticated forms of taxation and food allocation, formal conflict resolution, and the construction of infrastructure.

Setting up parallel governance structures involves dedicating manpower to the creation of a variety of administrative institutions (Mampilly 2011, 4).[8] Administrative units manage everything from day-to-day bookkeeping tasks and tax collection to dispute resolution and enforcement of basic law and order. Many groups also provide social services to the communities over which they preside. Social-service provisions vary from providing food and basic medical care on an ad-hoc basis to building permanent schools and hospitals. In El Salvador, for example, the FMLN engaged in a massive education and literacy campaign during the war, which brought the literacy rate up from a meager fifty percent to almost ninety percent in only a decade. Moreover, the remaining ten percent were unable to read mostly for want of eyeglasses, rather than ineffectiveness or the FMLN's lack of reach. Finally, many insurgencies create community groups to broaden their linkages with the civilian population. The management and oversight of student organizations, youth wings, and women's groups further embed the insurgent group in society, foster loyalty, and imbue the organization with an even more diverse set of skills for use during wartime (Parkinson 2013) and afterwards.

Implications

The central takeaway from this discussion is that the composition of insurgent organizations is highly variable. Some rebel groups operate almost exclusively in combat-oriented domains and go to extreme lengths to stay hidden and keep civilians at bay. Yet, other

[6] RENAMO is a prime example.

[7] The rebellion literature more broadly would benefit from a conceptual distinction between territorial *control* and territorial *administration*. Territorial control is used universally to refer to rebel strongholds, but this singular concept fails to distinguish between groups that work to keep civilians at bay versus those that set up parallel administrative structures and become embedded in local communities.

[8] It is important to note that the phenomenon of rebel governance has been anything but ignored in the rebellion scholarship. Tilly (1978, 2005), Wood (2003), Mampilly (2011), Parkinson (2013), and others have detailed the intricacies of insurgent organizations, their governance strategies, and their wartime networks. These studies, however, have remained separate from those examining post-war outcomes and the long-term trajectories of rebel groups, which by-and-large continue to conceptualize insurgent organizational structures as unidimensional combat entities. This bifurcation has proven detrimental to the literature as a whole.

rebel organizations diversify into a variety of non-combat domains such as civilian administration and ideological dissemination. While the origins of diverse organization trajectories is beyond the scope of the current study,[9] I argue that these differences across insurgents' wartime structures systematically affect the prospects for rebel-to-party transformation. The logic of this argument follows from a piece-by-piece comparison of the requisite political party structures on the one hand, and the possible combinations of rebel groups structures on the other hand.

3.2.3 Proto-party Structures as the Locus of Change

The diversity of rebel organizational composition raises the question at the heart of this study: How do these various structures affect rebel-to-party transformation? Since we know what an organization must be able to do to function as a political party—govern, mobilize a base of support, and articulate a coherent platform—we can systematically assess how different organizational structures present during wartime affect a group's prospects for developing similar structures and competencies once the war ends. I identify a set of key wartime domains whose functions map clearly onto Mair's three elements of party organizations. These relationships are illustrated in Figure 3.1.

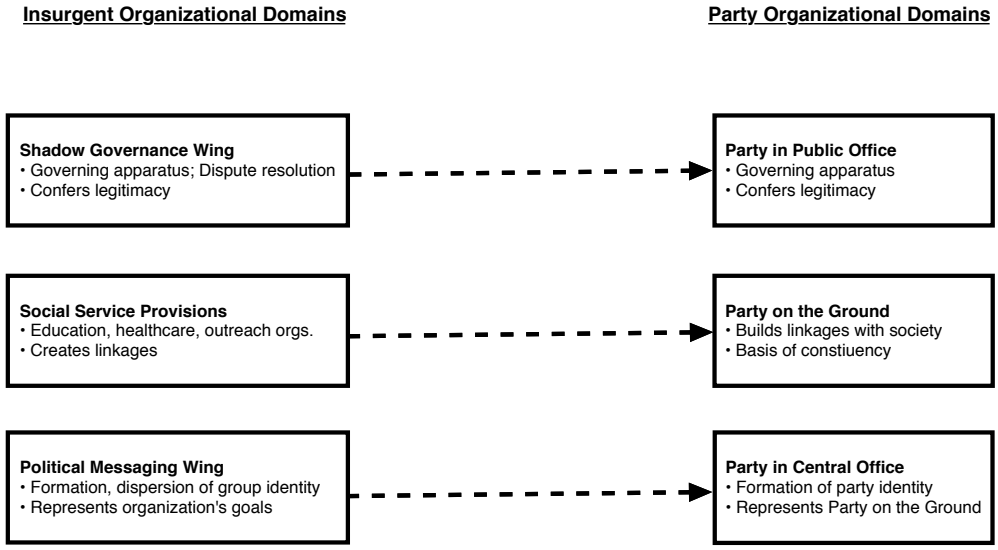


Figure 3.1: Mapping Insurgent Domains to Party Domains

I identify three wartime organizational domains that constitute what I call *proto-party* structures: shadow governance, social service provisions, and political messaging. Functionally, they mirror the requisite structures of party organizations, which in turn makes rebel-to-party transition more likely since the structure of the starting organization more closely resembles the end point. Proto-party structures built during wartime confer two

[9]For insight into why these differences arise in the first place, Mampilly (2011) provides an excellent analysis of the source of variation in rebel governance.

advantages on rebel groups as they attempt transition into a political party. First, these structures contribute to organizational diversity, facilitating resilience more broadly. Second, any prolonged operation in a given domain imbues the organization with relevant experience and a structured skill-set, which can then be translated into legitimate governance roles as the group transitions. As March notes, "each increase in competence at an activity increases the likelihood of rewards for engaging in that activity" (1991, 73). The utility of a *structured* skill-set cannot be understated. A working organizational structure is more than an ad-hoc group of individuals with the same skills; it is also their *relations*: how those skills are continually used together over repeated interactions. Proto-party structures are thus advantageous because they represent cohesive units of individuals working together on tasks comparable to those in the post-war political arena.

Insurgent wings dedicated to territorial administration and shadow governance mirror the role of the party in public office. From a functional standpoint, both structures govern and manage the quotidian administrative tasks associated with acting as a ruling body. As such, I anticipate that a nascent party with governance experience will be more likely to deal with the early administrative tasks of party registration, and more likely to become a lasting opposition party.

Organizational wings dedicated to social service provisions and community outreach organizations mirror the role of the party on the ground. Like the membership organization of the party, community outreach structures force societal linkages that are often politically oriented and used to build a stable base of support. In the case of the party organization, the goal is to build a loyal constituency of voters; in the case of the insurgency, the wartime goal is to divert loyalty from the state and create a set of sympathizers from which to draw support and recruits. However, as the war comes to a close, insurgent organizations that engaged in consistent community outreach have pre-existing support and mobilization structures on which to draw as they shift from the battlefield to the political arena. I anticipate that these structures not only affect the overall prospects for transition, but that groups with established community organizations will be more likely to exhibit long-term success by mobilizing these groups into a loyal constituency.

The final wartime structures that map directly onto a central party function are political messaging wings. Mirroring the role of the party in central office, political messaging wings represent the facet of the rebel organization dedicated to the creation, distribution, and refinement of their core ideology and goals. Insurgent organizations with well-developed messaging structures have three advantages over their less politically-vocal counterparts. First, this aspect of the organization creates and reifies a core political identity, which contributes to organizational cohesion (Hannan & Freeman 1984) and mitigates the risks of change. Second, by relying on informal community settings to develop their message during the conflict, these groups are afforded a sort of trial-and-error period. They can test what resonates and what needs refinement before their political platform has to go live (Ramzipoor 2015). Third, when post-conflict elections come around, groups with pre-existing messaging wings already have a platform on which to run. Since scholars routinely note the challenge and central importance of "building" a political platform at the point of transition (Manning 2007, Manning 2008*a*, de Zeeuw

2008), we should thus expect that a head start on this task is a critical asset in making the transition to a party. [10]

3.2.4 Organizational Detractors: The Resource Curse Redux

Thus far, my argument and the theoretical literature on which it is based suggest that heterogeneous organizational structures monotonically improve the prospects for rebel-to-party transitions. However, this is not the case. Notwithstanding the general benefits of organizational diversification, some insurgent organizations have dedicated structures that potentially subvert political transformations. Specifically, I expect that organizational units dedicated to the extraction and sale of "lootable" resources will have a deleterious effect on transition. *Lootable* resources (Le Billon 2014) refer to those resources that do not require major investment or infrastructure to extract, such as timber, coca, poppy, and alluvial gold and diamonds.[11] I argue that the subversive effect of relying on these resources stems from a mutual incompatibility between "looting" structures on the one hand, and proto-party structures on the other. The incompatibility arises through two mechanisms.

First, the extent to which rebel groups can rely on natural resource wealth to fund their activities is the extent to which they do not have to rely on external sponsorship from other states. Insurgencies reliant on external support typically have to appease their sponsors in order to secure steady funding—largely because sponsors must appease their populations and justify the sponsorship. RENAMO, for example, had extensive public relations representatives working in the United States, Portugal, and elsewhere in Europe. The group was constrained by their sponsors and had to develop rhetoric and a political agenda that appealed to the values of their sponsors—which they then repurposed into their party platform during their transition. Thus, to some extent, external sponsorship places political and behavioral constraints on the organization. In contrast, groups that need only maintain relationships with buyers lack both accountability and incentives to develop structures that facilitate party-formation at a later date.

Second, if the profits from resource exploitation are sufficient, the movement is less in need of civilian support to sustain its operations. As such, reliance on lootable resources disincentivizes insurgent groups from building structures that broker relationships with civilians. Take, for example, a state endowed with lootable resources and a rebel group with the capacity to control territory. The group faces a choice. One option is to occupy populated areas and collect rents from civilians, which incentivizes the construction of political and administrative structures. The other option is to lock down resource-rich territory and dedicate organizational effort to (1) maximizing the efficiency of extraction and sales, and (2) keeping civilians at bay so as to prevent others from infringing on their profits.

[10] Furthermore, a common criticism of failed transformations concerns the former rebels' inability to build a coherent or meaningful party platform (Mulaj 2010).

[11] These resources are theoretically distinct from others like coal or hydrocarbons, which rebels are unlikely to leverage in their favor due to the infrastructural requirements for extraction.

Insurgencies that opt for the latter trajectory develop in isolation, minimizing the need to convince civilians of the utility of the movement. Consequently, for groups that rely heavily on resource extraction, I expect political messaging to be minimal and social outreach units to be minimally developed. If these organizations are ultimately given the opportunity to transition into a legitimate political actor at the end of the conflict, they will face greater obstacles to transition. Not only does their lack of organizational diversity mean that they face the formidable task of building political institutions anew, but their lack of civilian engagement throughout the war means that they now lack a viable constituency from which to derive political support. Consequently, funding structures built in the service of exploiting resources have cascading organizational implications that affect the insurgency's wartime composition and post-war trajectory.

3.2.5 Implications

Part of explaining rebel-to-party transition is accounting for *what changes*. In this section, I argue that proto-party structures are critical specifically because where they are present, fewer destabilizing changes need to be made. This section revealed that insurgent organizations exhibit a remarkable potential for diversity in their structural make-up. Yet, diversity is by no means universal; and not all diversity is equally advantageous. I argue that success in rebel-to-party transformation varies systematically with the socio-political diversity of insurgent organizational structures. Operating in socio-political domains makes insurgent groups more resilient to shocks, and endows the organization with a set of skills relevant to competing in the political arena.

3.3 How does Change Happen?
Reprioritization versus Rebuilding

The section above detailed the structural content that makes rebel-to-party transformation more likely in some cases than in others, yet an important question remains. What is the *process* of change? More specifically, how do rebel groups—with and without proto-party structures—actually *become* political parties? The rebel-to-party literature has established a long list of correlates of successful transition,[12] but these arguments cast only a dim light on the mechanism at work. This section moves from outlining the content of change to modeling its process. In other words, the goal is to model the *-to-* in rebel-to-party transformations. Motivated by a problematic assumption in existing accounts of transition, I develop a two-path model of transformation that finally sheds light on the divergent prospects of success and failure.

Conventional accounts of the rebel-to-party process are problematic along three fronts, all of which stem from a major underlying assumption. As I note in greater detail in Chap-

[12]External sponsorship and goal achievement (Acosta 2014), the end of the Cold War (Matanock 2013, Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz 2016), institutional arrangements (Shugart 1992), and organizational composition (above), have all been put forth as important factors explaining rebel-to-party transformations.

ter 1, the majority of previous work depicting the process of transformation relies on an assumption of structural novelty: the interlude between *rebel* and *party* is characterized by a scramble of accumulating the resources and personnel to build new structures from scratch. The first problem with this assumption is that it obscures the process of change. Scholars list the myriad requirements of building a party organization—registering as a party, formulating a political program, selecting candidates, getting offices and typewriters and other supplies (de Zeeuw 2008, Manning 2008*a*)—yet, this list does not explain how change occurs, or why some insurgencies are more successful than others.[13] The second problem with this assumption is that it is simply not true. As I establish in Section 2, not all insurgencies entirely lack the structures needed to function as a party, and this conception of the transition process fails to account for the different paths insurgencies might take. Finally, these material challenges to transition are not consonant with the empirical factors that often lie at the heart of failure.

This section draws on theories of organizational change to develop a novel framework of the process of rebel-to-party transformation. I argue that insurgent groups face one of two paths to transition as a function of their organizational composition at the end of the conflict. I take the decision to negotiate with the state as the analytic start of transformation. At this point, former insurgences go through a recursive process of organizational assessment—which involves identifying the difference between what the group has and what it needs—and organizational change—the steps taken to fill in the gaps. The model predicts that groups who enter negotiations with proto-party structures already in place face an easier and less risky path to change than their more homogenous counterparts. I trace the process of rebel-to-party transition through three actions: the decision to negotiate, organizational assessment, and organizational changes. For each path to change, I outline the risks and derive testable implications about its bearing on success.

Decision to Negotiate

Formally, rebel-to-party transformations begin with a decision to engage with the state on the *political* battlefield. This starting point is the one commonality across transitions. For a variety of possible reasons that lie outside the scope of this study, state or rebel leaders (and sometimes third parties) attempt to lure the other to the negotiating table. This aspect of the transition is a multilevel bargaining process. Internal bargaining dynamics affect the timing of talks as well as the specific requests the insurgents lay out (de Zeeuw 2008). External bargaining (between the rebels and the state) affects the success (or breakdown) of the negotiation and the content of the final agreement.

While the dynamics of negotiations are an important part of the rebel-to-party process, they do not tell the whole story. Prior arguments about transformation, however, tend to jump directly from bargaining and negotiations to an evaluation of party status.

[13]The problem here is analogous to explaining metamorphosis in butterflies by saying "in order to become a butterfly, a caterpillar needs wings, fewer legs, more colors, and bigger antennae." To be sure, this explanation is a fine way of articulating the basic differences between a caterpillar and a butterfly, but it does little to explain how one turns into the other.

These arguments overemphasize agential explanations and the role of choice. Ishiyama & Batta (2011*b*) describe the rebel-to-party literature as focusing on "whether former rebel groups *decide* to adapt to, evade, or exit the post-war political arena" (369) (emphasis added). Wade (2008), for example, argues that of the factors explaining the FMLN's successful transition to a political party, the "first and most obvious, was the decision by FMLN leadership that armed struggle was no longer an option" (44-5). Likewise, in Nindorera's explanation of the CNDD-FDD's transition in Burundi, he argues that the key factor governing the transformation was the "strong *desire* for a negotiated solution" (2008, 116) (emphasis added). In short, previous accounts conflate the decision to negotiate with the decision or ability to transform.

At this point, however, we must ask, can a rebel group or an organization or an organism *decide* to adapt? Rebel groups can decide they *want* to adapt, they can decide to make requests that will shape their postwar opportunities, and they can largely decide to abide by ceasefires and to disarm. However, asking for and receiving a power-sharing clause in a negotiated settlement is not sufficient to ensure party consolidation. Decision-making and internal bargaining dynamics are an important part of what is currently an incomplete story. The process of transformation must instead be understood in organizational terms as the former insurgency reconfigures its goals, structures, and strategies to operate in a new environment (Hannan & Freeman 1984).

3.3.1 Organizational Assessment

Once a rebel group decides to attempt party transformation, in must first engage in an organizational assessment: an iterative process of self-reflection in which the organization assesses the difference between what it has and what it needs to better function in its environment. Assessment occurs consistently throughout the group's lifecycle, but usually the differences are small and the corresponding changes are incremental and material in nature: more weapons, different networks for transporting weapons, more recruits for a given unit (or overall), or different combat strategies, to name just a few. With party transition on the horizon, however, this task becomes more complex. The rebellion must take stock of what it has, what it lacks, and what it no longer needs to effectively transform into and consolidate a party organization.

Organizational theory sheds much needed light on the two-fold goals of assessment. One task is to identify the existing structures that are compatible with the goals and actions of party development. Are there existing political cadres that are poised to take on formal administrative roles? Crucially, organizational assessment at the transition stage is not just a matter of identifying the individuals who can take on political roles. Although especially skilled individuals are sometimes plucked from one role and placed into another, both empirical trends and theoretical models point to the importance of structures over individuals. Organizations exhibit structural inertia and the extent to which even small parts of the organization are kept intact is the extent to which major transformations are less destabilizing (Hannan & Freeman 1977). Furthermore, intact structures make the process of change more efficient because they are already situated

within and supported by the organization and the individuals comprising those structures have experience working together on a relevant task. For example, if an organization has a wing that managed political messaging during wartime, that whole cadre may be usefully redeployed to write and disseminate the party's platform.

The second assessment task is to identify the wartime structures that now constitute dead weight, typically the combat units. The problem, of course, is that the rank-and-file militia units—some of the most important structures in the movement during wartime—suddenly become vestigial organs. Consequently, rebel leaders cannot simply trim the fat without risking intense backlash in the form of spoilers or an extremist splinter group comprising disenfranchised foot-soldiers. Thus, another important part of organizational assessment and transformation is devising a plan for incorporating or compensating individuals in vestigial domains.

3.3.2 Organizational Change: Two Paths to Transformation

Depending on the results of the post-negotiation assessment, former rebel organizations face two paths to becoming a political party. If a rebel group is largely homogenous and combat-centric in structure, the rebel-to-party transformation process will proceed in accordance with the expectations in the current literature: namely, the organization must recruit new personnel and build party structures from scratch. I argue, however, that if an organization is endowed with proto-party structures, the process of transformation can work through *reprioritization* rather than rebuilding. Rebuilding and reprioritization are two paths to organizational change that come with fundamentally different risks of survival (Hannan & Freeman 1977).[14] Reprioritization is the mechanism by which proto-party structures confer major advantages during rebel-to-party transformations. In this section I trace out each path to transition and the accompanying challenges and risks. I argue that rebel-to-party transition is more efficient, less risky, and thus more likely to succeed through the reprioritization of proto-party structures.

Building a Party from Scratch

What does the rebel-to-party transition process look like if it unfolds the way conventional accounts assume? If during wartime, the insurgent organization never built structures dedicated to the socio-political and administrative tasks similar to those of a party, the assessment will reveal a large gap between what the organization has and what it needs. From an organizational frame of reference, rebel groups lacking proto-party structures exhibit four organizational deficiencies, only one of which is acknowledged in the current literature. Compensating for these deficiencies puts intense strain on organizational cohesion and resources, which in turn compounds the risk of transition.

[14]Elsewhere throughout the organizational theory literature, these paths to organizational change are known as "exploration" and "exploitation" (March 1991, 71). They refer to an organization's decision to expand into new markets either by building structures to explore new territory or by exploiting and refining existing skills to take advantage of a new opportunity.

The first (and only acknowledged) deficiency is that the nascent party lacks the personnel and corresponding skill-sets needed for political domains in which the group must now operate. Thus, the leadership needs to find skilled individuals to take on the variety of administrative tasks needed to build and support a party organization. However, the process of organizational transformation is more intensive than just hiring qualified personnel to fill political positions, and it is riskier than just finishing the hiring process in a timely manner. The second and related deficiency is the lack of corresponding structures: the relational protocols that determine how a given unit of individuals work together and how the unit is situated within the organization. Building a structure from scratch—say, a political messaging wing—involves a variety of logistical considerations: establishing the roles within the unit (who writes what, who has veto power), deciding who reports to whom, and figuring out how resources are allocated and received.

The third impediment to smooth transition is the requisite trial-and-error period that accompanies expanding into a new domain. Insurgencies with a well-developed political messaging wing during wartime likely did not get it right the first time; rather, they undergo a process of learning and updating. They figure out which messages resonate and which fall flat. Furthermore, in the context of political messaging, groups with preexisting wings also had established channels of civilian engagement. In contrast, new messaging structures cobbled together in the aftermath of conflict face the added pressure of developing a cohesive political message and testing it through tenuous channels during a period of marked instability for the organization.

Finally, the process of building and prioritizing new structures coupled with a dismantling of old (typically combat) structures threatens the stability of the organization (Hannan & Freeman 1984, 159). According to Hannan and Freeman, major organizational change is destabilizing to the extent that it disrupts any of the four core aspects of the organization: (1) goals, (2) authority structures, (3) core technology (i.e. infrastructure and members' skills), and (4) strategies (1984, 156). Building a party from scratch while dismantling combat units threatens the legitimacy of every core aspect of the organization as it existed during the conflict. Goals are shifted toward political engagement. Authority structures are disrupted as new hires in the party-building stage come to occupy high-ranking positions in the party to the exclusion of veterans of the insurgency.[15] Further, the set of skills and strategies on which the nascent party must rely depart markedly from their previous operations. Such disruptions can result in internecine conflict, mass defection, and/or splinter groups (which, in the case of insurgent organizations would likely take the form of spoilers who choose to continue fighting even in the wake of peace agreements).

While theories of organizational change shed light on the actions and obstacles that come with building a party from scratch, they also deepen the mystery. The risks of failure go far beyond what the rebel-to-party literature suggests—which makes success all the more puzzling. The main expectation that follows from this analysis is that the

[15]Many people who are hired in the party-building stage are either total outsiders to the organization or were part-time affiliates during the war (Manning 2008*b*), and these outsiders are often confronted with intense resentment on the part of longstanding members.

extent to which a nascent party has to build political structures from scratch is the extent to which the party is unlikely to succeed in the long run. Of course, this is not to say that successful parties have never trod this path. Yet, the inherent difficulty associated with party-building in the wake of a settlement calls into question the assumption that all rebel-to-party transformations proceed (and succeed) through this route.

Transformation by Reprioritization

The theories of organizational change I discussed previously seem to suggest that the challenges of major transformation are nearly insurmountable—yet successful rebel-to-party transitions are far from uncommon. While no research is sanguine about the ease of major structural overhauls, recent organizational scholarship has revealed that the difficulty of change is not a constant. Instead, the prospects for successful transformation are a function of the organization's structure and the environment in which the organization operates. Drawing on this research, I argue that the process of rebel-to-party transformation unfolds in a fundamentally different way if the organization begins the transition with proto-party structures in place. Specifically, transitioning groups with pre-existing party structures can redirect resources through established chains-of-command, toward established subunits.

For proto-party insurgencies, the organizational assessment process will reveal units working in domains (e.g. political messaging) compatible with political reorientation: e.g. administration, community outreach, and political messaging. While the unit may be underfunded or understaffed, its very existence facilitates the construction of a (more) robust messaging structure for the political party. The process of transformation will necessarily be different from the building and hiring scramble depicted throughout the literature. Instead, the organization can rely on established chains of command and communication to prioritize and bolster the existing wing. Resources and information flow more easily through existing networks, which at such a critical time can be the difference between survival or death (Parkinson 2013).

If transition occurs by reprioritization, case evidence should reveal a pattern of structural preservation. The "rebel" careers of five schoolteachers in Mozambique illustrate this process well. In 1984—a full ten years before RENAMO ever appeared on a ballot—the leadership created a wing of politico-military commissars. Five schoolteachers were forcibly recruited together to create a wing responsible for articulating a coherent political message to other soldiers. Later, in 1988, the same unit was augmented and dispatched in a campaign to provide political education to civilians. As the war came to a close, this group was again called upon to aid in the negotiations process, and then promoted to high-ranking offices within the party. Two of the five initially worked together in Dhlakama's offices, one became the national director of education, and the final two currently work in foreign relations. While the unit itself was not transposed in its entirety from one position to another, its trajectory throughout RENAMO's transition indicates a preference for structural preservation and reliance on existing channels to identify and promote relevant skills.

Theoretical models and empirical evidence clearly suggest that reprioritization ex-

ists as an alternative path to rebel-to-party transformation. The question that follows is whether this path to transition offers advantages over building anew. Though I enumerated detractors in the section above, it is also possible that building a party from scratch offers more opportunities for efficiency since structures can be designed explicitly for the party organization. I argue, however, that when rebel-to-party transformation occurs through a process of *reprioritization* instead of *rebuilding*, nascent parties sidestep many of the obstacles depicted above. The extent to which the former insurgency has skills mirroring those of a party is the extent to which a transformation from rebel group into political party is an evolution rather than a revolution. As a result, the prospects for failure are considerably attenuated. As an illustration, consider building a party in central office—a unit dedicated to the construction of the party's platform and political mobilization—either by repurposing a wartime propaganda wing or by building it from scratch.

First, transitioning groups with established proto-party structures can benefit from their experience with the type of activities the organization must prioritize as they move to compete with the state in the political arena. Groups with established messaging wings have benefitted from organizational learning. In other words, the skills and roles of individuals are embedded or institutionalized in a way that makes the process efficient. These groups avoid what Stinchcombe (1965) refers to as the "liability of newness:" the inefficiency, high start-up costs, and intra-organizational conflicts that arise when adding new roles (148). Evidence from organizational change analyses consistently suggests that changes designed to exploit an existing skill-set are more efficient than transitions into a new domain.

Second, repurposing existing organizational arrangements is easier and less destabilizing than building structures anew while dismantling others. Building a political messaging wing from scratch entails both hiring skilled individuals (or finding them within the organization), dividing up the tasks among them, and building the unit into the organization. Determining who reports to whom, establishing lines of communication, and negotiating how (and how many) resources are allocated to the new wing are organizational challenges that some groups avoid if they come to the table with nascent messaging already in place.

In addition to the logistical challenges, building key party structures anew by hiring outsiders promotes resentment and instability as veterans of the conflict are passed over for promotions to high-ranking positions. For example, while RENAMO had political messaging structures in place during the war, their administrative capacity was sorely lacking, and their rank-and-file members had less than a second grade education on average. Consequently, the leadership had to look outside the organization to fill positions as they grew their political structure. The ensuing rivalries between the "bush-based core" of the organization and the urban intellectual outsiders who were quickly promoted to high-ranking positions is well-documented (Vines 1991, Manning 2002, **?**). The inherent difficulty of transition was exacerbated by mass defections from soldiers who felt slighted by the outsider promotions.

3.4 What Conditions Affect Change?

The final piece of the transformation puzzle is the rebel environment: what is the *context* of change? As important as organizational features are, they are not the sole determinants of transition. Two key features of the environment shape the opportunities and constraints that insurgent organizations face as they take root and as attempt to transform: weak governance and post-conflict electoral institutions. In this section, I argue that weak governance shapes the opportunities for organizational breadth during wartime, whereas electoral institutions shape initial barriers to entry into the political arena when the conflict comes to a close.

3.4.1 Weak Governance

Weak governing capacity works through three main channels to bring about favorable conditions for rebel-to-party transition. First, the state will be less effective at counterinsurgency tactics—even in early stages of the rebellion—which facilitates recruitment and expansion. Rebel groups emerging outside the governments' reach have the opportunity to take root in (and take control of) local communities. This context, in turn, creates more abundant sources of recruitment. In contrast, nascent rebellions emerging where counterinsurgency capacity is strong are often forced to operate in a more clandestine manner, which creates numerous obstacles to expansion and organizational diversity. In the context of strong counterinsurgency tactics, insurgencies can actually become victims of their own strength. For example, the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) in Chile emerged from various student organizations with a political commission, a well-circulated publication, and rural and labor outreach organizations in addition to their militia. Organizationally, the MIR was well-poised to become a key opposition force in the country. However, their rapid organizational expansion resulted in an infiltration by state intelligence agencies, which had "a devastating effect on the supposedly clandestine organization" (Ensalaco 2000, 9). To prevent future infiltrations, the MIR had to artificially restrict its recruitment—even in the face of enthusiastic—and the size of its cadres. This case is one of many in which organizational expansion was constrained not by internal capacity but by state strength.

The second channel through which weak governance affects transition is through local grievances. Unequal distributions of wealth, political corruption, and state failure to provide basic services often form the ideological underpinnings of the movement. Poor governance is often the source of the grievances for which many rebel groups seek reprisal and larger segments of the local population often share these feelings. Wood (2003) argues that shared grievances often translate into clandestine or even overt support for the rebellion. This wartime support, in turn, forms the foundation of a viable political constituency for rebels-turned-parties in the post-war era.

Finally, weak governance provides rebel groups with the unique opportunity to establish shadow governance in the areas they control. Once again, this is not a functionalist argument. I do not assume that wherever governance is weak, insurgents will come in to pick up the slack. I do, however, anticipate that limited state reach is a precondition

for insurgent organizations to expand into governance and administrative domains—as Tilly (1978), Mampilly (2011), and others have noted. From an organizational standpoint, acting as an ersatz governing body means the structure of the rebel group will have a greater diversity of politically salient roles. This diversification, in turn, feeds into the organizational mechanism that facilitates rebel-to-party transition. Hezbollah's early operations in southern Lebanon, for example, were vastly facilitated by the weak government of the 1980s (Azani 2009). In the aftermath of both the Lebanese Civil War and the even more recent Israeli occupation, the Lebanese government simply lacked the resources necessary to stamp out the nascent insurgency. This weakness allowed Hezbollah to expand both in absolute numbers and in organizational diversity as they took over a variety of governance tasks including infrastructure building, education, and conflict resolution.

Weak governance not only provides the insurgency with ample room to expand in its infancy, but it also shapes the range of opportunities for organizational expansion once the group has coalesced. However, its effects are not always favorable. When weak central control is paired with lootable resource availability, nascent insurgencies face an easily resolvable dilemma. While on the one hand, they can take control of local communities and build up administrative structures to support the organization through taxation, they may instead work to keep civilians at bay—allocating finite organizational resources to resource extraction and sales. In many cases, insurgencies opt for the latter. Those groups evolve in greater isolation and are less likely to comprise the types of organizational structures that prove beneficial for adapting to political life later on. My casework on the RUF exploits geographical variation in the availability of alluvial diamond reserves. I show that where diamonds were abundant, the RUF exhibited a less politically-diverse structure and engaged in more severe violence against civilians. In contrast, in the east of the country, where diamonds are more scarce, RUF cadres were more embedded in civilian communities and exhibited a greater organizational diversity.

3.4.2 Post-Conflict Electoral Institutions

As former insurgencies gear up to compete in the political arena, they face a fundamentally different set of obstacles than they did during wartime. In addition to the logistical challenges of reorganizing as a party, the choice of electoral institutions shapes the obstacles to entering the political market. Scholars widely agree that proportional representation systems are more conducive to multi-party systems, facilitate the emergence of smaller parties, and lower the barriers to entry (Duverger 1951). All else equal, I anticipate that former-rebel parties are more likely to experience *initial* levels of electoral success under proportional representation. It is crucial to note, however, that while electoral institutions are likely to affect entry at early stages of transition, I do not expect them to have an effect on longevity.

3.5 Conclusion

The theory developed in this chapter models rebel-to-party transition in terms of the content, process, and context of change. I pinpoint the locus of adaptation within insurgents' organizational structures, demonstrating that they often extend well beyond the combat realm. Many insurgent organizations include structures dedicated to governance, political messaging, financing, and other tasks central to the organization's mission. While organizational diversification broadly facilitates resilience, the crux of this theory is that rebel organizations that diversify into proto-party domains during wartime are uniquely poised to transition into political parties at the war's end. I argue that structures associated with three critical domains—governance, social services, and political messaging—facilitate organizational transition by imbuing rebel groups with relevant political experience and decreasing the risks of organizational transformation.

This argument underscores the importance of moving beyond homogenous conceptualizations of rebel groups. Section 2 identifies the variety of organizational structures that may compose a given insurgent group. The formalization of insurgent structural composition represents a major advancement in our understanding of rebel groups. In addition to previously explored dimensions of variation—including centralization (Staniland 2014), resource endowments (Weinstein 2007), and repertoires of violence (Kalyvas 2006)—future studies of insurgency could benefit by including diversification into the analysis. The wartime activities in which rebels participate, and the corresponding organizational structures that support them, likely have critical implications for a variety of outcomes both on and off the battlefield.

Chapter 4

Modeling Rebel-to-Party Transformation

Chapter 3 advances a theory of rebel-to-party transition that identifies wartime organizational structures as the locus of a rebel group's adaptive capacity. My organizational theory of transition consists of two categories of hypotheses. The first posits the traits and conditions affecting the *success* of rebel-to-party transformation, and the second specifies the *process* of transformation. The dual nature of my hypotheses motivates a two-pronged research design that first tests whether organizational structures matter at all, and if so, whether proto-party domains are repurposed in the way I anticipate. Logically, establishing the salience of proto-party structures is analytically prior to testing whether transition unfolds by repurposing these structures into party structures. This chapter presents the first stage of my empirical analysis. I run a series of cross-national tests on original data to examine whether organizational content and environmental constraints are broadly associated with successful rebel-to-party transitions.

Understanding the factors that drive successful rebel-to-party transition has crucial implications for the research and policy of civil war outcomes. Yet, prior analyses exhibit very little agreement over what constitutes a *successful transition*, and even less agreement over what constitutes a failure. Furthermore, although rebel-to-party transitions have become increasingly common, they are still relatively rare phenomena: counts range from thirty-three (Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz 2016) to fifty-two (Matanock 2013). With a phenomenon that rare and that contested, statistical results will be highly sensitive to (mis)specification of the outcome. In short, the stakes are high and the degrees of freedom are low.

This chapter proceeds in three parts. Following from marked inconsistencies in previous datasets, Section 1 engages prior work in a critical debate about dataset construction and coding rules. The three extant datasets on rebel-to-party transition vary widely in both the operationalization of transition and the inclusion criteria for the dataset more broadly. Consequently, statistical results vary widely as well. I argue that problematic coding and inclusion criteria are driving many of the accepted results in the study of rebel-to-party transformation. This discussion ultimately motivates the creation of a new dataset on transition, which I introduce in Section 2. I discuss inclusion and exclusion

criteria for the cases in the Insurgent Structures and Outcomes (ISO) data as well as the coding rules for the dependent variable—rebel-to-party transformation—which differ considerably from conventional operationalizations. Finally, Section 3 conducts a series of cross-national statistical analyses testing the organizational theory of transition against a variety of alternative explanations.

4.1 Evaluation of Existing Datasets

To motivate this discussion, I begin with an overview of the three extant cross-national datasets compiled expressly to test theories of rebel-to-party transition: the Militant Group Electoral Participation (MGEP) data (Matanock 2013), the Revolutionary and Militant Organizations Dataset (REVMOD) (Acosta 2014), and an extension of the UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset (Söderberg-Kovacs and Hatz 2016). The MGEP data includes 652 groups of which "51 participate in national legislative elections after a peace agreement" (Matanock 2013, 89). REVMOD includes "406 militant organizations that were active sometime between 1980 and 2012," of which 46 are coded as having transitioned (Acosta 2014, 670–71).[1] Finally, Söderberg-Kovacs and Hatz (2016) extend the UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset of 93 rebel groups to include a variable denoting which groups undergo a rebel-to-party transformation after a peace agreement was signed. According to their coding, 33 groups transitioned into political parties between 1991 and 2011. Table 4.1 summarizes the existing rebel-to-party transition datasets.

Table 4.1: Summary of Existing Rebel-to-Party Datasets

Data	**RtP Transitions**	**Total Cases**
MGEP (1980–2010) (Matanock 2013)	52†	652
REVMOD (1980–2012) (Acosta 2014)	46	406
UCDP (1975–2011) (Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz 2016)	33	93

†Matanock later notes that Angola returned to conflict after participating once, re-entered peace negotiations, and then began participating a second time.

This overview reveals marked disparities across existing datasets. Although the three datasets cover roughly the same time period, the number of positive cases varies by nearly 60%. And a close examination of the data exposes even greater discrepancies. Specifically, the variation in the number of successful transitions is not simply a function of more (or less) permissive coding criteria. In other words, Matanock's fifty-two transitions do not just comprise Acosta's forty-six, plus six more—as we might expect. Rather, if we sum

[1]As of 2016, Acosta's website suggests that the REVMOD data now spans 1944–2014 and includes more than 500 resistance organizations, yet he has not made these data publicly available.

the 1s across all three studies, we end up with a pool of 108 purported rebel-to-party transformations from which the successes are drawn.[2] From this pool, scholars only unanimously agree on *eight* cases.[3] Some two of the three studies agree on an additional twenty transitions, and a shocking sixty-seven cases are fully disjoint—only one of the three datasets codes the case as a positive transition.

From an analytic standpoint, these disparities are non-trivial. When the count, the coding, and the inclusion criteria exhibit variation as severe as we observe across these three studies, the disparities raise questions about the extent to which statistical results are driven more coding artifacts than by real-world trends. The following discussion evaluates the existing datasets on two dimensions: the operationalization of *rebel-to-party transformation* and the inclusion criteria. Each author relies on a binary coding of the outcome: former rebels either did transform into political parties or they did not. Thus, for each dataset, I ask, *Who are the 1s, and to whom are they compared?*

4.1.1 Evaluating Rebel-to-Party Operationalization

At first glance, conceptualizing a successful rebel-to-party outcome seems relatively straightforward: a former militant groups participates in post-war politics. However, the marked disparities in coding reveal that *rebel-to-party transition* is a contested concept. Even though every quantitative analysis adopts a dichotomous conceptualization of successful transition, no two scholars agree on what it takes to become a 1.

Despite these inconsistencies, shockingly little ink has been spilled on engaging other conceptualizations or critically evaluating the relative merits and tradeoffs of alternative coding schemes. As a result, readers are left with wildly varying counts of rebel-to-party transitions, and little guidance on how to adjudicate among them or evaluate their analytic implications. In this section, I present the variety of ways "successful transition" has been operationalized across the literature and discuss the tradeoffs of each. Existing conceptualizations of successful rebel-to-party transition are based on some combination of the following three criteria: 1) the extent of participation in the political arena, 2) the extent to which the group has disarmed, and 3) the extent to which the group has democratized *internally*. Those working with large-N datasets tend to code success only along the first two dimensions, while those employing in-depth case studies tend to draw from all three.

[2]The full pool of contested cases and how they are coded in each dataset (including my own) is delineated in Appendix A.

[3]Specifically, Matanock (2013), Acosta (2014), and Söderberg-Kovacs and Hatz (2016) all code UNITA (Angola), the EPL (Colombia), the URNG (Guatemala), the Free Aceh Movement (Indonesia), RENAMO (Mozambique), the RUF (Sierra Leone), and the SPLM/A (Sudan—now, South Sudan) as positive instances of transition. Every other positive case in each dataset is either omitted from or coded as a failed transition in at least one of the others.

The Extent of Participation

To what extent must a rebel group participate in the political process before we file it as a "successful transition?" *Participation* is an imprecise concept since it can range from formally registering as a party to winning seats in multiple elections. Indeed, even across binary conceptualizations of the outcome that are based exclusively on participation (as opposed to also requiring disarmament and internal recomposition), scholars disagree on exactly how much participation is sufficient to constitute a transition into a political party. I categorize extant coding schemes as *Minimalist Participation*, *Electoral Participation*, and *Relevant Participation*.

Minimalist Participation. Some scholars opt for minimalist definitions of participation—though even the minimalist conceptions vary. I consider a coding scheme minimalist if winning seats is not a defining feature of "successful transition." Matanock, for example, codes success based on the implementation of an agreement that includes an electoral participation clause (2013, 90). Thus, provided the negotiated settlement had a clause *allowing* for political transformation of the insurgents, a given rebel group scored a 1 on successful transition. Acosta codes a group as a successful rebel-to-party transition if it "participates in competitive electoral politics" (2014, 671). Though still minimalist, Acosta's operationalization differs slightly in that former-rebel groups at least had to *register* as a political party in order to qualify.

The minimalist benchmarks for coding successful rebel-to-party transition have two serious drawbacks. The first drawback is specifically associated with the MGEP data, in which the group is considered to have "successfully transitioned" if a negotiated settlement included a clause permitting rebel-to-party transition and the settlement was implemented. Relying on stipulations in negotiated settlements is potentially problematic, however, because they are neither necessary nor sufficient to ensure participation. Critically, rebel-to-party clauses represent an important policy choice, yet they are unlikely to parse out success from failure. Furthermore, some groups may be artificially omitted if they transitioned in the absence of a participation clause, and other groups may be artificially included if they were given the *opportunity* to transition, but never did.

The second drawback of a minimalist coding scheme is that it leads to severe variation across success cases. At one end of the spectrum, are groups that only get as far as formally registering as a party, but never even make it onto the ballot. At the other end, we find former rebels with long-standing careers in politics as major parties. This variation is problematic for two reasons. First, from an analytic standpoint, this coding fails to distinguish *aspiring* opposition from *lasting* opposition. Groups that disintegrate prior to or fail at the ballot stage may be systematically different from those that consolidate a party organization and win seats in post-conflict elections. Second, from a practical standpoint, if the political goal of rebel incorporation is to promote stability and democratization, this coding prevents us from putting rebel-to-party transition on the right-hand side of an analysis to investigate the effects of successful transition on important post-conflict outcomes. Specifically, we might expect different prospects for peace in a country in which rebel groups have transitioned into a legal and stable opposition party than in a

country in which they tried and failed.[4]

Electoral Participation. In Allison's (2006) examination of rebel-to-party transitions in Central America, he exclusively considers groups that have participated in at least two elections. This focus is based on his desire to measure how wartime performance affects post-conflict vote share. As such, he is restricted to considering only those groups that have made it onto on the ballot in elections, rather than those that have only registered as a party. This operationalization improves upon the minimalist conception since the success cases exhibit more similarity to one another than in the studies cited above. The drawback, however, is that since Allison's work is intended to measure variation in vote share, every group in his study has successfully transitioned into a party. Consequently, we are left in the dark about how to define failure.

Relevant Participation. Shugart (1992) sets the highest bar for successful transformations on the basis of political participation. Drawing on Sartori's (1976) concept of *relevant parties*, Shugart argues that participatory success should refer only to groups that attain either coalition or blackmail potential in the political arena (1992, 122). In other words, the party should either have the ability to gain executive power, or prevent another party from gaining executive power unless they agree to form a coalition. Once again, this benchmark represents improvement over minimalist definitions by decreasing variation among success cases. However, the high standard of *relevance* has two drawbacks. First, it increases variation among failures by including among them former-rebel parties that successfully hold seats, but are too minor to affect executive outcomes. Second, it is likely that factors other than group-level characteristics will affect how large the party becomes (such as institutional choices and the number of other parties in the system), but these characteristics may be unrelated to the stakes of transition: enduring peace and democratization. Consequently, the relevant participation benchmark is likely overly restrictive for the purpose of understanding what facilitates rebel-to-party transformation.

Disarming as a Requirement for "Successful Transition"

In addition to considering the extent of participation, some scholars contend that the organization must entirely abandon the armed struggle for their transition to be considered successful (de Zeeuw 2008, Klapdor 2009, Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz 2016).[5] For many scholars, the political struggle must be entirely waged "through active participation within the political system" or else the transition is deemed incomplete (Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz 2016, 7).

[4]In future work, I plan to examine how different levels of transition affect prospects for peace and democratization. For the time being, however, scholars should understand that course measures of *participation* may result in lumping systematically different groups under a single heading.

[5]Though Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz (2016) also include a minimalist participation requirement for transition, de Zeeuw's (2008) four-stage operationalization of rebel-to-party transitions does not require any participation. For him a full transition requires that the group have "a clear political program and sufficient organizational stability and political capacity to take part in elections...and other government tasks" (2008, 17). de Zeeuw does not, however, offer suggestions on how to measure that organizational capacity outside of observing past electoral success.

Including *disarmament* as a defining feature of rebel-to-party transition is problematic in three ways[6] First, this criterion, though commonly used, has more of a normative justification than a theoretical one. To suggest that disarmament is a requirement for full transition is to suggest that the party is in some way deficient if it retains an armed wing. However, scholars who adopt this requirement do not provide empirical evidence demonstrating that the continued existence of an armed wing compromises political effectiveness. Engaging in activities in addition to the pursuit of goals through policy channels does not inherently compromise the organization's status as a party unless these other channels are supplanting the political process.[7] Rather, this criterion is founded on an unjustified (and untested) assumption that by retaining an armed wing, insurgent parties may be circumventing the political process to achieve their goals.[8]

The second theoretical problem with a disarmament requirement is that it is only partially applied, which creates a double standard for rebel groups on the one hand, and governments on the other. Specifically, numerous governments retain control of paramilitary organizations—which are essentially extrajudicial armed wings of government—yet they are not considered incomplete parties. Thus, while actors on both sides of the civil conflict sometimes retain extrajudicial armed wings, scholars only assess it as a detractor for the former insurgency.

The final problem is both theoretical and analytic because this requirement conflates the formation and transition into a political party with the long-term cessation of hostilities, which represent two empirically distinct outcomes.[9] This conflation, in turn, distorts or obscures the mechanism at work. If former-rebel participation in politics has important implications for the long-term cessation of hostilities, then the argument is that something intrinsic about participation in the political process drives enduring peace—in which case, the *existence* of an armed wing should not matter. If, instead, the mechanism is about disarming, and becoming a political party is just a route to disarming, then the scholarship should be focused on the effectiveness of different disarmament programs—in which case the political party should not matter beyond being one potential route to disarmament. To be sure, whether a former-rebel party retains an armed wing (and under what conditions) is an interesting and important question in its own rite. Yet the transition into a political party and whether the group retains an armed wing remain

[6]N.b. This argument does not mean to suggest that negotiated settlements should not include DDR requirements. The issue at hand is whether disarmament is a necessary defining feature of a political party.

[7]Hizb'allah, for example, owns and operates restaurants, cafes, and even a museum. Do *those* activities make them less of a party? During the war, did those activities make them less of a rebel group?

[8]In reality, formerly militant organizations may retain an armed wing to provide basic policing and security to areas of the country that the central government cannot reach.

[9]The irony of this conflation is that much of the post-war peace and democratization literature views the former as a condition that facilitates the latter. As such, defining party transition in terms of disarmament essentially places this condition on both sides of the equation.

analytically distinct outcomes and should be treated (and coded) as such.[10]

Ultimately, disarmament is not a requisite feature of a political party. Although prior measures of rebel-to-party transition have included this condition, the analytic purchase of bundling transition and disarmament remains unclear, yet the analytic drawbacks are stark. Since transition and disarmament are two distinct outcomes, they warrant distinct measures. One can easily indicate with a binary control variable whether an organization retained an armed wing after transitioning into a party and then test the implications of this characteristic.One can then test whether and under what conditions organizations with both legitimate political wings and unsanctioned armed wings are prone to use violence. Or, one can test whether former-rebel parties that retain a military apparatus are more likely to resort to coercive tactics over political tactics because they have the opportunity. Crucially, these questions are empirically testable and they open numerous avenues for future research once we adopt nuanced and separate conceptualizations of each outcome.

Internal Democratization

The last major condition that scholars have posited as a defining feature of rebel-to-party transformation is the internal democratization of the party. De Zeeuw and others contend that an insurgent group has not fully transitioned into a political party unless the group has adopted *internal* democratic decision-making procedures and moved away from the hierarchical and/or personalistic organizational structure that defined the insurgency (de Zeeuw 2008, 14).[11] Crucially, however, those who impose this standard leave a number of important questions unanswered. What are the implications of retaining a hierarchical or personalistic structure? Are non-internally democratic parties different in some fundamental way than those with more open decision-making structure?

This criterion poses two problems—one theoretical and one practical—that call into question its analytic utility as a defining feature of rebel-to-party transformation. First, insisting on an internal democratic requirement for former-rebel parties necessarily raises questions about whether the multitude of existing personalistic parties are not true parties either. Parties—regardless of their origins—vary considerably in both their levels of bureaucratization and their internal decision-making procedures (Levitsky 2003). Consequently, this standard is both excessive and tangential to the central issue: whether the organization meaningfully participates in politics. The second problem is one of measurement. Though de Zeeuw argues that internal democratization is important, he does not provide a concrete way of measuring this dimension. Of course, the absence of a good measurement strategy is not to suggest that the concept itself is unimportant. Yet, when

[10]Disaggregating party transition from retention of armed personnel allows for a series of additional lines of investigation. First, one can test whether so-called *hybrid* organizations are more likely to resort to violence than groups that formally disarm and would thus have to assemble an ad-hoc militia to do the same. On the other side of the same coin, an analysis of the conditions that instigate or curtail a return to violence would benefit from a separate conceptualization of whether the post-war organization built a party apparatus.

[11]Wade (2008) also alludes to an internal democratization requirement in his discussion of the FMLN.

intractable measurement is combined with ambiguous theoretical utility, the added value of this dimension becomes minimal.

Implications

The wide variety of coding schemes explains the subsequent variation in the count of rebel-to-party transformation. Furthermore, the universal reliance on a binary conception of transition means researchers are forced to choose between an operationalization that is either over-inclusive, in which the "successes" are systematically different from one another, or under-inclusive, in which the "failures" are systematically different from one another. Results of analyses conducted on existing coding schemes may thus be driven by factors other than those that actually facilitate transition. Such biases can arise from one of two places: problematic criteria for success on the outcome and/or problematic criteria for failure. Thus, before I present a novel operationalization of rebel-to-party transformations, I first evaluate the broader inclusion criteria of existing datasets.

4.1.2 Evaluating Inclusion Criteria

A two-part question motivated this analysis: *Who are the 1s and to whom are they compared?* The previous discussion addressed the first part: differences and challenges in the coding of successful transition. This discussion addresses the second. I ask, *what groups made it into each dataset?* and *on what basis was this choice made?* These questions are crucial if the analytic quest is to isolate and test the causes of successful transition. This task requires a clear conceptualization of success and an equally well-defined conception of failure. After all, if we want to know why some groups transform while others fail, we first need to know how to define the *others*. This section outlines and evaluates the anatomy of the comparison sets across existing analyses.

When it comes to large-n research, these questions are infrequently posed. Scholars across methodological traditions have spilled a great deal of ink debating case-selection principles in qualitative research (Geddes 1990, King, Keohane & Verba 1994, Ragin 2000, Gerring 2004). These discussions have contributed to a set of rigorous standards to ensure that practitioners get maximal analytic leverage out of their cases. However, these standards are infrequently applied in the other direction. We lack a comparable set of guidelines for building theoretically- and analytically-sound datasets for large-n analyses. As such, we also lack a set of standards for evaluating datasets—beyond an problematic assumption that as the n increases, so does the quality of the dataset. However, case selection for small-n studies and inclusion criteria for large-n datasets both determine how causal effects are identified and isolated. As such, they should rely on the similar principles and be evaluated according to similar standards.

In this section, I draw on the same logic that drives case-selection principles in the comparative method to critically evaluate the inclusion criteria of existing datasets. I begin with one fundamental question: *how do we know a failed transformation when we see it?* Defining failure is crucial because without a theoretically-informed comparison set, statistical results are liable to be driven by other systematic differences between the subset

of cases that ought to be compared and the additional cases that injudiciously make it into the data. As with *success*, identifying failures initially appears relatively straightforward: militant organizations that did *not* participate in post-war politics. Further examination, however, raises a number of questions. Are they groups that did not participate because they did not want to? Are they groups that did not participate because they tried and failed? Or, are they groups that did not participate because they were not given the opportunity? Scholars have previously relied on one of two criteria to construct their datasets: (1) all militant non-state actors active during the period that the dataset covers, and (2) insurgencies engaged in a conflict with the central government that ended in a negotiated settlement. I evaluate each criterion in turn.

All Militant Non-State Actors

Both the MGEP and REVMOD datasets rely on broad inclusion criteria intended to capture all active militant groups in the years covered by the dataset. Although they differ considerably in their size (N = 652 in MGEP and N = 406 in REVMOD), Matanock (2013) and Acosta (2014) rely on similar criteria for their respective studies: "all non-state actors in civil conflicts" (Matanock 2013, 87).[12] She argues that "any of these groups *may* participate in elections," and as a result, including all groups is crucial to identifying variation (2013, 87) (emphasis added). Though Acosta's (2014) sources exhibit little overlap with Matanock's, his dataset is nonetheless compiled on the basis of a similar rule—all militant non-state actors in operation between 1980 and 2012.[13] The difference in size may be attributable to different datasets from which the authors sourced their cases, yet nothing in either study indicates a major difference between their inclusion criteria.[14]

While the concern of artificially omitting a group that *may* have participated in politics is well received, reliance on broad inclusion criteria poses major problems for empirical analyses conducted on overly-inclusive datasets. The main problem with the broad inclusion criteria used for both MGEP and REVMOD is that the majority of negative cases are not an appropriate comparison set to those groups that successfully transitioned into party politics. In addition to groups that attempted to transition into political parties but failed, the negative cases in both MGEP and REVMOD include three subpopulations of actors that should not be compared to successful transformations. The first problematic subgroup are the insurgencies that were defeated militarily before transition into a political party was ever an option (e.g. The Shining Path). Government victories pose additional and more severe obstacles to transition than those already faced by transition-

[12]Matanock's data is drawn from the following sources: the Terrorist Organization Profiles, the Terrorists, Insurgencies, and Guerrillas in Education and Research's Terrorist Groups Worldwide, the UCDP/PRIOR Armed Conflict and Non-State Conflict Datasets, and the Minorities and Risk data (Matanock 2013, 87).

[13]Acosta draws his data from the National Counterterrorism Center, the Violence Extremism Knowledge Base, the Global Terrorism Database, and the Terrorist Organizational Profiles (2014, 670).

[14]Indeed, if anything, we should expect the MGEP data to be smaller since Matanock requires that her groups be engaged in a civil conflict, whereas Acosta only requires that the organization be militant and active during the specified timeframe.

ing rebel groups. For one, military loss generally depletes the organization's personnel to a point that makes transition (or even survival in any form) untenable. Furthermore, all-out government victory is unlikely to be followed by a political institutional change toward a more open and competitive system. Thus, even if the group *could* survive and transform into a political party, legitimate and competitive participation is less likely to be an option.

The second problematic subpopulation included among negative cases are transnational actors. Organizations that operate transnationally—the PLO, for example—are likely to constitute a fundamentally different *type* of group than those engaged in a civil conflict against the central government .[15] First, since they are not engaged in conflict against a single central government, one is forced to ask whether they are even looking to usurp or share power in the same way as the success cases are. The second and related question that arises with respect to transnational militant groups is *where would the transition be?* Or, alternately, where did the failure occur? If there is any reason to believe (as most scholars suggest) that state-based or location-based variables matter for transition (state strength, institutions, governance) then we have to locate these groups in space. However, simply locating the groups in the state from which they operate may be an inaccurate representation of where and with whom they are doing the majority of their fighting.

The third problematic subpopulation among negative cases is the set of militant groups that lack representative political aspirations entirely (e.g. the Ku Klux Klan or Boko Haram). Similarly to transnational actors, many of these groups are not waging war against a central government. Furthermore, some have goals that directly conflict with representative government and others have goals that are so specific and idealistic (the Animal Liberation Front, for example), that transition into a political party is not a viable trajectory. Regardless of the reason, both types of cases in this subpopulation call into question the very conceivability of a political solution.

Pitting groups from any of these subpopulations against successfully-transitioned insurgencies like the FMLN—which ended their conflict with the central government through a negotiated settlement and had clear participatory aspirations—is not likely to help analysts get leverage on the factors that drive rebel-to-party transformations. These cases not differ from the successful transitions, but moreover, they differ systematically from groups that tried and failed. With overly broad inclusion criteria, the failure cases differ along so many dimensions they call into question whether statistical results are driven by actual factors that contribute to success and failure, or whether results are instead driven by selection effects. Unfortunately, in both the MGEP and REVMOD data, the overwhelming majority of negative cases comprise groups in at least one of these three categories. As such, the universe of cases is artificially inflated to include groups that are unlikely to ever transition into political actors.

[15]REVMOD's inclusion of the PLO is problematic for other reasons as well. Most notably, the PLO is an umbrella group comprising other groups that also appear in the dataset (Fatah, Hamas, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine), some of which have transitioned, some of which have not.

Negotiated Settlement Criterion

Söderberg-Kovacs and Hatz's (2016) dataset represents some improvement over the broad inclusion criteria by limiting their sample to groups that (1) engaged in combat with the central government, and (2) ended their conflicts via a negotiated settlement. The authors are particularly interested in assessing the role of rebel-to-party provisions in negotiated settlements. As such, they limit their analysis to potential transformations that follow intrastate peace agreements (Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz 2016, 12). This criterion exhibits the opposite problem as the studies discussed above. While the two previous datasets are problematic because they artificially *inflate* the number of cases assessed, this one is problematic because it needlessly truncates the number of cases by only considering rebel-to-party transitions that followed a peace agreement with political provisions in the UCDP data. In reality, however, peace agreements are not necessary conditions for rebel groups to transition into political parties, and a comprehensive analysis of rebel-to-party transformations must include all groups that had the *opportunity* to transition, by whatever means.[16]

4.2 Insurgent Structures and Outcomes (ISO) Data (1975–2015)

This sections introduces a novel dataset of rebel-to-party transformations. The ISO dataset consists of seventy-eight unique rebel groups, each of which attempted rebel-to-party transitions with varying success. ISO improves upon existing datasets in three ways. First, since existing datasets tend toward lax inclusion criteria, this dataset is constructed with an eye towards creating a more theoretically defensible comparison set. Second, existing conceptions and operationalization of the outcome prevent making nuanced distinctions between former-rebel groups that achieve varying levels of transformation (e.g. registration as a party versus winning seats in multiple elections). Third, no pre-existing datasets contain the sort of detailed organizational information needed to test the hypotheses in this project. The dataset presented here adds multiple novel indicators of insurgent organizational structure. As such, the goal is to develop a dataset that is as theoretically motivated as the hypotheses I test using it. This section outlines the inclusion criteria, dependent variable operationalization, and explanatory variable operationalization. For each feature of the dataset, I outline the benefits and tradeoffs of my coding rules. I conclude with basic summary statistics of the ISO dataset.

4.2.1 Inclusion Criteria

Given the problems inherent in previous studies, the inclusion criteria for this dataset warrant special consideration. Scholars frequently engage in debates over how to properly

[16]It is worth noting that Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz (2016) admit that their focus on peace agreement signatories restricts their sample and omits some cases of rebel-to-part transformations (11).

define and measure variables of interest.[17] Yet, when it comes to conceptualizing a phenomenon, scholars spend considerably less time discussing how to define *failure*. To be sure, this is not a universal shortcoming—or at least, not a universal problem. For many studies, the zeroes reveal themselves logically.[18] In the case of rebel-to-party transformation, however, the zeroes are not as self-evident as previous scholarship has implied. To get traction on any question about what makes a group of actors unique (or what implications follow from their uniqueness, one must identify a *relevant* comparison set. Yet, in much scholarship—particularly scholarship relying on large-n statistical analyses—zeroes are artificially inflated to include subpopulations that are not reasonably comparable to the success cases (Ragin 2000, 50).

To warrant inclusion in ISO, a given insurgency must satisfy three criteria. First, the group must be engaged in a civil conflict in which one of the actors is the central government. This criterion narrows the pool of organizations to those for whom a local (i.e. within-state) political solution is a conceivable outcome. Consequently, it filters out two types of militant organizations that do not constitute informative comparisons to successful former-rebel parties. This criterion omits transnational terrorist groups whose grievances are not targeted at a state actor—and who, thus, are unlikely to seek or desire a power-sharing solution in one specific state. It also omits groups that are too small to instigate a full-scale civil conflict.

The second requirement for inclusion is that the organization must have the opportunity to transition into a political party at the end of the conflict. In other words, they must have a legal path to participate in politics. This criterion allows me to capture only those groups for which party transition was a realistic option by filtering out two problematic types of cases. First, it omits instances in which the government experienced a military victory, which are problematic because government victories not only weaken the organization, but more importantly they do not typically come with the institutional changes needed to allow competitive political participation. This criterion also omits cases in which party bans were present. For example, the Tehrik-i Taliban based in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in Pakistan should not be included among the data because although that region is allowed representatives in the parliament, the state does not allow political party formation from that region, thus forcing FATA representatives to run as independents.[19]

The third inclusion criterion is that the group must—either on paper or in a speech—express the desire to participate in party politics. This requirement is especially important and accounts for the starkest contrast between this dataset and others: the absence groups that have no explicit desire to participate in the political sphere. The inclusion of groups lacking explicit political and participatory aspirations invites a nonsensical comparison

[17]For example, if half of the democratization literature is split between the causes and effects of democracy, the other half is dedicated to figuring out how to define it in the first place.

[18]As per the democratization example, once one settles on a definition of *democracy* comparing democracies to *non*-democracies merely involves finding an exhaustive list of *other* regimes.

[19]Of course, this particular case raises questions about the extent to which organizations operate semi-clandestinely as a de facto political party. For the sake of this project, however, I limit the analysis to political parties that operate legally.

and likely drives severe selection effects in statistical results.[20] After all, what does it mean to say a group failed at something that they did not want or try to attain? It is no more meaningful to say that the Ku Klux Klan failed at party politics than it is to say that I failed at becoming a stage actor. If we want to find out what makes some people succeed at stage acting when others fail—we ought to be comparing Nathan Lane to the guy he was casted over, not me.

Tradeoffs

ISO's rigid inclusion criteria are not without important tradeoffs. On the one hand, the restrictions filter out militant organizations whose inclusion may result in biased statistical results driven by differences unrelated to the traits that affect the capacity to transition into a political party. On the other hand, these restrictions considerably attenuate the size of this dataset relative to others used to analyze the same phenomenon. Consequently, any statistical analysis conducted on this new dataset operates with considerably fewer degrees of freedom, which will augment the standard errors around coefficient estimates. I argue, however, that the restrictive inclusion criteria contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the factors associated with successful rebel-to-party transition by comparing success cases to insurgencies that tried and failed to transform. Scholars who conduct similar analyses on overly-inclusive datasets run the risk of comparing successful parties to groups that were kept out of the political arena for a variety of other reasons.

4.2.2 Outcome Variable: Rebel-to-Party Transformations

The ISO dataset also improves upon existing operationalizations of the outcome of interest: rebel-to-party transformation. Previous ventures to establish a cut point for dichotomous measures of "successful transition" reveal just how murky this water is. Is it enough just to register as a political party? Must they first participate in an election? Or perhaps a former rebel group needs to win some seats before we consider their transition complete? As I argue in Chapter 2, transition into a political party is a multi-stage process. Some groups achieve more successful transitions than others and I argue that a good measure of rebel-to-party transformation should capture these nuances. Thus, I disaggregate rebel-to-party transformation into four discrete outcomes: (1) no transition, (2) minimalist participation—i.e. registration as a party, (3) one-hit wonders—i.e. groups that win seats in a single election then lose seats and disintegrate thereafter, and (4) persistent opposition.

The choice of cut points is motivated by both the process and stakes of successful transition. Capturing nuance in the process is important if scholars want to understand

[20]For example, the REVMOD dataset includes the Animal Liberation Front, whose mission statement is to "abolish institutionalized animal exploitation" and "end the 'property' status of nonhuman animals." As of July 2016, the communiques detailing their major actions are entitled "June 20—16 Rabbits Liberated from Uruguay Farm," "June 13—Rabbit Rescued in Turkey by ALF," and "June 9—320 Birds, 3 Foxes Liberated in Mexico City." This case should raise serious questions about how much nuance we sacrifice for the sake of increasing degrees of freedom.

why some groups are more successful in the electoral arena than others. Furthermore, analyses of this process could be vastly improved if we kept the stakes in mind. When we are talking about rebel-to-party transitions, what we are often talking about is a potentially lasting political solution to a state beset by civil war. Lumping together groups that register as parties and promptly fracture with groups that become lasting opposition parties can severely obscure the results of the analysis and the policy implications we draw from it.

Using the inclusion criteria detailed above, I identify seventy-eight insurgent organizations poised to transition into political parties on the heels of war. For each case, I examine whether and to what degree the group went on to participate in legislative elections and the main dependent variable is coded on this basis. I focus exclusively on participation in legislative elections because in many states, participation in presidential elections is possible without being backed by a robust party apparatus. The empirical record of executive branch elections reveals numerous cases in which rebel leaders ran on presidential tickets prior to the cessation of hostilities or any formal assembly of a political party, which suggests that participation on this dimension is not necessarily capturing a group's transition into a political party. I do not, however, differentiate among national versus regional electoral participation. Although the majority of success cases transitioned into national political parties, I apply the same coding criteria if the insurgency in question transitioned into a regional party because the outcome is still the same: transitioning into a legitimate political actor.[21]

0) No Transition

This category represents groups that were given the opportunity to transition into political actors on the heels of war, but failed to meet even minimalist standards such as registration as a party. The trajectories of groups in this category vary somewhat—though considerably less than the zeroes in other datasets. Some former insurgencies in this category, such as the LURD in Liberia, simply dissolve after the war is over. Others transition into something *other* than a political party. The Kosovo Liberation Army, for example, transitioned into the Kosovo Protection Force—a civilian organization tasked with emergency and disaster response as well as post-war reconstruction.[22] Still others stay together, but return to fighting.

1) Minimal Participation

The second category captures those groups that fail to move beyond the minimal criteria of rebel-to-party transitions. These groups formally register as a party and sometimes get on the ballot—usually for only a single election—but their vote share is insufficient to gain representation. Former insurgencies were coded as *minimal participants* if they

[21]The ISO dataset includes an additional dummy variable coded 1 if the group exclusively transitioned into a regional party, and 0 otherwise.

[22]This group subsequently transitioned into the Kosovo Security Force.

appeared on the ballot in post-conflict elections and never won legislative seats.[23]

Including a separate category for reaching only minimalist benchmarks of transition sets this dataset apart from others. Where most previous analyses consider *any* participation in electoral politics sufficient to constitute a transition, I advocate distinguishing between those that nominally participate from those that experience electoral success. I anticipate that different factors will predict minimal transition that longevity and this measure can capture those differences. The majority of rebel parties that never move beyond a ballot appearance either dissolve or revert back to violence shortly after their failure at the polls. Consequently, having a distinct analytic category for this brand of failure can help shed light on failed democratic transitions, returns to violence, and other important post-conflict outcomes.

2) One-Hit Wonders

The third category of my dependent variable distinguishes a special class of rebel electoral victories that I refer to as *one-hit wonders.* In these cases, former-rebel parties win some legislative seats in the first post-conflict election, but fail to pass muster as a political party in the long term. The one-hit wonders subsequently tend to drop out, fracture, or partially merge with another pre-existing party after failing at the polls in subsequent electoral cycles.

Former insurgencies are coded as *one-hit wonders* if they win any number of seats in the first post-conflict election, and the number of seats they hold drops to zero within three subsequent elections. While this coding scheme may appear slippery, the empirical record sorts clearly between this category and the next. New party organizations born out of rebel groups tend to either win seats in the first election and then hold their place in the legislature indefinitely, or they win seats and, over the subsequent two elections, their representation drops off by an order of magnitude until it hits zero. Furthermore, the one-hit wonders tend to win significantly fewer seats in the first post-conflict election than their more successful counterparts, thereby suggesting some other systematic difference between these groups.

3) Persistent Opposition

Finally, if a goal of modeling rebel-to-party transition is to elucidate the prospects for peace and democratization, then we should want to find out what makes parties *stick.* Thus, the fourth category represents lasting rebel-to-party transformations. Groups are coded as *Persistent Opposition* if they hold onto some seats in the legislature for at least three elections. Since party longevity factors into my coding of success, a complication arises if the nascent party has participated in too few elections to reliably distinguish between this category and the previous. This ambiguity may either come about because the war has ended too recently to observe repeated elections (as in the case of the SPLM

[23]I do not put a limit on the absolute number of post-conflict elections these groups stand in. Empirically however, every group that failed to gain seats in the first post-conflict election dropped out within two subsequent electoral cycles.

in Southern Sudan) or because the country postponed elections for a reason other than a return to civil war (as in the case of Hamas in Palestine). In the case of these groups, I code them as persistent opposition if they are still in the legislature, thereby given them the benefit of the doubt.[24]

Table 4.2: Distribution of Cases over the Four Transition Categories

Outcome	N	Cases
1 – No Transition	12	Hizb-i Islami Gulbuddin, Khmer Rouge, UFDR, FROLINAT, Forces Nouvelles / MCPI, CNDP, Alfaro Vive Carajo, LURD, MNJ, PFLP, DFLP, LTTE
2 – Minimal Participation	11	FROLINA, CSNPD, FNT, MDD, Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front, MIR, EPL, MNLF, RUF, TMVP, Kurdish Hezbollah
3 – One-Hit Wonders	8	PALIPEHUTU-FNL, KPNLF, FARC / UP, M19, FRUD, RCD, al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, NPFL
4 – Persistent Opposition	36	Jamiat-i Islami, Junbesh-i Milli Islami, Hizb-i Islami, Hizb-i Wahdat-I Islami, UPA / FNLA, MPLA, UNITA, CNDD-FDD, FUNCINPEC, MLC, FRETILIN, FMLN, EPLF, EPRDF, URNG, Free Aceh Movement / GAM, PIRA / Sinn Féin, SCIRI, KLA / PDK, Hizballah, Amal Movement, NLA / UÇK, FRELIMO, RENAMO, SWAPO, UCPN(M), FSLN, Fatah, Hamas, RPF, ANC, SPLM/A, JVP, TELO, NRA, Tupamaros

Tradeoffs

As with the inclusion criteria, it is crucial to engage in a discussion about the tradeoffs of a particular coding scheme. The four-stage measure of party transformation offers an improvement over existing measures by disaggregating the paths of former insurgencies into distinct electoral outcomes. Such disaggregation is analytically beneficial because groups that achieve different levels of electoral success may differ systematically from one another along important dimensions or in ways that have important implications for for their respective prospects of returning to war. This coding scheme allows for a more nuanced exploration of differences between rebel groups that faced comparable opportunities, yet achieved different outcomes. The distinctions open up new paths for further research into the organizational and/or environmental factors that predict different levels of success.

The primary drawback to this coding scheme—similar to that of the inclusion criteria—is the severe reduction in degrees of freedom. Sorting an already small dataset across four

[24]I reran all analyses by both omitting and recoding these groups as *one-hit wonders* and the results remain constant, thus suggesting that this ambiguity is not influencing the results.

outcomes instead of two reduces the amount of variation within each type, thereby compromising the accuracy of point estimates. The results of a statistical analysis will never appear as statistically robust as those in Acosta (2014) and elsewhere. I argue, however, that the precision gained by capturing salient variation in the dependent variable and constructing a theoretically-justified comparison set outweighs the added uncertainty.

4.2.3 Coding Organization-Level Variables

Beyond the potential issues with inclusion criteria and dependent variable operationalization, pre-existing datasets are ill-suited to testing the organizational theory of resilience because they lack measures of insurgent organizational structures. The theory I test proposes that variation in insurgents' wartime organizational structures systematically affects their capacity to transition into successful political parties when the war ends. Here, I detail the coding of organization-level variables included in the ISO data.

Proto-Party Structures: Measures & Hypotheses

The central argument developed in Chapter 3 is that insurgent organizations with proto-party structures—structures similar in composition and function to those found in political parties—will have a decisive advantage in transitioning into political parties on the heels of war. I identified three broad areas of operation that correspond to the roles of a party organization. To operationalize proto-party structures, I identify five distinct domains that correspond to governance, social services, and political messaging. I collected group-level data on whether a given organization operated in the following areas during wartime: (1) providing governance and administrative services, (2) providing education to civilians, (3) providing health services to civilians, (4) organizing community-outreach groups, and (5) engaging in political messaging. Due to the inherent difficult of acquiring accurate—let alone nuanced—group-level data about clandestine organizations, each domain is coded dichotomously according to the following rules.

- *Administration* – This variable is coded 1 if the insurgency acted in an administrative capacity toward civilians in either controlled or contested territory, and 0 if the group did not. Indicators of administrative capacity include resolving disputes; allocating resources (e.g. food, money, or basic goods); or building and managing public infrastructure (e.g. roads, electricity, waste removal).

- *Educational Provisions* – This variable is coded 1 if the insurgent group provided basic educational services to civilians such as literacy programs or an equivalent to primary schooling, and 0 otherwise. While most (though, likely all) educational services included some political component, if I only found evidence of "political education," this variable gets a 0, and directed education about the movement counts instead towards political messaging.

- *Health Services* – This variable is coded 1 if the organization set up medical services accessible to civilians, and 0 otherwise. The extent of health provisions ranges from

providing basic medical treatment to sick or injured civilians (as in the case of the CNDD-FDD in Burundi) to constructing full-service hospitals (as in the case of Hizballah in Lebanon).

- *Community Groups* – This variable is coded a 1 if the insurgency had an explicit youth, women's, and/or student organization during wartime and 0 if they did not. Because I want to capture long-term embeddedness, the community groups had to exist at least one before the end of the war and they had to either have their own name or I required evidence of repeated meetings.[25]

- *Political Messaging* – This variable is coded 1 if the group provides a regular source of propaganda. I do not preference one medium over another, so I take any of the following as an indicator of a political messaging wing: writing and disseminating pamphlets or newspapers, a radio station, a television station, or "political education" groups.

Using these indicators, I create a composite index of proto-party structures. The index is additive and unweighted since no theoretical reasons point to the relative importance of one domain over the other.[26] The proto-party structures variable thus captures the extent to which a given insurgency has diversified into salient political domains. Thus, a higher value on proto-party structures indicates greater political diversification. This variable will be used to test the following hypothesis:

H1: A greater array of proto-party structures increases the likelihood that former insurgents will achieve more advanced levels of rebel-to-party success.

Policing and Security

I also collect data on whether rebel groups provided policing and security services to civilians during the conflict. This variable is also dichotomous and is coded a 1 if I found evidence that the insurgent group took over policing activities in an area. Examples of security services include civilians calling on the organization in the event of a robbery or harassment or rebels pointedly protecting civilians from attacks (either from the government or from other rebel groups). Policing captures the enforcement side of administration, but itself does not likely translate into a specific party feature. As such, I do not include it as part of the proto-party structure index.

I include this variable in the dataset because the goal is to have as thorough of an account of rebel organizational structures as possible. I have no theoretical reason to believe that policing has any specific effect on rebel-to-party transformations. I do, however, rerun the models with policing added as an additional control variable to test whether *any*

[25]The name requirement is a proxy for consistency. The goal is to separate out episodic round-ups of students for the sake of recruitment from lasting engagement with civilian communities.

[26]To further ensure that one of the domains was not driving the results, I created a series of attenuated indices, which systematically omitted each of the components, and reran all of the tests. The differences between the results with the full index and the attenuated ones are insignificant.

diversification is good for rebel-to-party transition.[27] The coefficient estimate is consistently small (typically around 0.1) and the standard error hovers around 0.7, suggesting that not just any diversification, but rather, proto-party diversification is the driver of rebel-to-party success.

Size

Empirical evidence from organizational studies reveals that when it comes to resilience, size matters. Larger organizations are expected to exhibit greater diversification and possess more slack resources, both of which feed into adaptive capacity (Haveman 1993, Minkoff 1999). The size of insurgencies varies across time, but the size variable in this dataset specifically captures the estimated size of the organization at the end of the war (i.e. leading up to transition). The expectation following from organizational theory is that size is relevant for adaptability and survival, thus, where possible, I took the size estimate that was closest to the time of potential transformation. Size estimates came from a variety of sources, most notably the Non-State Actor Data (Cunningham, Gleditsch & Salehyan 2009*b*). Where size estimates were given as a range, I took the average. Drawing on the expectations from Chapter 3, I expect larger organizations to fare better for two reasons. First, as noted above, size contributes to diversification and resilience. Thus, size likely works in tandem with proto-party structures because larger organizations are able to operate more extensively across multiple domains. Second, large organizations during wartime likely contribute to large bases of political support when former-insurgents transition into parties. Consequently, I expect size to be an important predictor at all levels of transition.

H2: Larger insurgent organizations are more likely to transition into political parties.

Sources and Missing Data

The organization-level data derives from a variety of primary and secondary sources including first-hand accounts from both group members and civilians from numerous conflicts, archived communiques, archived pamphlets and newspapers, other scholarly work from individual conflicts, state and NGO reports of conflict zones, and international newspapers. Unquestionably, participant accounts and state accounts of insurgencies are likely to exhibit bias. The greatest concern, of course, is insurgent members exaggerating the extent of services they provide (either in interviews or in propaganda). Where sources permitted, I relied on multiple sources to cross-check accounts of rebel governance. In all but two cases (Alfaro Vive, Carajo! in Ecuador and the EPL in Colombia) I was able to find additional sources—either scholarly or journalistic—corroborating the provision of additional services. When these cases are dropped from the analysis, the results do not change.

Missing data poses the greatest obstacle to assembling complete pictures of organizational traits—particularly for organizations that no longer exist in the same form. The

[27] Additional models are included in the appendix to this chapter.

problem is not a lack of specific information for each rebel group, but rather that scholars do not tend to document what a group lacks. For example, if an insurgency is deeply embedded in a community and runs schools and hospitals, we would expect those reporting on the group to mention these traits. If, however, an rebel group conforms more to an isolated insurgency, in which they control territory, but largely work to keep civilians at bay, we would not expect someone writing on the group to note that the insurgency "did not run hospitals." Where no evidence of a particular structure was found across a variety of sources, I code the case as having a 0 on that particular attribute. Although we are generally enjoined from interpreting absence of evidence as evidence of absence (Dunning 2014), in the case of organizational structures, it is likely that data are not missing at random. Organizations for which there is no account of parallel administration or community embeddedness likely engaged in these activities to far less of a degree than others.[28]

4.2.4 Additional Explanatory Variables and Controls

In addition to the proto-party indicators outlined above, I also include in my analysis a series of control variables capturing other parts of my theory and alternative explanations from the rebel-to-party literature. I include in my analyses a variable capturing whether the insurgent organization relied on natural resources to fund their operation. I also include four control variables across my analyses: cohesion, external sponsorship, rebel-to-party provisions in the negotiated settlement, and electoral institutions. Cohesion and external sponsorship represent additional characteristics of the organization and its relationship with outside actors, whereas rebel-to-party provisions and the electoral institutions in place represent the institutional opportunities and constraints affecting transition.

Natural Resource Exploitation

In addition to organizational composition, I argue in Chapter 3 that reliance on lootable natural resources detracts from other activities, and thus, inhibits rebel-to-party transition. Collecting data on natural resource exploitation is challenging because many groups rely on resource exploitation to *some* extent, but reliably capturing the variation across this practice (and across time) was intractable. Thus, for the current project, I use a binary indicator coded 1 if I found evidence that the insurgents relied on lootable resources for funding, and 0 otherwise.

H3: Reliance on lootable natural resources decreases the likelihood of successful transition into a political party.

[28] I run a separate set of tests dropping from the analysis any groups for which I had to impute more than three organizational variables and the results hold.

Cohesion

Staniland (2014) demonstrates that wartime resilience and adaptability are at least in part a function of organizational cohesion. Though he does not specifically address rebel-to-party transformations, I draw on this argument to test whether the same features matter for resilience *off* the battlefield. Staniland defines rebel organizational cohesion in terms of the group's "discipline at the center" and "high levels of obedience [to the center] on the ground" (2014, 7). Measures of local discipline and centralization are difficult to quantify and even more difficult to obtain for clandestine organizations. However, highly cohesive organizations should exhibit high levels of compliance, and thus, low levels of infighting. I use organizational fracturing as an inverse proxy for cohesion. Organizational fracturing is a count variable starting at 0 if the group exhibits no evidence of infighting. It gets a 0.5 if I find evidence of intra-organizational tensions, but no splits; and the count then increases from there by 1 for every time the organization split over its lifetime. I expect that high rates of organizational fracturing will detract from an organization's capacity to seamlessly transition into a party.

H4: Greater organizational cohesion (lower levels of fracturing) will increase the likelihood of successful transition into a political party.

External Sponsorship

According to Acosta's (2014) analysis, one of the most significant predictors of rebel-to-party transition is the extent to which the militant group has secured external sponsorship. Acosta's variable for external sponsorship is a simple count variable documenting the number of state patrons a rebel group had. For the groups present in my data and his, I draw on REVMOD for the insurgency's number of sponsors. For the cases of mine that did not appear in Acosta's dataset, I adopt the same coding criterion: the count went up by one for every additional country that provided the insurgency with funding, weapons, training, or sanctuary.

H5: More external sponsors will increase the likelihood of successful transition into a political party.

Rebel-to-Party Provisions

I also control for whether the conflict ended with a negotiated settlement that included explicit rebel-to-party provisions. Existing scholarship is mixed on the impact of transition clauses. Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz (2016) argue that these provisions are "far from a necessary or sufficient factor" for a transition process to take place. Matanock (2013), in contrast, devotes a great deal of time to specifying when and under what conditions negotiated settlements include such provisions, thereby implying their importance to the transition process. *Rebel-to-party provisions* is a dichotomous variable coded 1 if the group signed an agreement with an explicit transition clause according to the UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset, and 0 otherwise. The expectation from the literature is as follows:

H6: A negotiated settlement with rebel-to-party provisions will facilitate transition into a political party.

Electoral Institutions

Although prior arguments do not include hypotheses about electoral institutions, I include a binary control variable indicating whether the country's legislature is elected via proportional representation or single-member districts. The rules governing post-conflict elections may create an exogenous barrier-to-entry for new parties trying to break into electoral politics. Specifically, since single-member districts are more likely to foster two-party systems, former rebels otherwise well-poised to transition into a political party may face an institutional obstacle unrelated to their organizational advantages. The variable *P.R. System* is coded 1 if at least half of the seats in the national legislature are allocated via proportional representation, and 0 otherwise. I anticipate that proportional representation systems will make breaking into politics more likely, but will have little impact on longevity of the party. This expectation derives from the additional requirements for electoral victories in successive elections. Namely, I expect that some share of votes for rebels-turned-parties in the first post-conflict election are what we might call "votes for peace," in which civilians cast votes for former-rebels under the imagined, veiled, or extant threat of a return to violence. In successive rounds, however, I anticipate that holding onto any seats won in the first election depends more on the party's ability to consolidate and govern. Thus, while proportional representation systems make it more likely to gain entry, and marginally more likely to keep a toehold, I expect that this variable matters less for predicting success as time goes on.

H7: Proportional representation systems increase the likelihood of initial levels of electoral success, but not party longevity.

Omitted Controls

Prior statistical analyses on rebel-to-party transformation include two additional variables that I omit from my analysis: the end of the Cold War (Matanock 2013, Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz 2016), and *partial outcome-goal achievement* (Acosta 2014). Each is omitted for a different reason and I briefly justify their exclusion before delving into the empirical analyses. The end of the Cold War precipitated a worldwide cessation of intrastate hostilities. Explaining this trend is simple: resources flowed to rebels and governments from opposing sides of the Cold War until East-West tensions subsided. Once the flow of resources dried up, so too did the conflicts. Actors on both sides of a given conflict were often dependent on resources from outside actors. Consequently, when those sponsors pulled out of the conflicts, neither side had the capacity to continue pursuing military victory—and negotiated settlements were suddenly a good option. However, nothing about the Cold War's termination can parse success from failure, which is the ultimate goal of this analysis. The positive and significant results are a spurious correlation capturing only *when* this phenomenon began.

The second variable I omit from my analysis is Acosta's (2014) *partial outcome-goal achievement.* According to Acosta, we should expect rebel-to-party transformations when, at the end of the war, militant groups have only partially achieved their goals (2014, 670). He reasons that militant groups turn to the electoral arena to continue pursuing their goals through politics instead of violence. In contrast, groups that have fully achieved their goals have no incentives to take this route (2014, 669). This variable is problematic for numerous reasons. First, while partial goal achievement may motivate a group to pursue politics, it does not explain the success or failure of this pursuit. Its significance is likely driven by the huge proportion of negative cases (i.e. non-transitions) that harbor idealistic and unattainable goals. How does one reasonably compare the goals and progress of the Animal Liberation Front (to free all animals from captivity worldwide) to those of RENAMO (to institute a populist government in Mozambique)? I argue that the types of groups that are likely to pursue politics in the first place are more likely to have goals that are partially achievable. Second, despite Acosta's large sample size, REVMOD lacks data on all but thirty-six of my cases and the coding criteria are so poorly specified as to render the variable non-replicable.[29] Thus, this variable is neither theoretically justified nor empirically reliable and simply borrowing his coding would reduce the size of my dataset by half.

4.3 Cross-National Analysis

In this section, I estimate a series of ordered-logistic and logistic regressions to test the organizational theory of resilience against competing theories of rebel-to-party transformation. The analyses are divided into two sections. The first set of regressions tests the main hypotheses and alternative explanations of rebel-to-party transition on the four-stage outcome variable defined above, and the second section reruns the analyses on a variety alternative specifications of the outcome variable. In the first section, I use ordered-logit models, which allow me to estimate how unit increases in the explanatory variables affect the odds of moving from one discrete outcome category to another when those categories can be reasonably rank-ordered. The results of these analyses strongly support the organizational theory of transition presented in Chapter 3 while also calling into question alternative explanations of rebel-to-party transition.

My choice to model transition with an ordinal logit model represents an optimization between suitability and feasibility. On the one hand, by bounding estimates, ordinal logit models increase the accuracy of predicted probabilities over OLS results when the outcome is not continuous.[30] On the other hand, ordinal logistic models exhibit a severe modeling assumption known as the parallel slopes assumption. Specifically, these models

[29]For example, according to his dataset, Bandera Roja's goal was to "replace regime," their progress was "participated in electoral politics," and their coding on outcome-goal achievement is "no." In contrast, the TPLF's goal was the same, their progress is listed as "contends for power in Ethiopia," and their outcome-goal achievement is coded as "partially."

[30]Specifically, using a linear model on very few outcome categories will result in nonsensical predictions, i.e. a -1 or a 5 on the outcome, when neither values exist in the dataset.

assume that the effect of a unit increase in a given explanatory variable is the same when moving between categories 0 and 1 as it is when moving between categories 1 and 2, and so forth.[31] Unfortunately, however, alternative models like adjacent-category logit, which correct this problem by providing separate estimates for each category, also require considerably more degrees of freedom than are available in this dataset. The limited size of the dataset makes model convergence difficult, which in turn compromises the accuracy and stability of the results, thereby nullifying the benefits of the model.

4.3.1 Predictors of Rebel-to-Party Transformations

The base model estimates an ordinal logistic regression testing the extent to which key organizational traits affect an insurgency's likelihood of transforming into a political party. This model includes only the main variables from the theory presented in Chapter 3: proto-party structures, size, and natural resource exploitation. The second model adds in other organization-level controls from Staniland (2014) and Acosta (2014). The third model controls for two institutional factors that might affect transition: whether the negotiated settlement included explicit rebel-to-party provisions (Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz 2016) and whether the former-rebels were entering into a proportional representation system or single-member district system.

4.3.2 Empirical Results

The results reported in Table 4.3 have major implications for how we understand rebel-to-party transitions. Each model, regardless of specification, lends strong support to the Hypothesis 1 regarding the central role that proto-party structures play in an insurgency's capacity to transform into a political party. The estimated effect of this variable remains relatively constant across model specifications—suggesting that every additional proto-party structure contributes to nearly a threefold increase in the odds of moving up to the next level of transition.

Similarly, as anticipated, the size of the insurgency is consistently significant across models, thus supporting Hypothesis 2. Though it is impossible to determine exactly what aspect of size plays the greatest role, larger membership likely contributes both to a greater diversification of skill sets within the organization as well as a larger potential constituency from which to garner votes in the post-war era. Hypothesis 3 is moderately supported by the direction of the coefficient on natural resource exploitation, yet this variable fails to achieve significance. The uncertainty around resource exploitation is likely a result of too corse of a measure. Many groups relied on natural resource exploitation to some degree, but a few relied on natural resources to the exclusion of civilian support or engagement. I explore this variable further in the case studies in subsequent chapters to test its role where more fine-grained specification of resource exploitation is possible.

[31] In the context of rebel-to-party transitions, for example, there may be some explanatory variable for which an increase makes a group very likely to jump from *No Transition* to *Minimal Participation*, yet a proportional increase in that variable is considerably less salient in making the group jump from *One-Hit Wonder* to *Persistent Opposition*.

Table 4.3: Ordinal Models of Rebel-to-Party Transformation

	Model (1)	Model (2)	Model (3)
Organizational Traits			
Proto-Party Structures	1.001***	1.016***	1.042***
	(0.28)	(0.29)	(0.29)
log(Size)	0.879***	0.887***	0.888***
	(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.26)
Rate of Fracture		-0.321	
		(0.23)	
External Controls			
Lootable Resource Reliance	-1.004	-0.988	-0.750
	(0.69)	(0.70)	(0.73)
External Sponsors		-0.035	
		(0.16)	
Institutional Controls			
Rebel-to-Party Provisions			0.474
			(0.66)
P.R. System			0.985
			(0.61)
Intercept 0|1	1.396	1.000	2.177**
	(0.76)	(0.81)	(0.92)
Intercept 1|2	2.768***	2.377***	3.702***
	(0.83)	(0.86)	(1.04)
Intercept 2|3	3.709***	3.345***	4.693***
	(0.90)	(0.93)	(1.10)
N	67	67	67
Residual Deviance	110.5	108.6	106.7
AIC	122.5	124.556	122.740

Implications for Alternative Explanations

The results largely call into question alternative explanations of rebel-to-party transition. The effect organizational fracture on transition is weakly negative, though the sign is in the expected direction. The weak association between fracture and transition may be

a function of the multi-stage outcome, such that cohesion is important for predicting whether the organization will die out at early post-war stages, but may have little to do with the organization jumping between different categories of electoral success. I conduct further tests on this expectation in the next section.

The most stark departure from the literature is the null finding on external sponsorship in Model 2. Acosta's (2014) analyses find that an insurgency's number of external sponsors is a consistently positive and highly significant predictor of rebel-to-party transformation. In contrast, testing the effect of sponsorship on the ISO data reveals that its effect is imperceptible. Furthermore, given the size of the standard error relative to the magnitude of the point estimate, speculating on the reversal of the sign is hardly worthwhile. This null result suggests that previous results are driven by injudicious inclusion criteria, which made for a sample that included groups that were a priori less likely to attract external support for the same reason they were unlikely to ever transition into political parties.

The null effect of rebel-to-party provisions is another result that points to the extent to which inclusion criteria and dependent-variable coding can drive results. Matanock (2013) devotes an entire chapter to examining the conditions under which peace agreements include provisions for electoral participation, which implies that such provisions affect the likelihood of transition. Furthermore, it is quite likely that rebel-to-party provisions would yield positive and significant results if tested on the MGEP data for two reasons: First, I anticipate that rebel-to-party clauses do a good job of predicting minimal electoral participation (i.e. registration as a party), but that they do little to explain the factors contributing to the long-term *success* of the party, which the outcome variable in this study captures. Second, I anticipate that the large number of negative cases in which there was no negotiated settlement at all (let alone no rebel-to-party clause) would artificially drive up the salience of these provisions in predicting a positive outcome.

Finally, the results of Model 3 suggest that competing under proportional representation may reduce the barriers to entry into the political arena, thereby facilitating transition, though the point estimate is not significant. I anticipate that the uncertainty surrounding this estimate is a function of two factors. First, and most simply, the small sample introduces a penalty into the standard errors of all point estimates, particularly in maximum likelihood estimation in which model convergence is more taxing than it is under simpler models like OLS.[32]

Table 4.4 gives the predicted probabilities of transition over the range of proto-party structures. The model used to generate these probabilities estimates the probability of transition as a function of proto-party structures, size, natural resource exploitation, and the presence of a proportional representation system. I hold size constant at its median, which is 10,000. Natural resource exploitation and proportional representation systems are held at their modal values: 1 and 0, respectively.

[32]To ensure that the difficulty of convergence was not driving insignificance of the control variables, I rerun each model using OLS. The results are nearly identical to those above except that proportional representation does achieve significance at the 0.05 level in this model. The OLS results are reported in an appendix to this chapter.

Table 4.4: Predicted Probabilities of Transition over Number of Proto-Party Structures

No. of Proto-Party Structures:	5	4	3	2	1	0
No Transition	0.006	0.013	0.028	0.059	0.120	0.231
Minimal Transition	0.020	0.043	0.087	0.162	0.263	0.346
One-Hit Wonder	0.042	0.083	0.146	0.215	0.246	0.211
Persistent Opposition	0.932	0.862	0.740	0.564	0.371	0.212

The impact of having an organizational structure that is diversified into politically salient domains is made even clearer upon inspecting the probabilities in Table 4.4. The probability of becoming a persistent opposition party in government increases by an average of 14% with each additional proto-party structure evident during wartime.

4.3.3 Alternative Coding of Rebel-to-Party Transitions

This section reruns the models above on a variety alternative specifications of the outcome variable. For these analyses, I recode rebel-to-party transition as a series of dichotomous variables along each of the three cutpoints and run a series of logistic regressions mirroring the models specified in the previous section. This analysis serves two main functions. First, by rerunning the analyses on the minimalist coding, I can test whether the results of prior studies hold on their own turf, or whether they are driven more by inclusion criteria and omission of key organizational traits (as anticipated). Second, testing my hypotheses across a variety of cutpoints enables me to parse out whether certain explanatory factors are more important for some stages of transition than others.

Each set of models asks a distinct analytic question. The first asks what factors predict minimalist participation in electoral politics. The outcome variable for these tests is coded as a 1 if the group achieved at least a minimalist level of participation (i.e. registration as a political party or beyond) and a 0 otherwise. The second set of tests asks what factors predict whether a group attained office at least once. As such, the outcome variable is coded as a 1 if the group held seats even for a single term (thus comprising both the 2s and 3s from the four-stage transition variable defined above), and a 0 otherwise. The final set of tests asks what factors predict lasting political parties. Thus, the outcome variable here is coded a 1 only if the group held seats for more than two election cycles.[33]

Results from a Minimalist Coding of Transition

By slicing the dependent variable at a minimalist benchmark for participation, as depicted in Table 4.5, almost every variable falls out of significance—both from my own theory and competing theories. This coding of the outcome mirrors the coding rules used in

[33]Again, if a group has only experienced two elections since the end of the conflict, and they are still in the legislature, I code them as a persistent opposition.

Table 4.5: Logit Models of Minimalist Participation

	Model (1)	Model (2)	Model (3)
Organizational Traits			
Proto-Party Structures	0.471	0.428	0.583
	(0.34)	(0.358)	(0.38)
log(Size)	0.693†	0.741*	0.790†
	(0.36)	(0.37)	(0.44)
Rate of Fracture		-0.413	
		(0.32)	
External Controls			
Natural Resource Reliance	0.100	-0.988	0.669
	(1.22)	(0.70)	(1.40)
External Sponsors		-0.156	
		(0.21)	
Institutional Controls			
Rebel-to-Party Provisions			1.875
			(1.16)
P.R. System			1.490†
			(0.90)
Intercept	-0.796	-0.071	$-2.542^{\dagger}$
	(0.95)	(1.08)	(1.35)
N	67	67	67
Residual Deviance	42.6	40.5	36.6
AIC	50.6	52.5	48.6

Matanock (2013) and Acosta (2014), though neither of their expectations are supported. Furthermore, not only does external sponsorship not achieve statistical significance, but the sign on the coefficient estimate is the opposite of Acosta's predictions. These analyses indicate the extent to which prior results were driven by the composition of datasets rather than the identification of factors that accurately predict rebel-to-party transitions.

The two variables that achieve marginal significance are size and the presence of a proportional representation system. If the goal is to predict minimalist electoral participation, this result is unsurprising. The unifying similarity across the positive cases coded by the minimal standard is survival: not all groups *adapted*, but they all *lasted* long

enough to register, and some of them lasted long enough to break into politics. This result supports the expectations from organizational theory—that size and the institutional environment affect organization's capacity to survive in the face of a shock.

When compared to the results of the ordinal logit above, in which the same models are used to predict increasing levels of transition success, this analysis has crucial implications for the future study of rebel-to-party transformations. Once we reduce the sample down to a set of plausible cases, a minimalist coding of the electoral participation obscures important trends in this phenomenon. Taking any electoral action as an indicator of successful rebel-to-party transformation lumps together groups that differ systematically from one another along a variety of important dimensions. This grouping, in turn, likely makes rebel-to-party transition a poorly specified explanatory variable for researchers looking to examine how this phenomenon contributes to lasting peace and stability in the country.

Predicting *any* Electoral Success

Table 4.6 illustrates how drastically results change when the outcome variable is coded to reflect a higher benchmark for success. For this set of models, the dependent variable is coded as a 1 if the former insurgents ever experienced an electoral victory (i.e. the 2s and 3s from the four-stage outcome), and a 0 otherwise. At the point that electoral victory is considered a defining feature of transition, proto-party structures become key to parsing out successes from failures and the effects of this variable are not sensitive to model specification. If we want to predict something more than becoming a party in name only, the insurgency's wartime organizational structures prove to be a vital consideration.

The size of the organization also remains important, as do electoral institutions. Specifically, if the country has a proportional representation system in place, the odds of a party winning seats increase almost fivefold.[34] The continued significance and magnitude of this variable is unsurprising since both newer and smaller parties have an easier time breaking into the political arena under this institutional arrangement.

Predicting Persistent Opposition Status

Finally, the last set of models codes a transition as successful only if the party occupies a lasting position in national or regional politics. The results of this model continue to align with the predictions of my theoretical framework, yet they differ in important ways from the previous set of models. First, electoral institutions are no longer a significant predictor of success. This result follows logically if we consider how electoral institutions should matter, and supports Hypothesis 7, which suggests that institutions should only matter for initial entry rather than longevity. We should expect the institutional arrangement to affect whether a party can break into politics in the first place, but whether the party *lasts* once it is there is more a function of the party's political aptitude.

[34]To interpret the magnitude of the effect from the model, we exponentiate the coefficient, which gives us $\exp(1.573) = 4.82$.

Table 4.6: Logit Models of Electoral Success

	Model (1)	Model (2)	Model (3)
Organizational Traits			
Proto-Party Structures	0.851**	0.815*	0.830*
	(0.32)	(0.32)	(0.34)
log(Size)	0.870**	0.854**	0.835†
	(0.30)	(0.30)	(0.31)
Rate of Fracture		-0.085	
		(0.30)	
External Controls			
Natural Resource Reliance	-0.257	-0.988	0.020
	(0.87)	(0.70)	(0.94)
External Sponsors		0.110	
		(0.19)	
Institutional Controls			
Rebel-to-Party Provisions			-0.241
			(0.82)
P.R. System			1.573*
			(0.788)
Intercept	−2.879**	−2.927**	−3.731**
	(1.01)	(1.12)	(1.35)
N	67	67	67
Residual Deviance	42.6	53.1	49.2
AIC	50.6	65.1	61.2

4.4 Conclusion

Rebel-to-party transformations are relatively rare phenomena, which makes statistical results highly sensitive to (mis)specification of the outcome as well as the inclusion criteria for the dataset. This chapter represents a significant push forward in our understanding of the factors that affect rebel-to-party transformation along two dimensions. First, ISO improves the outcome coding and case composition of prior analyses in a way that is both theoretically and empirically driven. Second, the statistical tests conducted on this dataset provide new insights into the factors that affect rebel-to-party transformation.

Table 4.7: Logit Models of Persistent Opposition Status

	Model (1)	Model (2)	Model (3)
Organizational Traits			
Proto-Party Structures	1.071***	1.028**	1.075**
	(0.33)	(0.33)	(0.35)
log(Size)	0.987**	1.020**	0.968**
	(0.32)	(0.33)	(0.32)
Rate of Fracture		-0.700	
		(0.45)	
External Controls			
Natural Resource Reliance	−1.550†	−1.703†	-1.408
	(0.88)	(0.92)	(0.81)
External Sponsors		0.066	
		(0.18)	
Institutional Controls			
Rebel-to-Party Provisions			-0.365
			(0.81)
P.R. System			1.113
			(0.81)
Intercept	−4.087***	−2.927**	−4.71**
	(1.19)	(1.12)	(1.44)
N	67	67	67
Residual Deviance	52.4	49.1	50.4
AIC	60.1	61.1	62.4

The wartime organizational features of insurgencies have received little-to-no attention in the previous literature, with authors instead looking to the post-Cold War era, external sponsorship, and the extent of goal completion to predict post-conflict transition into political parties. According to the analyses conducted on the ISO dataset, insurgencies that operate in political domains during wartime have a distinct advantage in the post-war political arena relative to less politically-diverse groups. In addition to the specific domains of operation, the size of the insurgency consistently factors into transitional capacity as well.

Furthermore, not only are proto-party structures strong predictors of successful rebel-

to-party transformations, but the importance of this variable undermines a fundamental assumption in prior theories of the rebel-to-party transition process: that "new" rebel parties have to build up party structures from scratch. The data suggest that insurgent organizational structures are far more heterogeneous than current conceptualizations of rebellion account for and that this heterogeneity a key determinant of organizational trajectory.

The results severely call into question the validity of prior statistical analyses of rebel-to-party transformation. Despite the significance and magnitude of findings reported in Matanock (2013), Acosta (2014), and Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz (2016), not one of the control variables achieved significance in any model specification. I argue that the null findings derive from fundamental differences in the datasets and that previous results were driven in large part by the failure cases in the MGEP and REVMOD data.

Crucially, however, these tests are conducted on observational data. The results lend strong support to the organizational theory of resilience, yet the underlying mechanisms (such as transposing cadres and redirecting resources to existing wings) remain untested. In the following chapters, I turn to three in-depth case studies to continue testing the theory and its hypothesized mechanisms.

Chapter 5

Mozambique: RENAMO's Journey from Puppet to Party

None of us here are politicians nor have the political capacity to rule the country.
-Renamo leader, Afonso Dhlakama, 27 September 1982

[I] have won democracy for the people. That is why we will contest the elections.
-Renamo leader, Afonso Dhlakama, 19 November 1992

The two quotations above—almost exactly ten years apart—are emblematic of Renamo's history. No one, least of all Renamo's leadership, would have guessed at the outset that Renamo would eventually transition into the most successful and durable opposition party in Mozambique. Their origins were inauspicious at best, and the ever-changing conditions in which they had to operate tested their resilience at every turn. Moreover, the geopolitics of the region and how they factor into Renamo's sponsorship add a rare layer of complexity to this case. Rhodesian and then South African sponsorship of Renamo had distinct organizational implications that are inextricable from its story as a local resistance movement inside Mozambique. Of all the successful rebel-to-party cases, Renamo's organizational transformation is the most severe and the most surprising. Over the course of seventeen years, Renamo went from a puppet of the Rhodesian government to a viable opposition party in Mozambique.

The cross-national statistical analyses presented in Chapter 4 enabled me to get broad traction on the extent to which proto-party structures are associated with rebel-to-party transition. Snapshot analyses, however, are unable to test whether the *process* of change unfolds in the way my theory predicts. This chapter is the first of three within-case analyses that trace the processes of successful and failed rebel-to-party transformations.

In this chapter, I test my organizational theory of rebel-to-party transition against conventional explanations from the literature. Testing my theory requires evidence along three dimensions: content, process, and context. First, to test whether the *content* of the organization matters, I must find evidence that Renamo had proto-party structures during the war. If instead the organizational structure exhibited homogeneity, then my theory on the importance of wartime organization is called into question. Second, I

look for evidence to test whether the *process* of rebel-to-party transition occurs in the way I hypothesize: by repurposing existing structures to fulfill new, but related goals. While Renamo was among the sparsest of insurgent organizations to fully transition (in terms of the development of diverse political structures), evidence of repurposing and structural retention abounds throughout its lifetime. Finally, I examine how Renamo's environment factored into the transition. I look for evidence of whether state-society relations affected Renamo's development and reception. I also examine whether and to what extent external sponsorship played a role in its organizational trajectory.

Alternative Explanations

As I demonstrate in Chapter 1, the number of alternative theories of rebel-to-party transition is not commensurate with the amount of work that deals with the phenomenon. Consequently, few testable implications derive from the rebel-to-party transition literature; and even fewer address the underlying process or mechanisms. Nevertheless, a few additional explanations emerge as potentially viable: two addressing the correlates of transition, and one addressing the process of transition.

The first alternative explanation I address is the purportedly vital role of external sponsors. Acosta (2014) argues that external state sponsorship should facilitate rebel-to-party transition by helping militant organizations overcome credibility problems. I also anticipate external sponsorship to affect transition capacity, yet Acosta and I differ in our posited mechanisms. In Acosta's study, he argues that state sponsorship works by lending credibility to insurgents' renunciation of violence and commitment to peace settlements (2014, 670). This argument specifically concerns the dynamic between the sponsor and the target government.[1] In contrast, I expect that external sponsorship matters to the extent that that insurgent organizations have to modify their behavior to accommodate the preferences of the sponsor.

The next alternative hypothesis I test concerns the process of transition. Recall from the discussion of the literature in Chapter 1 that many accounts of rebel-to-party transition are built on an assumption of structural novelty. To recap, scholars who subscribe to this view assume that the transition process begins only after the fighting stops: the political apparatus is built from scratch in the transition period. Manning (2004), for example, argues that the "KLA and Renamo both emerged first as armed organizations and developed into political parties *only after the war*" (56, emphasis added). Similarly Close and Prevost argue that to become a political party on the heels of war, "insurgents have to learn the art of nonviolent politics" (Close & Prevost 2007, 4). For this assumption to hold, we should expect that rebels come to the negotiating table with an

[1] Recall from Chapter 4 that the number of external sponsors not only failed to achieve statistical significance, but the variable also flipped signs across the three models in which it was tested.

organization comprising little more than combat units.[2]

Crucially, the structural repurposing and structural novelty arguments are not entirely mutually exclusive (Zaks 2016). Even the most politically developed insurgency will have to do some building or augmentation to become a party. Thus, what I test here is not whether *any* novel building occurs, but whether organizational legacies factor into the new structure and facilitate the transition.

Finally, I also address the extent to which a post-insurgent party must go through an internal democratization process in order to fully transition. de Zeeuw (2008) argues that revamping internal decision-making structures to align with democratic principles is a critical "attitudinal change" that former rebels must enact (2008, 14). He goes on to argue that without this shift, "structural changes in other parts of the organization are unlikely to take place"—in other words, to participate in democracy, parties must embody democracy (15). Building on my review of this argument in Chapter 1, I argue that the internal structure of parties is an analytically distinct outcome from *whether* an organization is a party in the first place.

5.1 Historical Context

It is impossible to understand the origins or trajectory of Renamo without placing it in the broader historical and geopolitical context of colonial regimes in Mozambique, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe[3]), and South Africa. This section provides a brief yet critical history of Portuguese decolonization, the rise of the Frelimo government, and the regional geopolitical interests that precipitated the birth of Renamo.

5.1.1 The Liberation Struggle and the Rise of Frelimo

Despite the massive wave of decolonization in the early twentieth century, a severe economic crisis in Portugal drove the state toward renewed interest in its colonies. Their rule over Mozambique became increasingly heavy-handed and extractive. For minimal compensation, local populations were forced to farm and mine raw materials from which the Portuguese government profited handsomely. Dissidents were suppressed, imprisoned, or exiled (Funada-Classen 2013, 337). Yet, in light of Portugal's vehement anti-communist stance during and after the Second World War, the international community turned a blind eye as Portugal's stronghold in the region turned into a chokehold.

Increasing discontent with colonial rule spawned pockets of liberation movements both

[2]In some of the more extreme incarnations of this assumption, entire analyses proceed without any regard to the organizational legacies or history of the rebel group established during the war. In the introduction to de Zeeuw's edited volume on rebel-to-party transitions, he explicitly states that "the case studies in this book concentrate on what has happened inside and outside rebel movements in the period *after* the war" (2008, 3) (emphasis in original).

[3]I use *Rhodesia* to refer to the country prior to its independence in 1980; thereafter, I use *Zimbabwe*. This usage allows for an easier distinction between Ian Smith's colonial regime and Robert Mugabe's post-Independence regime.

domestically and across the border in Tanzania. Three disparate movements[4] eventually coalesced in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania under the name Mozambican Liberation Front (Frelimo) in June of 1962. Frelimo was headed by political figures forced into exile, and their initial calls for independence were peaceful. However, continued Portuguese intransigence prompted Frelimo to seek independence by alternative means. In 1964, Frelimo took up arms against the colonial power in an eleven-year war of independence that culminated in a full Portuguese withdrawal from the region and a hand-off of power to Frelimo.

In response to the expanding liberation movement, Portuguese authorities engaged in a massive hearts-and-minds campaign to solidify their hold on the country and disincentivize others from joining the struggle. The most robust counterinsurgency effort began with extensive anthropological research into the traditional social and religious structures of the Makhuwa people in northern Mozambique, where the Portuguese influence was most tenuous (Funada-Classen 2013, 229). The Portuguese ramped up their presence in the north of the country by integrating these traditional structures into the colonial administration. The primary goal, of course, was to prevent guerrilla forces from infiltrating and establishing liberated zones. Though Portuguese counterinsurgency efforts ultimately failed, this tactic would later play a key role in shaping locals' perceptions of the Frelimo government and their willingness to throw support behind the future movement that would oppose the Frelimo government.

While Frelimo's tactics originally mirrored the Portuguese approach of "traditional incorporation" (Funada-Classen 2013, 251),[5] this strategy was short-lived. In addition to the extant conflict between the rebels and the colonial authority, the Frelimo rebels also found themselves in power and resource disputes with the chiefs with whom they were sharing power. The infighting over who was truly in charge of the area created a rift between the traditional authorities appointed as chairmen and the Frelimo commanders. Frelimo soon became distrustful of traditional authorities and this distrust prompted a shift in wartime tactics and subsequently informed their post-independence policies.

In response, Frelimo adopted a stance of anti-traditionalism. Frelimo commanders began to speak out against "tribalism" as a hindrance to Mozambique's progress as a nation. In his memoir of the war, Frelimo's first president, Eduardo Mondlane, wrote the following:

> Before the war two authorities coexisted: the colonial, and that of the traditional chiefdoms subordinated and integrated into the colonial system but retaining nevertheless a certain autonomy. When the colonial power is destroyed by a guerrilla victory in a given area, this leaves an administrative void. The power of tribal chiefs, however, has its origins in the traditional life of the country, and in the last was based on a popular conception of legitimacy, not on force...**In its pre-colonial form, such traditional government of-**

[4]the Mozambican African National Union (MANU), the National African Union of Independent Mozambique (UNAMI), and the National Democratic Union of Mozambique (UDENAMO)

[5]For example, in one of the first areas Frelimo occupied, officials formally appointed traditional authorities as "chairmen" of the liberated zones (ibid.).

> **ten served its purpose quite well within a limited area...but even in such cases, limited in its scope and based on a small local unit, it cannot form a satisfactory foundation for the needs of a modern state.** In other areas, such power already had an element of feudalism, permitting an exploitation of the peasantry...**The survival of such systems is obviously a hindrance to the progress of a revolution that aims at social and political equality.**[6] *(Emphasis added)*

Throughout the 1960s and early 70s, the situation in Mozambique became evermore dire and the Portuguese government felt the strain. Numerous pressures inside the colonial power culminated in the Carnation Revolution, which ousted Marcello Caetano and instituted a democratic state for the first time in Portugal's history. With the new regime came promises to withdraw their colonial presence in Mozambique and elsewhere. On September 7, 1974, the Portuguese administration signed the Lusaka Accord and handed control of Mozambique over to Frelimo.

The most immediate consequence of Portuguese abdication was a substantial shift in the demography of Mozambique. Embittered by the Frelimo victory and facing hostile local populations, Portuguese settlers fled the country en masse. Though the exact number is unknown, estimates converge at around 200,000 Portuguese colonials leaving Mozambique immediately after independence (Funada-Classen 2013, 386). While the loss of the white colonial population was viewed as beneficial for egalitarianism and Mozambican nationalism, it also drained the country of the majority of its skilled workforce. Adding insult to injury, many of these workers sabotaged the new state by destroying machinery and supplies before fleeing back to Portugal (Hanlon 1990, 46).[7] As such, the Portuguese left behind a country with no industrial sector, a fledgling agricultural sector, and a population boasting an 8% literacy rate (Hall 1990, 51). This exodus left the Mozambican economy in ruins—both literally and figuratively—and Frelimo took power on the heels of collapse.

5.1.2 Frelimo's Policies: Tilling the Soil for Rebellion

Frelimo's rise to power had major consequences—both domestically and abroad—that make the subsequent rebellion seem like an inevitability. Immediately after taking office, the Frelimo government launched numerous policy initiatives in the service of two main goals: (1) to create a unified Mozambique through absolutist rule, and (2) to scrub the country clean of the marks left by its colonial past. With the latter came not only an eradication of explicitly colonial institutions, but also the dismantling of traditional aspects of Mozambican society that were associated with Portuguese rule. Together, these goals led to the implementation of extreme policies overhauling the economic and social

[6] Mondlane (1969, 163).

[7] These were not one-off acts either; rather, they were well-planned and widespread. Industrial workers across the country went out of their way to dismantle machinery and destroy replacement parts. There are also numerous accounts of people finding and burning instruction and building manuals in order to prevent the new owners from operating at capacity.

structures of the country. Understanding the policies enacted in the post-Independence era and their deleterious effects on Mozambican society provides the context necessary to appreciate the conditions under which Renamo later emerged. The goal of this section is to provide insight into specific policies and their implications in order to contextualize the evolution, strategies, and popular reception of Renamo.[8]

The Economic and Social Overhauls

Owing much to Soviet sponsorship and influence, Frelimo adopted a series of policies with three main pillars: the nationalization of the economy, the unification of Mozambican identity, and the modernization of society. The first pillar of Frelimo's agenda was a complete nationalization of the economy—and indeed most of its other social policies worked in the service of nationalism. All social services were nationalized immediately upon independence. Frelimo made it illegal for churches or private citizens to run schools, practice medicine or law, or even hold funerals (Hanlon 1990, 46). The government pledged to bring healthcare to the whole of the country with a particular emphasis on rural areas, which it did with relative success in the early years of its rule (Manning 2002, 51). The state also nationalized land and agriculture—forcing peasants onto large, state-owned cooperatives to farm cotton and other under-productive cash crops (Morgan 1990, 610). By 1977, Frelimo had fully nationalized industry, as well. All private commerce was outlawed and all shops were closed and replaced with People's Shops: state-run and supplied outlets that sold consumer goods at low, fixed-prices (Manning 2002, 50).

The second and third pillars of Frelimo's agenda were to foster a unified Mozambican identity and modernize society. Having adopted Marxist-Leninist principles, Frelimo attempted to unify Mozambican identity around the Party and a broad sense of Mozambican nationalism. Frelimo's specific policies in this vein comprised a balance of sticks and carrots. The government exhibited a zero-tolerance policy for political dissidents, what Frelimo referred to as *o inimigo interno* (the internal enemy) (Vines 1991, 5). Those who resisted the movement during the independence war as well as those suspected of criticizing the Frelimo government after it took power were jailed or sent to re-education camps. These camps, however, ultimately became hotbeds of resistance, and Renamo would later capitalize on Frelimo's convenient decision to house its opponents in concentrated areas.

Frelimo also went to massive lengths to dismantle and reconstruct Mozambican social structures—particularly in rural areas. These policies were enacted under the guise of Mozambican unity, modernization, and jump-starting the economy (Funada-Classen 2013, 382). The people were promised healthcare, advancement, and equality. In reality, however, Frelimo sought complete control and tore down any features of the social structure that potentially jeopardized their authority (ibid.). What began as wartime rhetoric about the "feudalist" and "exploitative" nature of tribal structures translated into post-war policies that did more to destabilize the foundations of rural life than they did to

[8]This section is not meant to be an exhaustive or even comprehensive account of Frelimo's reign. For excellent work on the Frelimo government and its policies in the context of the Mozambican Civil War see Hanlon's (1990), *Mozambique: The Revolution Under Fire* and Cabrita's (2001), *Mozambique: The Tortuous Road to Democracy.*

unify and modernize the nation: forced villagization, the installation of "dynamizing groups," and the total ban on religious practices.

The first major social overhaul, villagization, stemmed in large part from the history of disputes over authority between tribal elders and Frelimo officials in the pre-independence era. Moreover, since tribal structures and institutions had been exploited by the Portuguese to facilitate colonial rule, Frelimo viewed these institutions as potentially subversive and reminiscent of Mozambique's colonial past. In response, Frelimo uprooted traditional and long-established rural communities and forcibly relocated people into "communal villages" (Cabrita 2001, 116). Families were forced to give up private farms in exchange for working on cooperatives that were set up in communal villages to help fulfill agricultural development goals.

The villagization policies were more than a change of scenery. Tribal structures were dismantled and *régulos* (chiefs whose authority was reified by the colonial administration) were renounced in favor of augmenting the "dynamizing groups" on which Frelimo relied during the war. These small, grassroots committees were elected within the party and stationed throughout the country in a variety of roles. As Manning (2002) notes, "the Dynamizing Groups varied wildly in their ability to handle the heavy burden of administrative tasks they inherited in the vacuum between the departing colonial state and the creation of a new one" (51). These structures, however, proved to be clumsy and ill-conceived: lower-level positions were filled by people with little-to-no administrative experience, and higher-level positions were filled by appointed Frelimo officials who knew little about the region and often did not speak the local language.[9]

The final social policy that would play a key role in the subsequent civil war was Frelimo's codified ban on religion. Not only were chiefs forced to abdicate their role in the social hierarchy, but they were also banned from leading or participating in any religious ceremonies (Alexander 1997, 2). Many religions leaders were imprisoned, and all non-secular schools were burned or shut down as were medical clinics that were run by the Catholic Church (Manning 2002, 50).

5.1.3 Geopolitcal Context: Rhodesian Interests

The Frelimo government was not just restructuring relations domestically. One cannot fully understand the emergence and development of Renamo without first understanding the geopolitical context of Mozambique vis-a-vis Rhodesia and South Africa. Geographically, Mozambique occupies a strategically important location on the African continent. A long, yet narrow country situated along the south-eastern coastline (shown in Figure 5.1), Mozambique was the sole source of port access for its landlocked neighbors. Rhodesia, in particular, was heavily reliant on goods that came through Mozambican ports. Indeed, 80% of Rhodesia's external trade was conducted through Mozambique.

The continuity of this trade relationship, however, was highly contingent on the pol-

[9]The use of non-locals was a deliberate decision on the part of Frelimo to continue their push toward nationalism and anti-tribalism (Funada-Classen 2013, 382). In practice, however, the appointments posed logistical problems.



Figure 5.1: Strategic Location of Mozambique in Southern Africa

itics of the region. Prior to Mozambican independence in 1975, Mozambique, Rhodesia, and South Africa all had white regimes and all three states were in the midst of combating black nationalist movements that were aligned against them. The Portuguese government in Mozambique was fighting Frelimo until its independence in 1975, the British government in Rhodesia (under the control of Ian Smith) was fighting ZANLA until Zimbabwean independence in 1980, and the Apartheid government in South Africa was combating the ANC until 1994. Both before and after independence, Frelimo supported ZANLA and vice versa. Thus, once the Portuguese exited the region and handed the country over to Frelimo, tensions mounted between the Mozambique and Rhodesia. Ian Smith viewed the rise of Frelimo as an exigent security concern (Emerson 2014, loc. 485): ZANLA rebels were exploiting a more fluid border and Rhodesia began mounting cross-border attacks on Mozambican villages (Hanlon 1990, 51). In response, Samora Michel closed the border to Rhodesia in March of 1976, thereby cutting Rhodesia off from its main source of goods.

Mozambique's relationship with South Africa was complicated, to say the least. Tens of thousands of residents from the southern provinces of Mozambique emigrated to South Africa to work in the mining sector. This labor exchange not only helped Mozambique finance regional debts, but it also brought in a great deal of revenue and was one of the major sources of employment in the south. Yet, shortly after Mozambican independence, South Africa had to cut the number of miners from over 100,000 to under 40,000 (Hanlon 1990, 51). This was a sore point for Mozambique since it left the country with no means of financing its debt and it exacerbated an already staggering unemployment rate.

From the standpoint of the South African government, Frelimo's rise to power was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it posed a threat to the apartheid regime by legitimating black nationalist movements threatening white rule in South Africa (including

the African National Congress (ANC) and the South-West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO)). On the other hand, and putting aside regional instability, Mozambique's border closures were economically beneficial for South Africa. South African ports were now one of the principal routes through which goods could enter the sub-continent, and—as with any monopoly—they saw fit to keep it that way. South Africa's direct relationship to the Mozambican conflict did not come to fruition until 1980 when Zimbabwe gained Independence, but keeping in mind their strategic interests is important.

5.1.4 Implications of Frelimo's Reign

What were the implications of these policies and the geopolitical context in which they were enacted? The long answer is profound economic and social devastation that reverberated throughout the subcontinent. The short answer is, Renamo. Within a year of gaining independence, the economy collapsed: the country saw a 30% drop in national production, a 50% drop in per capita income, and a 60% reduction in exports (Manning 2002, 56). The confluence of nationalizing agriculture and the means of production, banning commercial business, and a massive draught that hit right as Frelimo took power also caused a massive food shortage. This famine was felt by urban and rural populations alike. State farms were unable to keep up with the demand for food, infrastructure was collapsing. Closing the border to Rhodesia cost the Mozambican government an estimated $550 million USD over a four year period (Emerson 2014, loc. 520).

Frelimo's social programs did not fare much better. Throughout the 1970s, state-society relations decayed rapidly. Although Manning (2002) notes that they were relatively successful at expanding healthcare in the first few years of its rule, ultimately, the government was unable to keep up with the demand due to a lack of trained personnel and a decimated infrastructure. Their new political structures "remained fragile and contested" (Hall 1990, 55), especially in the north of the country. Ultimately, the state was strong only in its aspirations.

Three factors worked in tandem to create fertile ground for a resistance movement in Mozambique. First, the social and economic policies enacted by the Frelimo government dismantled traditional structures of production and authority and replaced them with overly-ambitious and under-productive state institutions aimed at exerting control over all aspects of daily life. These policies then coincided with both a massive economic crisis and one of the worst draughts the country had ever experienced. Together, these circumstances precipitated intense resentment among the population and concurrently exposed the state's administrative weaknesses, both of which Renamo would later make a career out of exploiting.

5.2 RENAMO: The Journey from Puppet to Party

The remainder of the chapter traces RENAMO's structural evolution from its birth as a puppet of the Rhodesian government in 1975 to its eventual participation in Mozam-

bique's first multi-party elections in 1994. I break Renamo's organizational trajectory into four distinct stages, each of which has key implications for its internal structure and prospects for transition. Stage 1 (1975–1979) concerns the birth of the movement across the Rhodesian border and its early development as a strategic tool of the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO). Stage 2 (1980–1984) coincides with Zimbabwean independence, when South Africa (while still under apartheid) takes control of Renamo and remakes it to suit their own regional agenda. Stage 3 (1985–1988) represents a major pivot toward Renamo's autonomy—setting up more local bases, increasing its representation abroad, and expanding the political base of its organization. Finally, Stage 4 (1989–1994) begins with the initial negotiations with the Frelimo government and culminates in Renamo's highly successful performance in the 1994 post-conflict elections.

The goal of this chapter is to move beyond a historical narrative of RENAMO's idiosyncratic path to electoral politics and toward an critical test of the theory presented in Chapter 3. As such, I am continually looking for evidence of proto-party structural development, organizational assessment, and political readjustment. To test my theory of the transition process, I must find evidence of structural repurposing.

Throughout each stage of Renamo's transition, I take stock of its organizational structures, prospects for transition, and the challenges it faces. To confirm or corroborate my organizational theory of rebel-to-party transition, I must find three types of evidence. First, I must find pre-settlement evidence of proto-party structures. Second, I must find evidence of organizational assessment and readjustment that indicates a move toward a more politically-diversified structure. Finally, I must find evidence that the transition process occurred (or was facilitated by) repurposing existing structures into the party apparatus.

5.2.1 A Puppet of Rhodesia: RENAMO's Birth

Throughout Mozambique's War of Independence, Rhodesia had been making consistent incursions across the border where their own resistance movement, ZANLA, was taking sanctuary. Since ZANLA and Frelimo were offering support to one another, the Portuguese regime at least tacitly allowed Rhodesian forces to enter into the country. After independence, however, cross-border incursions violated Mozambique's newfound sovereignty, which put Rhodesia at risk for international condemnation. In response, Ken Flower—the director of the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO)—decided that in order to continue their mission in Mozambique, they needed a cover. And thus, Renamo was born.

If some insurgencies are born naturally of an aggrieved population or an embittered military, RENAMO is the test-tube baby of rebel movements. The conventional narrative of Renamo's origin suggests that the group represents a two-part project of the Rhodesian CIO to destabilize the Frelimo regime. The first part consisted of anti-Frelimo propaganda in the form of radio broadcasts. The second part consisted of an armed force intended to gather intelligence and sabotage the infrastructure of the new Mozambican state. In this section, I trace Renamo's organizational development and coalescence under CIO

control. I demonstrate, however, that while the organization was unquestionably a tool of Rhodesian interests, this story goes both ways.

I present clear evidence suggesting that Renamo was not a vapid puppet bending to the will of Ian Smith's government. The organization—and particularly, Orlando Cristina and its other leaders—understood the opportunity they had under Rhodesian sponsorship and exploited it to get a true Mozambican resistance force off the ground. Understanding the organizational composition of Renamo in the early years—and how it affects their trajectory moving forward—requires carefully tracing the development and integration of each component of Renamo. I begin with a brief history of Orlando Cristina, whose role in Renamo was temporally short, yet organizationally critical in setting it on its trajectory. I then trace the evolution and coalescence of the political and armed wings. Finally, I analyze how the organization as a whole functioned vis-a-vis Rhodesian officials and local communities in Mozambique.

Orlando Cristina

Orlando Cristina had been living in exile in Rhodesia since before Mozambican independence. During the War of Independence, Cristina made his way to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania where Frelimo was based. He too sought an end to colonial rule and, like many others, saw Frelimo as the best path to this goal. Yet, upon his arrival, Cristina quickly became disenchanted with the racial and ethnic tensions that were tearing at the movement (Cabrita 2001, 135). Feeling that these tensions compromised the message and efficacy of a unified Mozambican nationalist movement, Cristina defected from Frelimo and was subsequently jailed shortly after his return to Mozambique. He was freed by another Frelimo adversary named Jorge Jardim on the stipulation that Cristina work with him to incite an alternative to Frelimo. Cristina agreed, but their relationship was short-lived.

Cristina's initial conversations with Jardim were a turning-point in his thinking about the political direction of Mozambique. He witnessed numerous examples of opposition to Frelimo's takeover, but reasoned that ideological opposition "would be powerless without an army of their own" (Cristina qtd. in Cabrita 2001, 135). He saw—even prior to independence—that dissatisfaction with Frelimo was inevitable. Rather than mount a contemporaneous struggle, he waited to capitalize on people's discontent with a Frelimo government. Cristina later said, "[a]ll we can do is to wait for Frelimo to get into power for it is bound to create dissatisfaction among the people and that will be the rallying point for any hypothetical action."

Cristina fled to Rhodesia in 1974 to wait out the remainder of the war. In the short term, his actions were small and strategic. In June of 1975—coinciding with Mozambican independence—Cristina undertook one of the first major acts of anti-Frelimo propaganda in the form of the *Magaia Pamphlet*. He and a small group of recruits printed and circulated an underground publication criticizing Frelimo's handling of the war and the takeover. This pamphlet was aimed primarily at the military in the hopes of capitalizing on existing rifts within the organization and inspiring defectors. While he was not so

naive as to imagine that the pamphlet inspired the coup attempt in August of that same year, Cristina nonetheless interpreted the uprising as a clear indication that neither the people nor the armed forces were entirely in favor of Frelimo's reign (Cabrita 2001, 137).

It is at this point where the "tool-of-Rhodesia" narrative begins to break down. Encouraged by the attempted coup and aware of Rhodesia's interests in keeping the Machel regime in check, Orlando Cristina opted to stay in Rhodesia and collaborate with the CIO. This relationship was defined by compromise on both sides. Rhodesian officials needed the armed resistance movement to resemble genuine domestic opposition (Nilsson 1990, 21), and Cristina wanted the funding and resources to implement his vision of a Mozambican nationalist force (Cabrita 2001, 138). As I trace the development and integration of the political and armed wings of Renamo, it becomes clear that the resulting organization bore as much—if not more—resemblance to Cristina's nationalist vision as it did to Rhodesia's plan for a mobile insurrection force.

The Birth of Renamo's Voice: *Voz da África Livre*

By 1976, the CIO and Rhodesian Broadcasting Company (RBC) had repurposed a military radio tower to make routine anti-Frelimo broadcasts in the hopes of riling opposition in Mozambique (Fauvet 1984, 115). The early broadcasts, however, were relatively ineffectual—they were short and had a distinctly pro-colonial and pro-Smith bent. While discontent with Frelimo was on the rise in Mozambique, few were especially nostalgic for their colonial past.

Orlando Cristina saw these broadcasts as an ideal opportunity to lay the groundwork for the political opposition he had long envisioned. He wanted to extend the length of each transmission and shift the content toward a more distinctly Mozambican agenda. Despite having a clear vision at the outset, Cristina knew he had to play the game. He moved cautiously to ensure that the CIO did not feel that Cristina was infringing on their authority. As Cabrita notes, he "wanted a mouthpiece of an exiled movement opposed to the Frelimo government," but knew that this intense of a shift "was too advanced for the prevailing Rhodesian way of thinking...Cristina and those working with him realized that they had no option but to accept the reality, hoping that in the future they would gain more leverage" (2001, 139-40). This line of reasoning provides distinct evidence of the underlying political aims of the organization, thus calling into question the extent to which Renamo originated as a vapid puppet of the Rhodesian government.

Cristina decided that the RBC would be most likely to enact these changes if they thought the suggestions were coming from listeners. He called on the same network of collaborators that worked with him disseminating the Magaia pamphlet to forge a series of letters from listeners (Cabrita 2001, 140). These letters "praised the initiative, while stressing the importance of having a longer air time on a single slot" and hearing more about Mozambican issues (ibid.). This tack ultimately proved successful. Moreover, Cristina's reliance on the same propagandist network strongly corroborates my expectation regarding structural repurposing—even at early stages in organizational development. This sort of role-based adaptation is precisely what I expect as an organization is changing its focus.

By August of 1976, Cristina's plan was already implemented in full force: he and his collaborators had full editorial control of the station, they were outputting sixty-minute daily transmissions from a tower powerful enough to reach the whole of Mozambique, and the station officially changed its name to the *Voz da África Livre* (the Voice of Free Africa) (Cabrita 2001, 140). The content of the transmissions pivoted toward the intricacies of Mozambican politics. They praised Frelimo's efforts in the War of Independence, but criticized their subsequent handling of the country upon taking over. Cristina's people began calling for the implementation of multi-party elections and democracy in Mozambique.

Crucially, the staff of Voz da África Livre did not assume they would ever play a central role in the resistance, only that their broadcasts would help spark a civilian uprising within Mozambique backed by defection from the armed forces (2001, 144). Their distance from the conflict changed in 1976 when André Matsangaissa came to Cristina after defecting from Frelimo. Cristina later reported that Matsangaissa insisted that the radio campaign was helpful, but insufficient to spark change. They needed an armed force and Matsangaissa told Cristina that "people are ready to follow me," and all he needed were the resources to get it off the ground.[10]

Building the Armed Resistance

The Rhodesians did not get Renamo right on the first try. Their initial attempt at building an armed group for cross-border intelligence-gathering and sabotage comprised a significant number of former members of the Portuguese military in Mozambique, which they called *Remo*. The CIO was highly skeptical of Matsangaissa's capacity to recruit a genuine Mozambican resistance force. Moreover, as Cabrita notes, Matsangaissa's vision "entailed aspects that the CIO did not want to concern themselves with, namely a political agenda, a strategy of its own, and allegiance to an indigenous leader" (2001, 145). For the Rhodesians, Remo was a preferable arrangement—at least in theory—since disgruntled white colonialists were more less likely to break allegiance to the CIO.

For their part, Cristina and the Voz da África Livre staff throughly disapproved of Remo (Cabrita 2001, 146). From an ideological standpoint, Remo was not suited to the armed struggle needed to remake the politics of the Mozambique. From a logistical standpoint, they knew that the presence of white soldiers would be conspicuous to Frelimo forces and poorly received by local communities (2001, 146). Cristina tried to impress this issue upon the CIO without too overtly signaling his own motives.[11] Nevertheless, the CIO was still dismissive of the alternative. Peter Burt, a high-ranking officer in the CIO, challenged Matsangaissa to recruit his alleged followers and bring them back to Rhodesia, at which point the CIO might consider restructuring the movement.

The confluence of two events in 1977 resulted in the force that would ultimately form the military core of Renamo. The first involved a series of spectacular failures in Remo

[10]Direct quote from Orlando Christina recorded in Johannesburg in 1981.

[11]He reportedly concocted a story about how whites were ill-suited to withstanding the hardships of the terrain and "lacked the stamina" to endure the long missions that would need to be a part of the Rhodesian's plans (Cabrita 2001, 146).

operations ranging from white members being immediately identified and captured in Mozambique to an entire unit accidentally wandering into a ZANLA guerrilla base (2001, 147). The second—only occurring a few months later—was Matsangaissa's successful raid on one of Frelimo's re-education camps. He freed around fifty prisoners, and of those, twenty-eight made the two-day trek with him back across the Rhodesian border. In a mix of relenting and opportunism, the CIO began training Matsangaissa's troops at the Odzi farm just a few kilometers over the Rhodesian border. Odzi soon became the first Renamo base and Matsangaissa was named the leader of Renamo.

By incorporating Mozambican exiles and freeing then recruiting domestic enemies of the Frelimo regime, Renamo was deliberately engineered to look like an authentic resistance movement (Nilsson 1990, 21). This was not exactly a major engineering feat, as it were. Frelimo was rife with internal fissures since its inception and its post-independence policies only fueled discontent. As a result, the CIO had a hefty population from which to draw aggrieved recruits for their project.

"Viva a Resistência!" Renamo's Organization Coalesces

Despite the station's efficacy in convincing Mozambicans that the political and military wings together composed a unified organization, the Rhodesians went out of their way to keep Voz da África Livre "organizationally distinct" from the armed wing of Renamo (Fauvet & Gomes 1982, 114). Yet, this distinction did not hold in practice or in the perceptions of Mozambicans at home. In reality, Cristina and other officials in Renamo had influence over both the military and political wings of the organization. Moreover, from the perspective of the people inside Mozambique, Voz da África Livre was the voice of the resistance.

Once Matsangaissa convinced Cristina that his plan to recruit native Mozambicans was viable, Cristina began to explicitly discuss the movement in his radio broadcasts. It is at this point that we can see Renamo coalescing into the organization that would shape its trajectory moving forward. Borrowing from the signature line of a listener's letters to the station, the Voz staff began signing off each of their transmissions with *"Viva a Resistência!*, which is also allegedly how Renamo (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana) got its name (2001, 145). The station's association with the resistance movement only strengthened after Matsangaissa's raid was successful. Voz da África Livre began referring to Renamo by name in their broadcasts and actively promoted their agenda within Mozambique. Cristina actively had his hands in both wings of Renamo's organization: he directed the radio staff, which accounted for all of their political messaging; and he also worked closely with Peter Burt and Ken Flower of the CIO in navigating recruitment tactics for the armed wing.

These broadcasts were more effective than the Rhodesian security apparatus could handle. Galvanized by the sanguine accounts of a grassroots opposition to Frelimo, Mozambicans began flooding across the border to join Renamo's efforts. The CIO actually had to turn away willing recruits, lacking the space and resources to expand Renamo beyond just a few units. Indeed, after a few incidents of entire families arriving from Mozambique in search of Renamo, the CIO forced the station to discourage people from

crossing the border (2001, 148). Still, people continued to come. Among these inspired recruits was the man who would later take charge of the organization, Afonso Dhlakama.

By 1977, the armed wing of Renamo exhibited a clear command structure (Fauvet 1984, 115), yet its development was curbed quite severely by the CIO. Matsangaissa had by this point emerged as Renamo's leader and Dhlakama quickly worked his way up to become Matsangaissa's deputy. Cristina—still in charge of the radio station—met routinely with Matsangaissa (Cabrita 2001, 149), thus continually reifying the link between the armed units and the political messaging wing. The leadership, however, expressed discontent with the Rhodesians. At the time, the CIO lacked the resources and the will to allow Renamo to expand beyond its eighty-odd members. Willing recruits were constantly turned away and Cristina and Matsangaissa pled for an expansion. The CIO had no desire to manage and fund an indigenous Mozambican force with a political agenda of its own and told Cristina that if he wanted to change things, he would have to find a way to fund it himself (Cabrita 2001, 150).

Renamo's continued dependence on Rhodesian support was not for lack of trying. Throughout 1977 and 1978 Cristina embarked on a quest to secure more stable funding for the organization. He went to the United States, France, and the diaspora community in South Africa, framing the message of Renamo differently for each. Cristina approached the U.S., France, and others directly, and Voz da África Livre was used to appeal to the Portuguese community in South Africa (Cabrita 2001, 152). Other than a small pittance from the anti-Frelimo Portuguese diaspora, Cristina's initial appeals for external funding were largely unsuccessful. However, the very fact that Cristina sought additional funding to make the group self-sufficient is evidence of the organization's autonomous identity. Once Renamo did make headway with finding an external sponsor, the Rhodesian government suddenly stepped up and agreed to finance the expansion Cristina sought (Cabrita 2001, 152).

The confluence of three major events made 1979 a watershed year for Renamo. First, following the surge of funding and support from the CIO, Renamo established their first domestic bases in Sofala Province in Mozambique. The second event precipitating a major shift in Renamo's operations was the death of their leader, Andre Matsangaissa. Matsangaissa's death spawned a brief, but acute leadership struggle just as the organization was trying to get its bearings inside Mozambique. The third, and most severe shock to the organization came with Zimbabwean independence following the signing of the Lancaster House Agreement in December of 1979. For Renamo, the Lancaster Agreement meant a sudden and complete cessation of funding from the CIO.

Domestic Bases. When Rhodesia gave Matsangaissa the go-ahead to bolster their recruiting efforts, the ranks swelled immediately and Renamo began to take on the Mozambican-centric agenda for which Cristina had been pushing since its inception. In just over a year, Renamo went from a steady contingent of just under eighty members to an organization of well over 1,000 (Cabrita 2001, 157). Matsangaissa inherited greater control and autonomy over the organization as the CIO was unable to strictly regulate as large of a force. As Renamo's incursions became both longer and larger, they began scoping out locations inside Mozambique to set up its first domestic base by the Spring

of 1979 (ibid.). Matsangaissa eventually settled on a location in Gorongosa, with which he was familiar from his previous life. The locations of Renamo's first headquarters as well as Odzi base in Rhodesia is depicted in Figure 5.2.



Figure 5.2: Renamo's Two Bases: Odzi and Gorongosa

Establishing the Gorongosa base had a few major implications for Renamo's organization that shaped its trajectory. First, Matsangaissa began to forge ties with local communities, which was done with the explicit permission of the CIO (Emerson 2014, loc. 807). Specifically, they encouraged Matsangaissa to implement "a rudimentary hearts and minds campaign...by stoking the fires of opposition to Frelimo's policies" (ibid.). Matsangaissa specifically sought out *feiticeiros* (witch-doctors), whose authority had been stripped by Frelimo after independence. In exchange for validating the legitimacy of traditional authorities, the feiticeiros provided Renamo with tactical information about the location of Frelimo's army (Fauvet & Gomes 1982, 12). These alliances sparked a trend of reinstating traditional authorities in Renamo-controlled areas that persisted throughout their lifespan, long after they broke ties with Rhodesia. By exploiting Frelimo's ban on religion—and the ensuing discontent that resulted from this policy—Renamo was able to

efficiently curry favor with disenfranchised religious leaders and the people alike. Second, and related, these local ties conduced to the newfound level of success with Renamo's recruitment effort.

These ties were especially salient in two provinces: Tete and Manica. Although these locations also incurred the majority of attacks, official reports from the government admit that the "insurgents enjoyed a measure of popular support." This balance was largely a function of Tete and Manica's strategic locations—they occupied the border with Rhodesia, and as such, Renamo insurgents had no choice but to cross through. Yet in addition to routine military incursions and attacks on Frelimo's communal villages, Renamo would also host large gatherings in which they would distribute goods stolen from the People's Stores, brew beer for the locals, and discuss Frelimo's shortcomings (Alexander 1995, 9). These gatherings, though informal, represented yet another instance of the organization taking on proto-party roles. By forging links and galvanizing the communities, Renamo build up a considerable measure of political support. Locals viewed Renamo as protecting them from Frelimo's policies. As one chief put it, "Frelimo never did anything in our areas—mambos could do rain ceremonies, n'angas could work, people could pray...Renamo's presence was the reason why Frelimo could never establish secretaries or communal villages. We were happy because Renamo protected us from Frelimo."

In addition to the local ties Renamo was able to forge with their increased autonomy, they were also able to foster external ties. In mid-1979, Renamo launched a major public relations campaign. Foreign correspondents came to visit Renamo bases and speak with the leaders about the mission of the movement (Cabrita 2001, 155). These visits earned Renamo credibility abroad and allowed them to forge additional links with key political actors that would be critical in the years to come (ibid.). From an organizational standpoint, Renamo's newfound external ties represent a potential shift in their support apparatus. They had to develop a distinctly Mozambican and (in their case) anti-socialist rhetoric to appeal to foreign powers that would assist them in their fight against Frelimo. In the following years, we observe Renamo's political aspirations and actions shift to align with the rhetoric they use in their diplomatic missions.

The final implication of building up a series of domestic bases was the corresponding assembly of a dedicated telecommunications wing in the organization. In order to maintain reliable central control over an organization that now spanned three camps in Mozambique as well as multiple locations[12] in Rhodesia, the organization built up a relatively sophisticated wing of radio operators. Renamo's telecom unit straddled the political and military wings as the organization. On the one hand, they allowed for coordination among the armed insurgents. On the other hand, they kept the Voz da África Livre wing apprised of Renamo's progress, thereby solidifying the ties between two aspects of the organization that Rhodesia had tried (in vain) to keep separate.

Death of Matsangaissa. The remainder of 1979 was not as fortuitous for Renamo as the first half had been. Despite Matsangaissa's intentions of building strong community

[12]The Voz da África Livre staff operated out of Salisbury (where the programs were produced) and Guinea Fowl (where the programs were transmitted) and the main base for the armed movement was located in Ozdi (Cabrita 2001, 140).

ties and earning the trust of feiticeiros, the behavior of Renamo's rank-and-file members undermined his goals.[13] Community leaders recount numerous instances of Renamo members sexually assaulting women and engaging in other behavior deemed indecent (Fauvet & Gomes 1982, 12). Although the accounts surrounding Matsangaissa's death are varied, Fauvet and Gomes argue that the feiticeiros sought revenge for Renamo's undisciplined behavior by "feeding [Matsangaissa] a piece of fatally false information" (1982, 12). Specifically, they told him that the main town of Gorongosa was free of Frelimo troops and could easily be taken by Renamo. Upon entering the town, Renamo troops were ambushed by the state military and Matsangaissa was mortally wounded.

Matsangaissa's assassination sparked a leadership crisis within the organization. Matsangaissa was a charismatic leader whose capacity to attract recruits to Renamo was as much a function of his personality as it was his message. His two potential replacements—Afonso Dhlakama and Lucas M'lhanga—lacked this same quality. For their part, the CIO suggested that Renamo be split under two commands, one under each leader. Cristina, however, believed that this bifurcation would cause insurmountable rifts within the organization. In response, he attempted to have M'lhanga assassinated (Fauvet & Gomes 1982, 12). Ultimately, the assassination failed and Dhlakama rose to power naturally. Dhlakama understood, however, that his hold on power was tenuous—at least at first—and made explicit attempts to promote top officials under Matsangaissa to reassure them of their continued relevance (Cabrita 2001, 162). Dhlakama's careful handling of the power transition was critical for the organization's survival throughout this period. He was still working on consolidating his power throughout the Fall of 1979 just as Rhodesia was about to disintegrate.

The Lancaster House Agreement

On December 21, 1979, a series of negotiations arranted a peaceful transfer of power from Britain to the (former) ZAPU and ZANU guerrilla forces in Rhodesia. The terms of and conditions leading up to the agreement are beyond the scope of this project. What *is* relevant, however, is the immediate impact Zimbabwean independence had on Renamo. Recall that the Zimbabwean independence fighters (ZAPU, ZANU, and previously, ZANLA forces) collaborated with Frelimo both before and after Mozambican independence. Renamo had been created in part to help curb the progression of these guerrilla forces. As such, the new Zimbabwean leadership harbored only ill-will toward Renamo and had no incentives to continue their sponsorship. If anything, Zimbabwe was motivated to restore ties with Mozambique in order to regain access to Mozambican ports.

[13]Evidence of the disjoint intentions of Renamo leadership and the foot-soldiers abounds. Emerson observes that "Matsangaissa was especially careful to not have his men become a burden on the already impoverished peasantry," and that he engaged in explicit attempts to "gain the trust of the [masses]" (Emerson 2014, loc. 912).

Taking Stock of Renamo's Structure

By the end of their time under Rhodesian command, Renamo had an armed force of approximately 3,000 soldiers, a political messaging wing that still broadcasted daily transmissions of Renamo's message and progress against Frelimo, a burgeoning set of links abroad, and a set of domestic bases linked by a telecommunications wing that was more sophisticated than that of the Mozambican government. They also controlled about seventy-five percent of Sofala and Manica provinces (Emerson 2014, loc. 1019). It is of course worth noting that few in the organization had more than a second grade education, that some soldiers routinely engaged in violent and exploitative acts with local populations, and that cohesion under Dhlakama's leadership was still tenuous. However, the trajectory of the organization from inception up through the Lancaster House Agreement is far more complex than many existing accounts acknowledge.

At this point, we must ask why other accounts of Renamo are committed to painting the organization as a "created insurgency" (Vines 1991, 11) to "[resemble] an authentic resistance movement" (Nilsson 1990, 21), with "no independent existence" (Fauvet 1984, 116). Ironically, the evidence that Nilsson (1990) uses to support this view is also the answer to why the reality is considerably more complex. To corroborate his argument that Renamo is largely reducible to a puppet of Rhodesia, he quotes Orlando Cristina:

> It is the Rhodesians that pay my salary and my stay here, as well as the maintenance of the Mozambicans that fight inside Mozambique. Without this support, we would all sit at the coffee-bars in Libson dreaming about unrealistic struggles. Neither in South Africa nor in Malawi can we organize a guerrilla force. This has been possible only through Rhodesia.[14]

I question, however, to what extent this quote corroborates or undermines Nilsson's argument. While it unquestionably illustrates the logistic utility of Rhodesian sponsorship, Cristina's sentiments also clearly imply the underlying drive to create a true guerrilla force (as opposed to a façade movement built to cloak Rhodesian interests). I argue that this reflection is illustrative of the compromise and symbiotic relationship between Renamo and Rhodesia.

As far as Renamo's early organization was concerned, Rhodesia's role was critical in its provision of logistics and resources. Yet Renamo had a structural and ideological existence defined separately of its Rhodesian sponsors. This section depicts the numerous events throughout the first stage of Renamo's life in which this autonomous identity is evident. Cristina, Matsangaissa, and Dhlakama—as well as many rank-and-file fighters—"vehemently disagreed" with the CIO's insistence on curtailing the democratization rhetoric, but as Emerson notes, "they clearly understood it was the price to be paid for Rhodesian support" (2014, loc. 1226). The leadership also exhibited a clear desire to forge ties with local communities in Mozambique (Cabrita 2001, 150). Despite some instances of rampant misconduct, the organization nonetheless engaged in relatively

[14]Correspondence from Orlando Cristina (1983) retrieved in Lisbon Portugal (quoted in Nilsson (1990, 21)).

consistent provision of food, seeds, and goods.[15] Yet, perhaps the strongest evidence of Renamo's early organizational autonomy is its negotiation and survival of transferring sponsorship from Rhodesia to South Africa in 1980.

5.2.2 A New Puppet-Master: The Hand-off to South Africa

On March 4, 1980, Robert Mugabe's ZANU party took Zimbabwe's first elections in a landslide and senior officials in Renamo recall that the organization was subsequently given 72 hours to get out of the country. If Renamo were indeed the aimless puppet of the CIO, Zimbabwean independence and Mugabe's orders upon his electoral victory should have made their failure an inevitability. Yet, the leadership immediately started searching for other patrons. According to Fauvet (1984), Orlando Cristina (assisted by Ken Flower of the CIO) initiated negotiations with South Africa in the hopes of moving both the Voz da África Livre station and the Odzi military base across the southern border.[16] The negotiations were swift and the transfers began immediately (Martin & Johnson 1986, Cabrita 2001, Emerson 2014).

The very fact that Renamo's leaders sought to continue their operations under different patrons provides critical evidence that the organization was more than just a tool of the Smith regime. Were that the case, we would expect the handoff to have been initiated by the South Africans. Although the South African government had clear regional interests that played into their *willingness* to sponsor Renamo,[17] the independent aspirations of the movement are undeniable.

Due to the simultaneous turnover of leadership and sponsorship, Renamo underwent major organizational changes in this period that shaped its future trajectory. This section traces the organizational developments, transformations, and challenges that Renamo faced during its transition to and operation under South African sponsorship. Given the more detailed context of Renamo's emergence in the previous section, I now shift the analysis to focus more explicitly on the nature of the organization and how the major shocks of 1979 shaped its composition and prospects for transition later on.[18] First, I

[15]Often, Renamo soldiers would raid the state stores and share the spoils with local populations.

[16]It is important to note that Renamo and the CIO had engaged in regular communication with South Africa in the year leading up to Zimbabwean independence (Martin & Johnson 1986, 13). However, it was only at this point of desperation that the South Africans came through and agreed to fully support the organization.

[17]Specifically, South Africa had two primary motivations for using Renamo to continue a war against the Machel regime in Mozambique. The first interest was security-related. Frelimo tacitly supported the ANC, which made frequent incursions into South Africa from their bases in the south of Mozambique. Their second interest was economic. Any extent to which Mozambican ports or railways were out of commission was the extent to which South Africa retained a monopoly on regional port access. While South African interests are only tangentially related to this study, understanding the motivations behind their sponsorship helps to contextualize Renamo's actions under their leadership.

[18]This section focuses considerably less on the nature of Renamo's military operations within Mozambique. The goal is to trace salient organizational shifts and as such, I address territorial control and skirmishes with Frelimo only to the extent that they have direct implications for Renamo's organizational development. For a more detailed exploration of Renamo's domestic activities at the time, see Vines (1991), Cabrita (2001) and Emerson (2014).

show how the transfer to South Africa facilitated the creation of a more robust political wing. Second, I outline the major organizational consequences of Dhlakama's leadership. I show that he continually pushed Renamo in a more political direction and worked to consolidate a cohesive ideology through unconventional routes. Third, I delineate a series of organizational challenges that Renamo faced in this period and evaluate their impact on Renamo's future viability as a political party. This section—and this stage of Renamo's life—concludes with the N'komati Accords: an agreement that South Africa would cease explicit funding to non-state militant groups.

Proto-Party Development under South African Leadership

If South Africa's interest in Renamo were purely a military one, they had a funny way of showing it. The transfer to South African command proceeded in three stages (Martin & Johnson 1986, 14), the first of which was the full evacuation of the staff and supplies of the Voz da África Livre. As Emerson notes, Cristina and the Voz da África Livre staff "hardly missed a beat" as they relocated Vofal and began transmitting again almost immediately (2014, loc. 1890). Indeed, while the CIO at best tolerated Renamo's political development, their South African sponsors prioritized it. The development of Renamo's political wing occurred along three dimensions: the formal integration of the Voz da África Livre into the organization, the consolidation of a more cohesive political ideology, and the augmentation of a domestic and international contingent of political representatives for Renamo.

While the Rhodesians worked to keep the armed wing separate from the radio station, the South African commanders preferred to see the organization cohesive and centralized Fauvet & Gomes (1982, 14). The Voz da África Livre was thus formally integrated into Renamo, Cristina took on a more leading role as Secretary General, and the entire organization was under the command of Dhlakama, who declared himself "Supreme Chief" (Fauvet & Gomes 1982, Emerson 2014). For their part, the staff of the Voz da África Livre "hardly missed a beat" during the transition to South Africa (Emerson 2014, loc. 1890). Radio broadcasts resumed almost immediately as the military wing was still being relocated. The seamless transition of this wing of the Renamo highlights the benefits of organizational diversification. Having lost a major offensive at their Gorongosa base while simultaneously dealing with the uncertainty of their sponsorship situation, the military wing of Renamo was struggling to stay afloat in the interim period. Yet, the resilience and continuity of the Voz da África Livre wing helped ground the organization and keep its focus while the armed wing of Renamo regrouped.

In addition to reinstating the radio station, both Renamo's leadership and its South African sponsors sought to recast Renamo as a more political organization (Emerson 2014, loc. 1226). As such, other aspects of the political apparatus were augmented under the guidance of the Directorate of Special Tasks in the South African Army (DST). In one of the major political initiatives, the DST tasked the same unit in charge of Voz da África Livre to begin writing anti-communist literature, pamphlets, and posters to help convey their message more broadly. While the DST procured the printing supplies, the messages were largely left to the devices of the radio staff. Here—though prior to transition into a

political party—we observe organizational repurposing occurring at the unit level, rather than the individual level. This shift in the responsibilities of the Voz team lends credence to my expectation that organizational change occurs by directing existing subunits into related areas.

Yet, taking full charge of expanding Renamo's propaganda was no easy task. On the one hand, they needed to write material that was both appealing and accessible to the masses inside the country. Recall that at the time, 92% of Mozambican adults were functionally illiterate. Thus, Renamo's material had to be simple and straightforward. Figure 5.3 depicts a common poster of the era. The text was limited, the concepts even more so, and the pictures were evocative. In this example, one need only recognize the word "Frelimo" to associated it with the starving individuals depicted in the image.



Figure 5.3: Anti-Frelimo Propaganda Poster: *Frelimo Lied! You guys suffer*

On the other hand, the DST pushed the staff to develop a more sophisticated and cohesive political stance. According to Emerson, the South Africans were looking to shape Renamo into a viable political threat to Frelimo (2014, loc. 1226). In 1981, Renamo released its first Program and Manifest. This document represents the first consolidation

of Renamo's political agenda. The manifesto calls for Mozambique to institute a multi-party democracy and an open market economy, which by necessity also implies a cessation of Frelimo's communal villages and collective agriculture programs.

Pretoria's insistence on Renamo developing a more sophisticated political message was motivated at least in part by their push to help Renamo build up diplomatic relations abroad. As Emerson notes, "Pretoria moved energetically to help...build an effective political structure and network of overseas representatives" (2014, 1631). Colonel Van Niekerk worked directly with Dhlakama to council him in diplomatic tactics (Fauvet & Gomes 1982, 15). In November of 1980, Dhlakama made his first trip to Europe to drum up support for the insurgency. The goal of the trip, as Fauvet notes, was essentially to act as live propaganda (1984, 117). Dhlakama traveled to Portugal, France, and West Germany to talk up the movement and its military successes against the Marxist regime. Dhlakama established a key connection with Evo Fernandes in Lisbon, who subsequently became the head foreign correspondent and mouthpiece for Renamo in Europe. This was the first of many trips Dhlakama would make to shore up foreign support for the organization—ties that would prove crucial as the organization transitioned later on.

South Africa's assistance in bolstering Renamo's political apparatus between 1980 and 1984 pushed the organization to develop a more sophisticated and cohesive message and enabled the leadership to forge critical diplomatic ties abroad. By 1982, Renamo had finally formed a National Council and its Manifesto was in wider circulation domestically and abroad. By 1984 they had representatives working in five countries (the U.S., Portugal, France, West Germany, and Canada) to promote their agenda (Emerson 2014, loc.1870). However, the nature of the political wing had key shortcomings that Renamo would have to work hard to overcome in later years. The core of Renamo's political apparatus was, in some sense, always "foreign." As Manning notes, "despite the political content of its public agenda...Renamo really had no political or administrative framework inside Mozambique before 1985" (2008*a*, 61). The radio station was always based abroad (first in Rhodesia, then in South Africa), which created a disconnect between the members in the print-houses and the members "in the bush" inside Mozambique.

Moreover, the direct foreign involvement in the political wing compromised its legitimacy as a true Mozambican nationalist movement (Emerson 2014, loc. 2080). These rifts between the troops inside Mozambique and Voz staff ultimately lead to internecine conflict. Indeed, some speculate that this rift was ultimately the motivation behind Orlando Cristina's assassination in 1983 (Fauvet 1984, Emerson 2014). I argue that while South African assistance was crucial to Renamo's political development and the consolidation of its message, it was Dhlakama's approach that laid the foundation for Renamo's political development at home.

Renamo under Afonso Dhlakama: Developing Politics through Religion

Considering the tumultuous circumstances under which Afonso Dhlakama inherited Renamo, he managed to quickly and decisively consolidate his power over the organization. Dhlakama, however, differed markedly from his predecessor. He lacked the outgoing, risk-embracing charisma that drew people to Matsangaissa and was instead described as

cautious and bookish. His approach to leading Renamo differed in important ways and I argue that it was Dhlakama who took the organization in a political direction—even from early on in his involvement. While Dhlakama made some early attempts at fostering explicit political links with the people,[19] I argue that his reliance on spiritual narratives laid the groundwork for Renamo's political engagement. Here, I outline how Renamo used religion to forge links with local communities and indirectly advance a political agenda.

It is well-documented that spirituality and superstition played a key role in both the internal and external narratives of Renamo. In October of 1980—very early in his leadership—his speeches to his men made frequent reference to "the spirits" (Fauvet & Gomes 1982, 16). I argue that religious rhetoric was strategically used in place of *political* mobilization, but that its effects were the same: fostering an identity separate from that of Frelimo, mobilization on common grounds, and internal cohesion. For example, one of the most well-propagated myths was that Dhlakama and anyone else who participated in religious ceremonies would be impervious to "communist bullets." Here, we see an explicit fusion of religious and political concepts. From an internal organizational standpoint, the religious narratives contributed to group cohesion. Religious ceremonies featured prominently in their day-to-day affairs and members were not only told that the spirits would protect Renamo, but that the spirits would kill anyone who defected (Hanlon 1990, 229).

Religious narratives also played an important role in the relationships between Renamo and local populations. From early on, whenever Renamo would make incursions into populated areas, they would actively seek out religious and tribal leaders (*feiticeiros* and *regulos*, respectively) and reinstate the power of the traditional authorities (Hanlon 1990, 228-9). As such, those leaders who had been deposed upon Frelimo's ascension to power became a vital support network for Renamo throughout the war. Moreover, the reinstatement and validation of traditional authorities also sent a clear political message to the population. Although the troops on the ground did not spread a cohesive political message (at least, not at this time), the use and legitimation of religion set Renamo apart from Frelimo, whose political programs explicitly banned religious practices. Roesch (1992) confirms the clear political effects of the spiritual approach when he argues that "Renamo forces treat this whole traditional religious discourse as an integral part of the struggle and as the central element of the movement's mobilizational ideology" (472).

One of the most poignant pieces of evidence that Dhlakama's use of religious rhetoric had a distinctly political undertone is his title. While the leaders of other politico-military organizations are typically designated as "President," "Commander," or "General Secretary," Dhlakama opted for an unconventional title that smacked of religious imagery: "Supreme Chief." By making explicit reference to the authority structures that Frelimo tore down, Dhlakama evoked a clear image of an alternative and preferable organization of society under Renamo.

[19]For example, in 1980, Dhlakama appointed Renamo's first "political commissar," Henrique Sitoe. Sitoe's role would be to help communicate the political goals of the organization to the foot soldiers and to the local people inside Mozambique. Unfortunately, however, this early venture into establishing a contingent of political commissars failed as Sitoe admitted to having no knowledge of politics and defected shortly thereafter (Fauvet & Gomes 1982, 12).

Implications for Renamo's Organizational Structure

The sheer act of surviving the South African hand-off constitutes a remarkable display of organizational resilience on the part of Renamo. We would expect this sort of uprooting to have severe and (at least some) negative consequences for any organization. Recall that it was only in September of 1979 that Renamo began to find its domestic footing and then within three months it lost both its leader and its sponsor. Yet in the face of this uncertainty, the organization weathered the shock and bounced back stronger (Emerson 2014). On the domestic front—despite heavy losses in 1980—Renamo's military wing made significant inroads into controlling territory in the center and north of the country. On the international front, the four years spent under South African control allowed Renamo to build up its political apparatus and forge crucial diplomatic ties across Western Europe and North America.

More broadly, I argue that Renamo's capacity to weather the leadership turnover and simultaneous move to South African command contributed to what Minkoff calls a "repertoire of flexibility" (1999, 1677). I develop the theoretical basis for this concept more extensively in Chapter 3, but the essence of the argument is that resilience begets resilience. The more shocks an organization is capable of enduring, the better they become at adaptation and finding novel solutions to both new and old problems. This resilience was about to be put to the test a third time as the respective presidents of Mozambique and South Africa would come to the negotiating table and agree to stop supporting violent organizations.

The N'komati Accord

The third great shock to Renamo came in March of 1984 as South Africa and Mozambique came to the negotiating table to sign the N'komati Accord. This agreement prohibited both countries from housing or training "state, government, organizations, or individuals to commit acts of violence, terrorism, or aggression against the territorial integrity or political independence of the other" (Uni 1984). For the two signatories, this treaty was a significant move toward peace in the region by requiring the cessation of Frelimo's support to the ANC (which had been making regular incursions into South Africa from Mozambican bases) and the cessation of South Africa's support to Renamo. For Renamo, however, the consequences of N'komati were significantly more dire. Although the South African Defense Force (SADF) continued some under-the-table support, Renamo had to undergo a major shift to acclimatize to their new situation.

5.2.3 Cutting the Strings: RENAMO's Push for Autonomy

At the outset, the N'komati Accord and consequent reduction in South African support was a huge blow to the organization. Renamo was heavily reliant on its patron for ammunition, radio supplies, food, and medical equipment. While South Africa continued to provide clandestine assistance for at least another two years after N'komati (thus violating the terms of the agreement), the extent and frequency of their support waned

considerably. Renamo was essentially thrust into adulthood against its will, and this shock had two important implications for the organization. First, with Orlando Cristina dead and no ability to reinstate the radio station inside Mozambique, Dhlakama made a major push to create a domestic political presence. Second—and often working against Dhlakama's political goal—Renamo now faced a resource crisis and as a result their relationships with local populations varied wildly from relative stability in some areas to unimaginably brutal and exploitative in others. In this section, I trace the construction of the domestic political wing and discuss its impact on the organizational composition of Renamo in this period.

Recruiting a Political Wing

According to top Renamo officials, the break from South Africa catalyzed Renamo to augment and consolidate the political core of the organization. Beginning in 1984, Renamo fundamentally shifted their recruitment tactics to push the organization in a more explicitly political direction. Dhlakama (despite his previous failure in 1980) began a recruitment initiative aimed at creating groups of "political-military commissars" (Manning 2008*a*, 61). Renamo was to target secondary schools and other outlets where they could recruit (or, more commonly, kidnap) members with higher levels of education. Renamo's existing military core comprised unemployed, uneducated individuals—many of whom were forcibly recruited as children. Dhlakama knew that to augment Renamo's political legitimacy, they needed a membership that could help construct and articulate their political grievances.

While all political-military commissars were trained in combat, their role within the organization was communication. The first step was to help explain to other Renamo soldiers why they were fighting and, moreover why they should accept potential future negotiations with Frelimo (Manning 2008*a*, 61). The salience of this assignment cannot be understated. First, the aim of this unit represents the first real attempt to galvanize Renamo soldiers around a *political* message—as opposed to a religious one. Second, this message represents a clear push to soften members' intransigence toward the Frelimo government. To put it in perspective, by 1984, the Renamo leadership was already planting the seeds of working toward a negotiated solution—a full eight years before any such agreement would come to fruition. Manning corroborates this interpretation when she argues that "the establishment of formal political activities and structures within Mozambique began as a direct outgrowth of attempts to negotiate an end to the conflict beginning in 1984" (**?**, 177).

By 1986, the political-military commissars were being deployed to engage civilian populations as well, which in turn helped the organization create "more credible liberated zones" (Manning 2008*a*, 61). Specifically, Renamo sought to install basic administrative structures and engage in political dialogue with the people under their control. It is difficult to assess with confidence the extent to which Renamo would have developed more comprehensive social services (and thus built up more extensive proto-party structures) if they had the opportunity. Mozambique's extreme poverty, famine, and unskilled population made it impossible to do so with any consistency across regions. In some areas,

however—where personnel and resources permitted—Renamo was able to establish more extensive services, which would then play key roles in the party apparatus later on.

The political recruitment efforts continued and expanded through the end of the war. As Renamo slowly infiltrated urban areas in the mid-to-late 1980s, they began to build up clandestine support networks (*nucleos*). These networks served a variety of functions including drumming up support for the resistance, procuring and transporting supplies to Renamo soldiers, and supplying information on Frelimo's troop movements (Manning 2008*a*, 95). As these cells grew in size and number, the organization shifted to accommodate their role. Dhlakama appointed staff in his office to work directly with the urban nucleos and keep them up to date on Renamo's activities. A former aide to Dhlakama who was part of this staff recalls that they also wrote and printed propaganda for the urban cells to then hang or distribute throughout the cities.[20]

Situating Politics within the Organization

Renamo's shift toward political recruitment in this era was not just about adding more skills to the bottom of the organization. Instead, it contributed to a critical restructuring, the effects of which carried Renamo forward into its political negotiations with Frelimo and eventual transformation into a party. Every addition to Renamo's political structure from the bottom up, requires a corresponding addition from the top down. As I illustrated above, the creation of clandestine support networks in urban areas required a new set of roles and relations (in the form of an administrative and political messaging staff) to be instituted at the top in order to manage those networks. This process is what organizational diversification looks like and how it comes into being.

The top-down changes to correspond with their political recruitment were not limited to managing urban nucleos. Renamo's Foreign Minister, Evo Fernandez, described the structure of their National Council as follows:

> Renamo's political structure is like this. First, again, there is the President...then the Secretary-General...then the National Council, which is made up of chiefs, military people, civilians, and so on. Then we have external and internal departments. The external departments include foreign relations, finances, information and studies...The internal departments include education, health, economy, and administration. Each department has a head who reports to the President.[21]

This account suggests a much greater level of organizational diversification than many conventional portrayals of Renamo include. While there is clear reason for Fernandez to exaggerate the breadth of Renamo's political sophistication, similar descriptions of the structure are corroborated by a variety of scholarly and news sources (including Vines

[20]Interview with José Augusto quoted in Manning (2002).
[21]Evo Fernandez (1985) quoted in the *Journal of Defense and Diplomacy*.

(1991)[22] as well as the newsletter *Africa Confidential*[23]).

Furthermore, Renamo also experienced a bolstering of external support in this period. By playing up their anti-communist stance, Renamo attracted the support of conservative organizations and parties in the United States and Western Europe. Appealing to these actors required shaping their political rhetoric to express democratic and open-market values. This exercise not only earned Renamo critical financial support during a tenuous period, but it also helped consolidate the political message that they would carry through to the post-war elections.

Political Commissars in Practice

While Renamo indeed experienced a significant growth in their political wing, civilians' experiences with Renamo on the ground was not always what Dhlakama had in mind. Ultimately, it is impossible to provide a uniform characterization of the behavior or perceptions of Renamo because both varied so intensely from region to region. In many areas—particularly in the south of the country—Renamo's tactics became increasingly brutal. Under strict orders to conserve ammunition at all costs, Renamo soldiers resorted to committing massacres entirely with machetes and blunt objects.

Yet, other areas witnessed a bolstering of social services and formal administration. In the district of Macossa in Manica Province, for example, Renamo began to build schools and staffed them with secondary-school teachers captured during the political recruitment effort. While the schools themselves were poorly staffed and even worse off in terms of materials, they nonetheless represent attempts at providing basic social services to civilians. The favorable perceptions of Renamo from this area were likely a function of comparing Renamo's interactions with civilians to Frelimo's. As Alexander (1995) observes, "The government presence was more military than civilian from 1982 on" (27). Thus, however sparse Renamo's services were, they were more than what the government was providing.

Similarly, in Dombe (also in Manica Province), Renamo build up an administrative structure by repurposing "the legacy of Catholic institutions in the area" (Alexander 1995, 29). The Renamo leaders in that area were locals and, thus, considerably less exploitative of the populations (ibid.). Moreover, by promoting and protecting the churches in this area, Renamo was able to exploit a longstanding resentment toward Frelimo, who had banned and desecrated religious practices. Renamo, as Alexander explains, "was seen as a liberating force" in the region (1995, 30).

This period was crucial for Renamo along a number of dimensions. First, by weaning themselves off of foreign support, Renamo was forced to become the truly Mozambican nationalist movement it tried to paint itself as from the start. The organization once again displayed profound resilience to its changing conditions and managed to thrive after relo-

[22]This source is especially compelling since Vines' work focuses almost exclusively on the humanitarian atrocities committed at the hands of Renamo soldiers. His account seems otherwise committed to painting Renamo as little more than well-organized bandits, and indeed, the subtitle of the book is "Terrorism in Mozambique."

[23]See Issue 10 of August 1986.

cating entirely to Mozambique. Second, and relatedly, the political wing now comprised networks of domestic opposition to Frelimo—as opposed to the more privileged expatriates, who typically staffed the radio station. The new political apparatus assembled in this period ultimately formed the core of the party organization (Manning 2002), though there was still considerably more to be done. While Renamo's political presence was expanding throughout the county, its sporadic services were insufficient to truly prepare the people to function as democratic citizens (Alexander 1995, 31).

The Last Straw of the Mozambican Civil War

To understand the conditions that precipitated Renamo's rapid transition into a political party, we must first zoom out and examine Mozambique in the international context. Throughout the 1980s, the Mozambican conflict represented one of many proxy wars fought between the West and the USSR. The USSR sponsored and trained Frelimo troops while the West frequently aided anti-communist resistance forces. Yet, with the thawing of international tensions and the fall of the Berlin Wall, funding for proxy wars dried up. As such, opposing sides in civil conflicts around the world were left at a stalemate. Neither side had the will to cede; yet neither had the resources to continue fighting. The end of the Cold War sparked massive shifts in both Renamo and Frelimo as it became clear that the end of this conflict was imminent.

5.2.4 Coming to Life: RENAMO's Transition to Political Party

This section traces the final transition process from insurgency to party. I examine the organizational assessment and changes that occurred from 1989—when the transition took off—until 1994—when Renamo successfully participated in the first post-conflict elections. As with the previous sections, this analysis focuses on the process and obstacles to Renamo's organizational transformation. I touch only briefly on the protracted negotiation process with Frelimo, and do so only to the extent that it is relevant to my analysis.[24]

I argue that the mark of Renamo's active transition into a political party occurred in 1989 with their First Party Congress. Held in Gorongosa in June of 1989, this meeting of top officials to discuss the future direction of the organization was a watershed moment for Renamo for numerous reasons. First, although Dhlakama had previously alluded to this path, this meeting was the first time he explicitly called for a negotiated solution (Manning 2002, 92). Specifically, Dhlakama sought "genuine negotiation leading to national reconciliation and constitutional reform" (quoted in Vines (1991, 79)). The shift toward an integrative and peaceful solution represented an important break with the previous rhetoric of "overthrowing the Machel regime" on which Renamo was built.

[24]Entire books are dedicated solely to exploring this negotiation process. Frelimo and Renamo went through more than ten rounds of talks and multiple iterations of the peace agreement and draft constitution for the country. While critical to understanding the full context surrounding the cessation of hostilities in Mozambique, the negotiation process itself is tangential to my exploration of organizational transition. For a comprehensive overview of this process, see Hume's (1994), *A Path to Peace*.

Second, the First Congress served as an overt instance of the sort of organizational assessment I predict in Chapter 3. As the need to transition approaches, my theoretical framework predicts that leaders of the organization will need to assess the needs and skills of the organization and then implement corresponding changes. Manning's (2002) analysis of the meeting strongly corroborates this expectation as she argues that "the real significance of the First Congress was that it consolidated the fundamental changes that had been in the works since the mid-1980s and were aimed at moving Renamo closer to something resembling a coherent opposition movement" (92). The leadership explicitly noted the need to further augment the political clout of the organization. Specifically, Renamo needed two things: (1) an augmented political structure in the organization capable of managing the transition and taking on post-war political roles, and (2) a bolstered and more explicitly political administration of civilians in Renamo-controlled areas.

Shifting the Organization toward the Political Realm

Following the organizational assessment of the First Congress, Renamo engaged in its second major political recruitment effort. However, finding personnel who were even remotely qualified—to say nothing of willing—to take on higher-level political positions within Renamo was no easy task. Renamo's brutality was not lost on individuals in even the more well-off areas. Moreover, finding anyone with over a second-grade education in the country was difficult in its own rite. Nonetheless, bribed with (false) promises of education and scholarship abroad after the end of the war, Renamo recruited heavily from schools and universities. Dhlakama sought to surround himself and the National Council with "political people...[who could] give political education classes" to all the heads of Renamo's departments (Manning 2002, 94). While difficult, the effort provides clear evidence of retaining exiting structures, but repurposing them toward a more political end by providing education to the leaders.

The creation and trajectory of the Department of Political Affairs falls perfectly in line with my theoretical expectations. During the initial political recruitment drives in the mid-1980s, it was common for Renamo soldiers to forcibly recruit groups of people from a single area or a single school. In one instance, Anselmo Victor and some of his colleagues were kidnapped together and placed into political roles. They were trained together and they worked and lived together at Renamo's national headquarters (Manning 2002, 94). As I anticipate, rather than creating this new structure from scratch, this whole group transitioned to become the Department of Political Affairs under Victor's command (ibid.). This sort of reprioritization—retaining structures and relationships while shifting tasks and titles—mitigates the risks organizational change.

In 1992, Renamo and Frelimo finally signed a cease-fire agreement and negotiated settlement that paved the way for Renamo to transition into a legal political party and for the country to thus transition into a multi-party democracy. With the official go-ahead, Renamo held another Party Congress, which served to further assess the needs and direction of the organization. Dhlakama's statements explicitly confirm this role:

> Since we were a politico-military movement and we are proceeding with changes toward becoming a political party, this meeting...is to advance some changes... in the manner of functioning, because when we were a political military movement we had soldiers inside the movement, and now we are going to leave them, and it is important that we define precisely the tasks of a political party."[25].

Dhlakama's tasks for the Post-war Congress align with my expectations of organizational assessment. The leaders of the transitioning organization collectively assess what they have, what they need, and what needs to go in order to facilitate the political transition. In the wake of the peace agreement and second congress, Mozambique now saw a formal and legal shift in which Renamo bolstered administrative structures in the areas it controlled.

Augmenting and Repurposing the Political Administration on the Ground

The second dimension of Renamo's political transition involved shifting their tactics on the ground. This shift represents the construction and augmentation of proto-party structures aimed at governing and representing the Mozambican people. In rural areas, Renamo worked to augment and legitimate their administrative capacity. They continued their wartime trends of relying largely on chiefs and local authorities to occupy administrative positions (Alexander 1997, 14). The construction of rural administration likewise falls in line with the expectations from my theoretical framework. As Alexander (1997) observes, "administrations were stronger where there had been a more elaborated and locally recruited wartime structure" (14). This, again, is clear evidence of Renamo repurposing existing structures to accommodate new needs. Furthermore, after the 1992 cease-fire agreement, Renamo areas were officially recognized, which enabled them to further staff their administrative structures. At this point, Renamo was able to make ever-so-slightly more credible promises to potential recruits that their work would be rewarded with jobs once elections took place.

In urban areas, Renamo worked to formalize existing networks of clandestine support from the war into legitimate political structures (Manning 2008*c*, 188). A prime example of this formalization comes from Sofala Province. In 1990, anti-Frelimo activist and underground Renamo supporter Manuel Pereira was named Renamo's first provincial delegate (Manning 2002). Pereira, in turn, assisted Renamo in creating other provincial delegations throughout the center and north of the country.[26] At the war's end, Pereira became the official provincial representative of Sofala in the Mozambican government. Moreover, two of the other delegate heads created in 1990 went on to become members of Parliament (ibid.).

[25] Afonso Dhlakama, published in *Noticias* in November, 1994

[26] Specifically, he oversaw the appointment of delegates in Zambezia, Tete, Manica, and Nampula provinces (Manning 2002, 96).

Obstacles to Transition

Unfortunately for Renamo, the transition process did not exactly go off without a hitch. While Renamo made remarkable strides in augmenting its political and administrative wings, the organization faced two major obstacles to becoming a cohesive political party. The first challenge was logistical—as Manning (2002; 2008) argues, the transition was made considerably more difficult by the abject resource situation in the country. The Secretary General of Renamo, Vincente Ululu at one point said, "We don't need [political] training because Renamo during the war was a politico-military movement, so we have experienced personnel. We need money to create conditions to be able to function."[27] Moreover, numerous accounts suggest that Dhlakama intentionally delayed elections while the organization scrambled for supplies, engaging in what Manning refers to as "financial nitpicking" (2002, 108). At one point, he went as far as to claim that "Renamo's financial problems threaten democracy in Mozambique."[28]

While the logistical challenges were sizable, the most severe potential impediment to Renamo's transition was internal fragmentation. As the organization matured, Renamo placed an ever-greater premium on educated recruits. These recruits, as I note above, occupied a variety of roles: some units were responsible for internal education, others for civilian education, still others for administration and political messaging. While the new recruits benefited the organization by imbuing it with the relevant skill sets needed to operate in the political realm, they were nonetheless greeted with suspicion and resentment from foot soldiers who had been in the bush since Renamo's early days (Manning 2002, 114). During the war, the source of the resentment was merely a matter of rank—the new commissars were now in charge of "educating" the military core of the organization. These tensions, however, only grew with time as it became clear that it was the political recruits that would be handed the highest-ranking political positions, and thus, the highest-paying jobs. From an organizational standpoint, these tensions pose a very high risk of fracture; from a conflict standpoint, we might expect such rifts to manifest in the form of spoilers.

Ultimately, the "solution" to this problem was a matter of bribery. High ranking officers whose low levels of education disqualified them for government or military positions were trained in trades to be drivers or cooks. Foot soldiers accepted pay-offs, sometimes from demobilization funds, other times from Frelimo bribing defectors to join their organization in exchange for jobs and information (Manning 2002, 114). Despite—or perhaps because of—the longevity of the war, the general consensus is that demobilization was otherwise a relatively quick and easy process. Many foot-soldiers on both sides (though, more from Renamo than Frelimo) were redirected into the new, integrated Mozambican Army (Manning 2002, 111). The concept of a job with pay largely compensated for the bitterness of not qualifying for a prestigious government post after the war.

[27] Vincente Ululu in 1992 addressing potential international donors in the run up to elections.
[28] Afonso Dhlakama quoted in the *Mozambique Peace Bulletin* in May, 1993.

1994 Elections and the Aftermath

Renamo approached the upcoming elections in 1994 with the same tenacity and determination it did with every other change it faced. The organization was still in a tenuous state, but crucially, so was Frelimo's. Neither had ever campaigned for voluntary support without a gun in hand, and interviews with citizens suggest that many had no idea what to expect from either. Renamo incurred another sizable hiccup as both parties began campaigning. Having renounced communism, Frelimo began to steal much of Renamo's wartime rhetoric about free markets, free religious practice, and democratic institutions. This made the two parties even more undifferentiable in the eyes of the people. In the end, Renamo billed itself as a "coalition of the marginalized" to attempt to appeal to those Frelimo exploited during the war (Manning 2008*b*, 55). Frelimo made explicit attempts to remind people of Renamo's wartime atrocities.

The 1994 elections culminated in an executive win and legislative majority for Frelimo, but a sizable allocation of seats to Renamo.[29] One of the most interesting pieces of evidence that provides final support to my theory is that the provinces with the most well-established proto-party structures (social services and civilian administration) also cast the most votes for Renamo. In essence, the people *voted* to repurpose wartime political structures into peacetime governance.

5.3 Evaluating Alternative Arguments

This chapter was structured specifically to test the theoretical expectations of my organizational framework for transition. Before I conclude, I examine the extent to which alternative arguments also fit within this narrative. First, I examine the role of external sponsorship. While Acosta's argument—that external sponsorship works by enhancing the credibility of former militants—is still plausible, the evidentiary record comes up short. Renamo's most salient sponsorship came from Portugal and the United States, neither of which would have carried a great deal of clout with the Frelimo government. In the first place, Frelimo was not so far out from the independence struggle that they had forgone all lasting bitterness against the Portuguese. Indeed, the last thing Machel wanted was for elites in Portugal to tell him how to run the government. As such, he was not about to take their word as they vouch for the sincerity of Renamo. Putting aside Portuguese sponsorship, the United States was unlikely to fair much better in Frelimo's eyes. Although the Cold War was technically over by the time of the Rome Talks and Frelimo began to adopt the rhetoric of democracy, it still remains unlikely that the United States' word would carry much clout with Frelimo. Mozambique's civil conflict represented one of the more overt proxy wars of the era and to expect that such intense ideological tensions did not result in some lasting suspicion seems naive at best. Moreover, while there is mounting evidence suggesting that external sponsorship did affect transition through organizational and behavioral modifications within Renamo, I find nothing

[29]Frelimo won 129 seats in the Assembly with 44.33% of the vote, and Renamo won 112 seats with 37.78% of the vote (Africa Elections Database).

to suggest that continued external sponsorship in the transition period lent credibility to Renamo's commitment to transform into a political party.

The evidence from the Mozambican case corroborates two explanations. In the first place, I find evidence that Renamo shifted their rhetoric and their behavior to align with their foreign sponsors, thereby lending credence to my theoretical expectations about the organizational impact of different sponsorship mechanisms. Second, the role of foreign sponsors—particularly at the end of the war—lends some support to Manning's (2002) framework that former insurgencies face major resource challenges in the face of transition and must secure a means of overcoming them. While I expect that overcoming resource challenges are necessary, but not sufficient for rebel-to-party transition, the two explanations are in no way mutually exclusive and we should accept them both moving forward.

Second, I examine the role of internal party democratization. Recall de Zeeuw's (2008) argument that internal decision-making structures must democratize in order for other structural changes to take place. Both the process and results of Renamo's transition call into question the salience of internal democratization. Renamo has been—and remains to this day—a personalistic party with Afonso Dhlakama as the figurehead. Arguably, Renamo exhibited a greater level democratic decision-making when Dhlakama first took over Renamo in 1979-80 than it has at any other time.[30] Yet, as the organization matures (even well into its political tenure) the evidence for internal democratic decision-making only further wanes. While this argument raises interesting questions about whether and how the institutions that govern intra-party decision-making affect the behavior or longevity of the party, the evidence presented here suggests that other factors are considerably more salient in determining the capacity for transition into a political party that could function in democratic institutions.

5.4 Discussion

Alexander Vines refers to Renamo as a "created insurgency" (Vines 1991, 11). While this designation carries some truth, I argue that it is nonetheless misleading. Renamo's organizational origins at the hands of the Rhodesian security forces unquestionably shaped its direction and opportunities. However, the historical record is rife with evidence suggesting that—even in its earliest days—Renamo was more than a vapid puppet of the CIO (despite what the CIO would have preferred). As Emerson observes, "Cristina's vision of Mozambican nationalism had been a driving force behind the creation of Renamo" (2014, loc. 1226). This chapter has presented a sequence of evidence demonstrating that the core political aspirations of Renamo contributed to its organizational cohesion and resilience throughout the war, and ultimately enabled it to transition into the most durable opposition party in Mozambique.

[30]Recall, that as he stepped in to replace Matsangaissa, Dhlakama made a concerted effort to incorporate the opinions of other high-ranking officials in the organization. Even this brand of consensus, however, was more strategic than it was a true valuing of democratic decision-making. His deference was more of a survival mechanism than anything else.

From its inception until the 1994 elections, Renamo weathered five major shocks: the loss of its leader, the cessation of Rhodesian support, the transfer to South Africa, the loss of South African support, and finally the end of the civil war. Through each, Renamo managed to bounce back stronger and adapt the organization to function in a new context with new pressures. This repertoire of flexibility made Renamo highly resilient challenges both on and off the battlefield. I argue that this flexibility combined with its legacy of political structures built during wartime enabled what was nonetheless an incredibly difficult transition.

Mozambique is a hard case any way you turn it. The economic devastation, lack of civil society, destroyed infrastructure, and long history of conflict made for a nearly insurmountable challenge to democratization. Renamo's capacity to transition in the face of these challenges was likely as much a function of its organizational trajectory as it was the low expectations the people had for Renamo's electoral competition. While there is good reason to believe that the initial votes for Renamo were really votes for peace, the capacity of the organization to constantly adapt to novel environments has contributed to its longevity.

Chapter 6

Diamonds in the RUF: Failed Transition in Sierra Leone

People here do not "have" relations; they "are" relations.
-Charles Piot (1999)

The fighters could not agree to choose an educated person as their new leader after Foday Sankoh left. The whole revolution went down because of ignorance and illiteracy.
-RUF Educational Officer[1]

This chapter examines the organizational inception, development, and ultimate disintegration of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone. The RUF case represents a failure of a militant group to complete a planned transition into a political party. I choose the RUF as a comparison case not because they were doomed to failure from the start, but—on the contrary—because the RUF was ostensibly poised for success. The initial organization had an educated and politically active core, a great deal of influence over disaffected men who could be recruited as foot soldiers, and nearly unobstructed access to rural populations with longstanding grievances against the APC government. Furthermore, prior to the RUF's first incursion into Sierra Leone, Muammar Qaddafi of Libya explicitly offered to fund the revolutionary movement on the sole condition that they work toward transitioning into a political party. Any way you turn it, the early prospects for a successful RUF transition seemed favorable. In this chapter, I ask, what went awry?

Looking to the RUF's situation on the ground, scholars find no shortage of external obstacles to which they can attribute the groups failed political transition. The RUF's failure has alternately been attributed to patronage struggles with Charles Taylor (Gberie 2005, 12 & 55), a major counterinsurgency effort levied by a private military in conjunction with the grassroots Civil Defense Forces (Peters 2011, 147), the wanton and depraved crimes against civilians (Humphreys & Weinstein 2006), and the lack of UN oversight of the transition (Richards & Vincent 2008, 91). However, comparable obstacles are present in numerous cases of successful rebel-to-party transitions. While scholars have not entirely ignored internal obstacles—i.e. detractors arising from within

[1]Quoted in Peters (2011, 141)

the organization—the internal explanations tend to frame the RUF as a nominal cover for bandits and diamond thieves (Abdullah 1998).

In this chapter, I argue that these obstacles—while very real—are pertinent to the RUF's failed transition not only directly, but through major implications for how the RUF organization evolved. Notwithstanding their auspicious beginnings, I demonstrate that at every turn, the leadership drives the organization further into isolation from the very communities they were supposed to represent and from which they needed support both on and off the battlefield. In the epigraph to this chapter, Charles Piot illustrates the pivotal role of social currency – people are *defined* by their relations. As such, the extent to which a group voluntarily isolates itself is the extent to which they falter. By marginalizing the political core, isolating themselves from civilian populations, and prioritizing military prowess and personal loyalty over political savvy and ideological commitment, the leadership further derails the RUF's political potential with each passing year.

This chapter proceeds in three main parts. After briefly discussing why Sierra Leone is an apt comparison case, I outline the historical context leading up to the war. This section helps situate both the motivations for and obstacles to staging a successful political revolution in the country. The next section traces the organizational trajectory of the RUF beginning with its inception among radical expelled students from Freetown's renowned Fourah Bay College, through each phase of the war, and finally ending with its abject failure at the ballot box in the 2002 elections. Section 3 leverages internal variation in the RUF's organizational composition and behavior to further highlight the important role of proto-party structures—and the lack thereof—in facilitating rebel-to-party transformation. Specifically, I focus on a single RUF camp in Kailahun district in the far east of the country, which operated in a fundamentally different manner vis-a-vis civilians and community integration than the rest of the RUF. While no part of the RUF transitioned into a political party, the RUF received seven times more votes from this district than anywhere else in the country in the first post-conflict elections.

Case Selection

While the universe of cases is rife with unsuccessful transitions, Sierra Leone represents a good example of failure without falling into a straw-man problem. In keeping with the self-conscious and principled case-selection principles I advocate in Chapter 4, this section details my theoretical and empirical justification for choosing the Sierra Leone case. The first reason the RUF's case is appealing for this analysis is that it near-miss. As I mention above, the RUF seemed poised for success at its inception. Its combination of a political active and educated core, a large recruitment pool, an enthusiastic external patron, and a disenfranchised and isolated rural population is more than most politically ambitious groups could even hope for. Moreover, because the Sierra Leonean Civil War took off as many other civil wars in the region (including Mozambique's) were coming to a close, the RUF had a fair share of regional models for successful party transition.

The second reason for choosing Sierra Leone lies in the undeniable parallels between

it and the Mozambique case. These similarities exist both between the ruling parties and the insurgencies that arose in response. Sierra Leone and Mozambique are both former colonies of major powers (Great Britain and Portugal, respectively), both achieved independence through a force different from the rebellions examined here, and both newly-independent states were victims of their own ambition. As with Frelimo in Mozambique, Sierra Leone's All People's Congress (APC) made grand promises it was unable to keep, curtailed freedoms and civil liberties, and committed massive abuses against civilian populations for its own gain. I explore Sierra Leone's fall into a corrupt dictatorship in greater detail in the next section.

On the other side of the same coin, the RUF and Renamo exhibit market similarities that make them good comparison cases. First, both organizations had similar recruitment profiles for their combat wings (Weinstein 2007).[2] In general, they largely recruited from the wealth of unemployed youth in the respective countries, and both relied heavily on child soldiers. As Weinstein notes, Renamo and the RUF also exhibited similarly high levels of indiscriminate violence against civilians. Finally, they also both operated in conjunction with external patrons (Rhodesia and South Africa in the case of Renamo, and Libya and Liberia in the case of Sierra Leone).

Before moving forward with the analysis, I address a critical issue with the coding of the RUF case that arises in light of four recent studies. While early case work on the RUF classifies them as a failed transition (Söderberg-Kovacs 2007, Richards & Vincent 2008, Mitton 2009), some of the more recent large-N analyses on rebel-to-party transition code the Sierra Leonean case as a success (Acosta 2014, Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz 2016, Matanock 2016, Manning & Smith 2016). In the latter four studies, each author adopts a minimalist conception of rebel-to-party transition. Recall from Chapter 2, minimalist conceptions code a transition as successful if a former-rebel group either registers as a party or contests an election. Since the RUF registered and ran in the first post-conflict election, Acosta, Matanock, Söderberg-Kovacs and Hatz, and Manning and Smith all code the RUF as a successful transformation.

While the RUF's trajectory satisfies the minimalist conditions posited by the authors cited above, according to the transition framework introduced in Chapter 2, these achievements do not constitute a lasting organizational transformation. Specifically, the RUF registers as a party (the RUFP) and participates in the presidential and parliamentary elections in May of 2002. The RUFP earns a mere 1.7% of the presidential vote and 2.2% of the legislative vote, thus failing to secure any representation in the Sierra Leone government. The electoral failure was a final nail in the RUF's coffin – the RUFP largely disbanded thereafter and what remained of the organization merged with the APC.

6.1 Historical Context

The emergence, evolution, and eventual demise of the RUF are inseparable from—and often a direct function of—Sierra Leone's broader political context. Thus, before pro-

[2]Though, crucially, Weinstein does not differentiate between different wings or roles within the organization.

ceeding with my analysis of the insurgency, I provide the necessary backdrop of Sierra Leone's political and economic trajectory. This section provides an overview of three critical facets of Sierra Leone that set the stage for the RUF. First, I trace the country's political trajectory beginning with the auspicious road to democracy on the heels of independence from British rule and, yet, culminating in a downward spiral into authoritarianism at the hands of Siaka Stevens. Second, I provide necessary background into the politics of Sierra Leone's diamond industry, which plays a crucial role throughout its history and is instrumental in the RUF's evolution. Finally, I introduce a critical social stratum that coalesced on the outskirts of Sierra Leonean cities. The culture of the unemployed urban youth simultaneously enabled the government to execute corruption and oppression on a grand scale and formed the recruiting grounds for the movement that originally arose to combat the government's abuses.

6.1.1 Pre-1960: The Road to Independence

In 1807, when Britain (at least formally) abolished the slave trade, Sierra Leone became a refuge of freed slaves who were returned to the African continent from Europe and the Caribbean. Many of the "recaptives," as they were called, hailed from places other than Sierra Leone, but the convenience of returning freed Africans to a port city in West Africa meant that many had no choice but to resettle locally. The British had both territorial and economic interests in the region and they founded the British Crown Colony of Sierra Leone in 1808. Despite frequent incursions into the hinterlands for the purpose of trade, for much of the 19th century, the official Sierra Leone territory was limited to the Freetown peninsula. During the so-called "scramble for Africa," however, the size of the colony expanded rapidly to include Sierra Leone's present-day borders. This expansion as well as other aspects of British colonial rule had important political and economic consequences that ultimately set the country on the path to independence and would reverberate throughout Sierra Leone's history.

While Sierra Leone was one of myriad African countries under colonial rule until the 1960s, its social and political paths were unique relative to other colonial nations on three fronts: the development of political institutions and infrastructure, the development of the educational sector, and the integration of the Creole (or Krio) population into the upper-echelons of civic society. First, the Sierra Leonean capital, Freetown, was not only the administrative center of the country, but the hub of the colonial government for all of the British West African Settlements.[3] As a result, the sheer volume of British settlers in Sierra Leone resulted in considerable development of local institutions and infrastructure. In 1827, British settlers established Fourah Bay College, which was the first major university in sub-Saharan Africa. Consequently, Freetown also became the educational hub of the region. Fourah Bay drew interest from white settlers and Africans alike throughout British West Africa who wanted to pursue higher education.

The British incursion into the hinterlands of Sierra Leone also contributed to Sierra

[3]The governor of Freetown also had under his jurisdiction the Gambia, (what is now) Ghana, and parts of Nigeria.

Leone's development. In 1896, the boundaries of the colony were expanded to include the full territory comprising modern-day Sierra Leone. [4] A dual-government was established in which chiefs retained some political sovereignty over their tribes, but Britain maintained formal (and highly exploitative) control over the region. This expansion gave the colonial government unfettered access to Sierra Leone's alluvial diamond mines, over which they imposed a legal monopoly in the form of the Sierra Leone Selection Trust.

Colonial expansion was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, locals were exploited for cheap labor as miners and construction workers, and a negligible amount of the profits from the newfound mining sector were reinvested to improve quality-of-life in the region. On the other hand, to facilitate both mining operations and broader ambitions of British expansionism beyond Sierra Leone, the colonial government built up railways and hospitals throughout the country, thereby contributing to the country's infrastructure. Moreover, a variety of uprisings in response to British taxation and other exploitative policies led to the establishment of a single parliamentary system for the country in the early-to-mid twentieth century. By the 1950s, Sierra Leone had a functioning Westminster-style government, elections, local political parties, and a path to decolonization.

The third and related trend setting the Sierra Leonean case apart from other colonial states was its relative level of integration of black Africans into both the colonial government and educational sector. While palpable class divides remained between British settlers and the indigenous / recaptive population, many Krios in particular were well-educated and went on to hold high-ranking positions within the government and other high-skilled jobs. As Sesay and Ukeje note, it was the black population that "provided the backbone of the country's civil service and dominated white collar professions" (2009, 27). This level of integration represents a marked contrast from many other colonial states. In Mozambique, for instance, nearly all skilled employment and educational opportunities were reserved for Portuguese settlers, while native Mozambicans were barely literate and typically worked in low-skill, agricultural jobs.

This integration into political life in conjunction with the sophisticated political institutions left in the wake of British governance should have made for a smoother transition to independent rule than most other former colonies experience. The population had experience with voting and the two main political parties that competed in the first post-independence elections had previous electoral and governing experience.

6.1.2 Sierra Leone in the Wake of Independence (1961–1967)

On April 27, 1961, Sierra Leone experienced a planned and peaceful decolonization. On the heels of independence, the political climate was temperate and auspicious. Sierra Leone inherited a variety of institutions that poised the country for political and economic success, if not prosperity. They had a well-functioning Westminster style parliament and already-established political parties. The Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and the

[4] The lands outside of the Freetown peninsula were designated as a "Protectorate" of the colonial government. While in theory, those living under a protectorate sign treaties indicating their willingness to be protected by the British government, many of the chiefs presiding over tribes in these areas were coerced into signing, unaware of the implications, or ignored altogether.

All People's Congress (APC) competed in the post-independence elections. The SLPP won executive control, but the APC held a respectable number of seats in Parliament, and as Aning and McIntyre note, "the first five years of independence...witnessed a lively debate in Parliament" and had the "promise of a budding democracy" (2004, 27 & 67). In the context of this project, the entrenched political institutions and pre-independence integration of the Krios into civil service, politics, and education sets this case apart from the Mozambican case.

In contrast to the auspicious political situation, Sierra Leone's economic climate at independence left much to be desired. The diamond-producing areas in the east of the country—particularly Kono and Kenema—were severely neglected. Infrastructure and public services including healthcare, education, and transportation were rapidly deteriorating despite the government's continued reliance on diamond extraction and sales for the majority of its income (Sesay & Ukeje 2009, 27). This deepening economic disparity in the early days of independence tilled the soil for deep-seated resentment of the government. People in the capital were benefitting handsomely from the wealth brought in by the mines in the east of the country, while the people doing the labor in those areas saw none of the benefits.

6.1.3 The Rise of Siaka Stevens, the Fall of Democracy, and Fertile Ground for Resistance

Any way you turn it, Sierra Leone began its downfall in 1968 with the election of the APC led by Siaka Stevens. While Stevens was elected democratically, once sworn in, he took swift and extreme measures to move the country in the direction of one-party rule. Stevens' actions throughout his first decade in power made rebellion all but inevitable. The path to dictatorship began with an intentional breakdown of democratic institutions. He instigated massive centralization efforts of state machinery—working to undo the separation of powers that his predecessor valued. He amended the constitution to allow for the "forced retirement" of judges. Consequently, he and others in power had the capacity to fire judges whose rulings did not conform to the APC platform.

With APC rule also came a gross mismanagement of the economy and state resources. The economic downturn was in part a function of greed and in part a function of poor policy decisions for which the motivations are unclear. In contrast to the centralized mining operations in place under colonial and SLPP rule, Stevens advocated for a "free-for-all" approach to diamond mining (Aning & McIntyre 2004, 68). Aning and McIntyre note that under Stevens' rule, "illicit mining became the order of the day" (ibid.). As a direct consequence of the free-for-all "system," the economy took a massive hit on two related fronts. First, the cessation of organized mining operations and the direct funneling of profits to Stevens and his top officials removed the already thin veil of mining for state development. Frustration and disillusionment with the regime skyrocketed in rural areas. Second, and presumably counter to Stevens' goal, Sierra Leone experienced a precipitous drop in diamond exports as a result of the mismanaged, ad-hoc system. In 1970, the country exported 2,000,000 carats of diamonds, and this number dropped tenfold by

1984 (Aning & McIntyre 2004, 68).

Stevens and other top officials also engaged in a "massive looting of state resources" (ibid.), with a minimal overhead cost. They lived lavishly in the capital and flaunted their money while much of the country fell into disrepair. Aning and McIntyre go on to note that "access to resources became virtually impossible for non-APC members, and membership of the APC became a necessary condition for access to jobs and state resources" (68). Rural areas became increasingly isolated as Stevens allowed public infrastructure outside of Freetown to decay. Public transportation stopped and healthcare facilities became little more than palliative care units where sick people would go to rest or die. The government even began to stifle funding to the esteemed Fourah Bay College—particularly once students began speaking out in opposition to the increasingly dictatorial APC regime.

The steady deterioration of the country during the first ten years of APC rule took an even sharper downturn in 1977 starting with the overt manipulation of the 1977 elections and culminating in a single-party military state. It was at this point when the regime went from corrupt and mismanaged to oppressive and dictatorial. The elections were the start of a wide-scale manipulation of government. Stevens ushered in a contingent of young, minimally-educated men into office (Sesay & Ukeje 2009, 8-9). They ran virtually unopposed and relied on Stevens—rather than a set of constituents whose votes they had to earn—for their appointments and advancement. Sesay and Ukeje note that the new parliamentarians were corrupt from the start and "deprived of critical and independent thinking" (28).

The APC's revocation of press freedoms was perhaps the most stark move toward dictatorship. Once home to a free and vibrant press, the APC enacted draconian laws severely restricting what could be published and, in turn, "forcing many newspapers out of circulation" (Sesay & Ukeje 2009, 29). In what came to be known as the "Killer Bill," the government instantaneously revoked all newspaper licenses and forced newspapers' managers to "reapply within a month of the bill becoming law at an exorbitant fee" (ibid.).[5] with most licensing institutions under dictatorships, applying was expensive and approval was contingent on strict compliance with the new print regulations. Moreover, with annual renewal requirements, the Minister of Information had the power to "deny registration to those [presses] perceived as critical of government policies and officials" (ibid., 30). The consequences of this media-crackdown were devastating to the press: "within a few months, only four newspapers were left in operation, three of which were owned directly by the government...and the fourth by the APC" (30).

The government's move to curtail press freedoms was followed in short order by major crackdowns throughout civil society. Stevens reneged on promises made to unions that supported him during the elections, turning staunchly against organized labor (Sesay & Ukeje 2009, 30). And in the wake of demonstrations following the rigged 1977 elections, the government began to stifle funding to the esteemed Fourah Bay College. The APC feared that any organized movement making demands on the government represented a threat to their power. Top officials in the regime sent undercover agents to monitor

[5]The official name of the directive is the Newspaper Amendment Bill of July 1980.

classrooms and union meetings (31). Students were expelled, faculty were placed on watch lists, and demonstrations were violently repressed.

6.1.4 Sierra Leone's Lumpen Youth Culture

The sheer expanse of APC repression in this era raises an important question, *how did the government do its dirty work?* With such a weak and underpaid military (Harris 2014), cracking down on every facet of civil society should have posed an insurmountable challenge to the regime. It is at this point crucial to explore a cultural phenomenon in Sierra Leone that lies at the intersection of the APC's tactics and the RUF's origins. Starting around 1945, wayward youth and petty criminals began congregating on the outskirts of Freetown in periurban spaces known as *potes* (Abdullah 1998, 208). Known alternately as the *Rarray Boys* or *lumpen youth*, these groups of unskilled and unemployed young men emerged in every city in Sierra Leone (and, according to some, every city in Africa) (ibid.). Abdullah describes the lumpen youth as young males, "who live by their wits and who have one foot in the underground economy," which, he argues, makes for a culture that "easily lends itself to violence" (1998, 208). While their activities were somewhat kept in check by law enforcement, corrupt politicians—rather than seeking to abolish this burgeoning criminal class—routinely exploited the easy access to cheap, unaffiliated labor. Since their inception, politicians turned to the Rarray boys to coerce and repress local populations.

Thus, by the 1980s, Sierra Leone had gone from a burgeoning democracy to a repressive dictatorship. Infrastructure throughout the country had fallen into disrepair as the government exploited diamond mines to pad their own pockets with no concern for development. The economy was in ruins, so even those who had the privilege of attending college were often left unemployed after graduation. Rural populations were neglected due to a combination of willful ignorance and fledgling state capacity. As such, deep-seated resentment toward the government pervaded nearly all sects of Sierra Leonean society. Rebellion was all but inevitable.

6.2 Evolution and Devolution of the RUF

The remainder of this chapter traces the organizational evolution of the Revolutionary United Front. In many ways, the trajectory of the RUF echoes that of Sierra Leone more broadly. They had all the trappings and opportunities of a group poised to successfully take on a political role within the government, but poor choices and gross organizational mismanagement led to their ultimate demise. Keeping in mind that an organization is a collection of roles, linked by relations, which produce behaviors in service of the group's goals (Parkinson & Zaks 2017, 5) – the RUF exhibits two related organizational deficiencies that persist throughout its life. By prioritizing numbers over quality recruits and loyalty over relevant skills, the RUF leadership limits the type of roles in the organization to combat and resource extraction and limits the type of relations to internal, hierarchical

military command. As a direct result, we observe an early and severe disconnect between the RUF's *behaviors* and its *goals*.

I begin with a discussion of the group's emergence: an auspicious confluence of disenfranchised college students, willing recruits as foot-soldiers, an offer of external patronage, and neglected rural areas from which to stage the rebellion. I then trace the RUF's wartime trajectory, breaking their evolution into three phases based on identifiable shifts in their organizational composition and tactics. Certain behaviors—most notably, the intense humanitarian atrocities—have become emblematic of the RUF; yet their story is considerably more complex. Each phase of the RUF's lifecycle is marked by a set of opportunities, decisions, and subsequent organizational changes (in composition, behavior, and/or goals) that had lasting effects on the group. For each phase, I lay out the relevant organizational changes and then discuss the corresponding implications for transitioning into a political party. I pay special attention to the decisions that led to the erosion of the RUF's ideology as a guiding force within the organization.

6.2.1 A Hopeful Emergence

Putting aside limitless access to physical resources, if we were to equip a rebel group with maximal organizational advantages at its inception, the RUF stacks up quite well. From the inside, the group had a great deal of promise; from the outside, they had a great deal of opportunities. First, as I note above, grievances against the APC pervaded every facet of Sierra Leonean society. Rural populations were exploited for cheap labor with no recompense in the way of development, the unemployment rate in the cities skyrocketed, and civil society groups were violently repressed. Moreover, the weakness of the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) and lack of reach of the government into the hinterlands of the country meant that rebellion had a good chance of taking hold rural areas. To put the government mismanagement in perspective, Bellows and Miguel (2009) note that on the eve of the civil war, "Sierra Leone had the second lowest living standards of any country in the world" (1145).

Second, the failing economy and high unemployment rate meant that even educated Sierra Leoneans were unable to find work. The 1970s saw an emerging class of disaffected students and graduates, who would eventually play a crucial role in the formation of the RUF. While at university, student groups began turning to Gaddafi's Green Book to inform their discourse about an eventual revolutionary struggle. Aggrieved college students, unable to leverage their education into a career, began participating in the *pote's* carnivals and eventually became entrenched in lumpen culture (Abdullah 1998). The educated class was revered and their incorporation transformed the *potes* into hotbeds of dissent and political socialization (Savage & Rahall 2003, 49).

While the soil for rebellion had long since been tilled, the tipping point of the RUF's formation was a major government crackdown at Fourah Bay College in 1984. Violent repression of student demonstrations against the regime resulted in a three-month lockdown of the university and the permanent expulsion of forty-one students and three faculty members (Abdullah 1998). Aning (2010) likens this moment to opening Pandora's

Box because it (1) armed the expelled students with a compelling political narrative that they could leverage to "broaden the opposition base among young people" and (2) made politically radicalized youth "available for [military] training outside of Sierra Leone" in Liberia, Ghana, and Libya.

Libya's involvement represents the third major advantage for the burgeoning rebellion. In 1987, the expelled students and other radicals in Sierra Leone were recruited by Muammar al-Qaddafi for guerrilla and ideological training in Benghazi, Libya (Abdullah & Muana 1998). Qaddafi set out to fund groups that would stage "anti-imperial rebellions" in accordance with his Green Book ideology. Crucially, however, Libya was not merely a wartime patron. To the contrary, Qaddafi's funding offer was *contingent* upon the RUF converting itself into a political party (Hazen 2013, 83).

Among this early contingent was Foday Sankoh, who would later become the leader of the Revolutionary United Front. Foday Sankoh grew up extremely poor and closely associated with lumpen culture (Denov 2010, 62). Yet he broke away from that path in 1956 when he joined the Sierra Leone Army (SLA). Sankoh attained the status of corporal in the SLA and he was trained in radio and communications operation (ibid.).[6] In 1971, Sankoh took part in a military coup attempting to overthrow Siaka Stevens from power. The coup, however, was unsuccessful and Sankoh spent seven years in prison before being released and joining up with the other radicals who would eventually form the RUF.

The Sierra Leoneans were trained alongside revolutionaries from other West African countries, most notably, Charles Taylor, who would go on to launch the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) in 1989 (Harris 2014, loc. 1552). It was here that Sankoh and other core members of the RUF would forge crucial links with Taylor that ultimately resulted in an alliance between the NPFL and the RUF. Indeed, until the RUF's first incursion into Sierra Leone in 1991, Sankoh and others spent a considerable amount of in Liberia fighting and training with the NPFL.

Taking Stock of the Organization

From an organizational standpoint, the integration of disaffected student activists into the lumpen youth culture represents an ideal foundation for a revolutionary political movement. The educated core of the movement was politically savvy, had well-articulated grievances, and had established relations with a group willing to take on a combat role. They sought a return to democratic rule and the implementation of fair and regulated mining practices to aid in Sierra Leone's development, which they argued would best be achieved by a prolonged revolutionary struggle. The lumpen youth—who were no strangers to organized violence—formed an ideal recruiting ground for the militant sect of the rebellion (Aning 2010, 286).

This advantage, however, was short lived. The first major organizational setback of the RUF was the mass flight of the educated core. Disenchanted with the direction of the organization, most of the expelled students who completed military and ideological

[6]Given the critical role that experienced radio operators have played in both the Mozambican case and the Salvadoran case, having a communications specialist in a leadership role should have been advantageous for the centralization and cohesion of the RUF.

training in Libya defected shortly thereafter, opting instead to continue their education in Ghana (Abdullah & Muana 1998, 177). First-hand accounts suggest that they felt the RUF was not going to be the revolutionary political movement they had intended, but rather just a guise for banditry in the same vein as the government they opposed (ibid.). While it is impossible to assess with certainty what the counterfactual RUF would have looked like had the Fourah Bay students retained their leadership roles within the organization, this exodus unequivocally meant a loss of crucial political skills for the RUF. Thus, to the extent that the nascent organization comprised disenfranchised and politically active university students on the one hand, and galvanized lumpen youth on the other, the loss of the former makes the organization susceptible to being overrun by the tendencies of the latter. In organizational terms, I argue that this departure had a homogenizing effect on the early RUF from which it never recovered.

6.2.2 First Phase (1991–1993)

This section explores the organizational evolution of the RUF beginning from the official start of the Sierra Leone Civil War in 1991 until the end of 1993 when the confluence of ramped up counterinsurgency efforts on the part of the state and leadership struggles within the organization forced the RUF to retreat into the bush and shift their tactics. This discussion does not to give a comprehensive play-by-play of the war. Instead, I provide a brief overview of the RUF's first year on the ground in order to contextualize the key events and decisions that shaped the organization's development. In this phase, I highlight how early disputes and fissures in the organization manifest as operational and behavioral inconsistencies. These early organizational dynamics prove to have key implications for how the RUF interacts with local populations, how recruitment is carried out, and how promotions are determined.

The RUF made its first incursion into Sierra Leone from Liberia in March of 1991. At this time, the rebel group was around 100 men strong and comprised a mix of Sierra Leoneans and a contingent of Liberians known in the RUF as the "Special Forces." Drawn directly from the ranks of the NPFL, the Special Forces were better-trained than the Sierra Leonean members, and as such, represented a crucial asset to the RUF (Peters 2011, 144).[7] They crossed the border from Liberia into Sierra Leone at the Mano River bridge, located in the northeast of Pujehun District and at Bomary in Kailahun District (see Firgure 6.1) (Abdullah & Muana 1998, 177). The stated goal of the rebellion was to "overthrow the neo-colonial regime," referring to the exploitative tactics of the APC (Savage & Rahall 2003, 37). The RUF moved eastward, toward the rural areas of Sierra Leone, rather than west toward Freetown. The initial incursion was swift and largely unobstructed by government forces. Capturing territory was easy given the APC's severe neglect of its armed forces (Sesay & Ukeje 2009). Indeed, as Denov (2010) notes, "within a month, most of Kailahun [District] was under RUF control" (66). Over the course of

[7]According to internal sources, the initial plan was that the Special Forces would assist the RUF with its first set of incursions and then return to Liberia (Peters 2011). The units, however, collectively decided to stay on with the RUF, the implications of which I explore as the chapter progresses.

the first year, the RUF moved steadily along Sierra Leone's eastern border. While the insurgency did not get heavily involved with mining operations until the mid-1990s, they nonetheless made frequent incursions into mining areas and held territory in the diamond district of Kono (Denov 2010, 67).

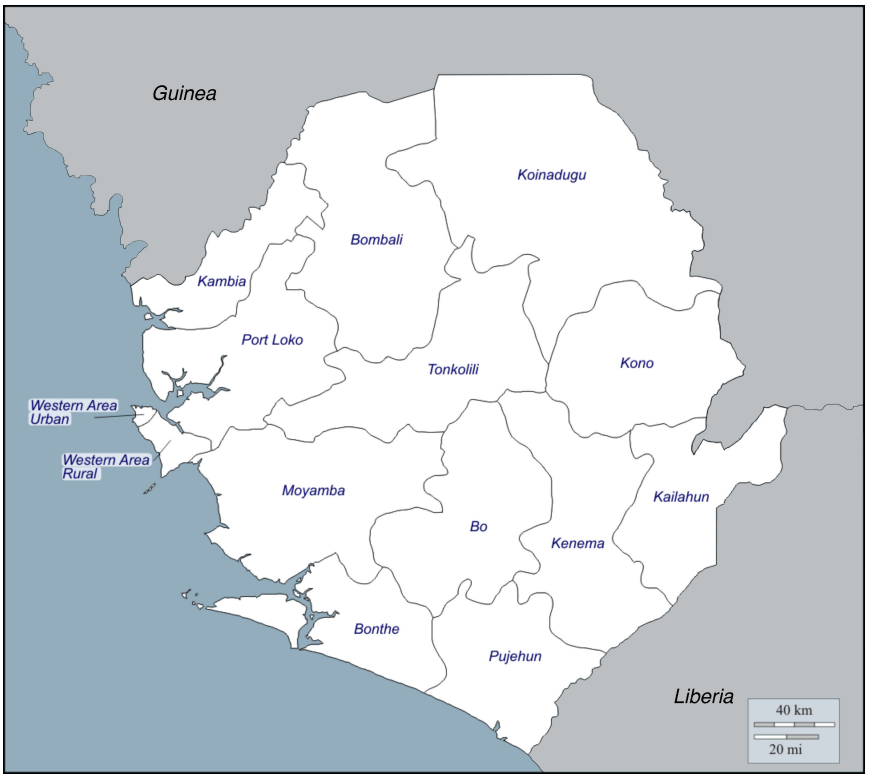


Figure 6.1: Districts of Sierra Leone

The combination of government (and SLA) incapacity on the one hand, and civilian opposition to the APC regime on the other hand, created an ideal environment for the RUF to not just hold territory, but establish "liberated zones" with developed administrative structures. Sesay and Ukeje document the APC's negligence of the warfront, arguing that "no serious effort was made to bring the civil war...to a timely and conclusive end" (2009, 34). Indeed, they go on to note that the regime's disregard for the army's welfare was so severe that it eventually prompted a military coup in the following year (ibid.). As such, the RUF did not face well-coordinated counter-insurgency effort, which in turn allowed them to move relatively freely throughout the east of the country in the first few years of the war and created the opportunity to forge relations with local communities.

Indeed, the RUF embarked on their mission with sanguine hopes that they would easily garner support in border regions—whose residents were long-opposed to the APC government (Abdullah & Muana 1998). Hazen (2013) and Peters (2011) argue that, contrary to many conventional accounts, the insurgency enjoyed some initial support from locals. This support was particularly strong along Sierra Leone's eastern border,

in which the RUF distributed supplies to communities and made attempts to implement shadow governing institutions like "people's courts" (Richards & Vincent 2008, 88). A chief from Kailahun District paints an almost unrecognizable picture of the RUF: "the RUF had this social agenda which made sense to the people...[they] did not come with the 'face of war' but with promises" (Peters 2011, 83). Ultimately, however, the RUF's operations in Kailahun are more exemplary of the organization's inconsistencies than its holistic trajectory.

In many other areas, the RUF relied more on engaging and recruiting from lumpen populations in hinterland *potes*, than on efforts to forge linkages with local communities. These tactics proved detrimental to what would have otherwise been an idea opportunity for civilian engagement. Abdullah and Muana note that despite harboring "violent political opposition to the APC regime," locals' reactions were "at best ambiguous" (Abdullah & Muana 1998, 178). In the RUF's favor was a crop of willing recruits from the lumpen youth, who relocated to the mining areas to exploit the "smuggler's economy" (ibid). The RUF's simple, yet hollow, rhetoric of overthrowing the APC and blaming the regime for the country's ills resonated with the youth. As a result, the organization amassed a large group of undisciplined recruits, who exploited their affiliation with the RUF to extort and loot at will without regard to the RUF's code of conduct. Similar behavior was evident among the (Liberian) Special Forces, who were resistant to the RUF's ideology and often engaged in wanton cruelty toward civilians (Peters 2011, 144).

The varied composition and dispositions of the RUF led to an early disconnect between the organization's behavior and its purported goals. Even from the outset, many RUF fighters relied on violent tactics to capture land. They executed village elders and chiefs, who they claimed were pawns of the APC government (Abdullah & Muana 1998, 178).[8] Richards and Vincent highlight the societal implications: people initially "excited at the prospects of Qaddafi addressing their impoverishments and repression" soon found "the RUF message drowned in a tide of revulsion at early atrocities" (2008, 89). In response to the civilian massacres and rumors of comparable brutalities from the NPFL, Muana describes a "mass migration from the instability of the countryside to the relative safety of towns and cities" (1997).[9] Consequently, locals who were at one point hopeful that the RUF would become a viable force to combat the APC's handling of the country became equally as disapproving of the RUF.

These behavioral disparities across different RUF units explain why the organization was ultimately unable to leverage local dissatisfaction with the APC into a broad and lasting support network (Hazen 2013, 78). According to Peters, the RUF's failure to engage and transform Sierra Leonean society can be traced to these organizational disparities (and the leadership's refusal to correct them). He argues that rather than being a driving motivation for all units, whether ideology was emphasized was a function of

[8]The narratives the RUF perpetuated about the corruption of chiefs and elders were not entirely untrue. Throughout both colonial, SPCC, and APC rule, chiefs and other leaders were frequently coopted by the party in power. As Denov notes, they "became closely associated with the kleptocratic and patrimonial tendencies of the Freetown elite" (2010, 56).

[9]For their part, the RUF encouraged the civilian flight. For the nascent group it meant ghost towns rife with supplies and adequate shelter.

"the specific area-commander in charge" (2011, 127). He goes on to note of these commanders, "some were committed to the movement, but others clearly harbored private agendas and the RUF did not filter out this latter group" (ibid.).

While many of the early RUF recruits were lumpen youth, the early phase of the war still meant a considerable amount of voluntary (or semi-voluntary) entry from radical intellectuals seeking a political revolution. During this time, however, the organization exhibited a palpable tension between an opportunity to augment its intellectual base (thereby making it possible to diversify its roles) and a desire on the part of Sankoh to consolidate his power. In Richards and Vincent's account of the RUF's attempted transition, they note that in the early days of the rebellion, the RUF "rallied a number of radical intellectuals with a Green Book background" in the east of the country (2008, 83). Ibrahim Deen Jalloh was a political dissident and teacher at Bunumbu College. He joined the movement with his wife, who headed up the RUF's women's wing (ibid.). According to RUF members, Deen Jalloh and the crucial links he forged with other Bunumbu intellectuals from the university helped to shape the RUF's ideology (2008, 92). Members describe him as the director of ideological instruction—as he infused the otherwise hollow rhetoric of "emancipation" with grounded tenets of the Bunumbu curriculum including "rural self-reliance and cooperative empowerment" (Richards & Vincent 2008, 92).

This early hint at diversification through the reintroduction of intellectuals into the movement was met with a tepid reception on the part of the leadership. Following some military difficulties and internecine fighting among the leadership in early 1992, Foday Sankoh's priorities shifted toward consolidating his power in the organization (Richards & Vincent 2008, Hazen 2013). As a result, "Sankoh's own support for the political group within his movement appears to have been ambivalent" (Richards & Vincent 2008, 92). Sankoh perceived the role of the Bunumbu College intellectuals as potentially infringing on the loyalty members had to him. According to former RUF fighters, Sankoh's distrust of the intellectual elite governed both recruitment and promotion choices within the organization:

> Most commanders came from poor backgrounds and the movement upgraded them. Foday Sankoh promoted the semi-literate because these were more loyal to him and were less likely to take over the movement. He did not like the educated ones.[10]

Thus, Sankoh's attempt to marginalize rather than embrace the new ideological wing of the group meant that the ranks of the organization were swelling with the individuals who were least likely to have the skills needed to advance the RUF's political agenda. Richards and Vincent echo this analysis, arguing that "[t]he failure of the political agenda to transform the armed movement from within owed much to Foday Sankoh's reliance on his tiny, less ideological, praetorian guard" (2008, 90).

Sankoh exploited divides in the RUF leadership and began forcibly eliminating rivals among the upper echelons of the organization. Two of the top-ranking members of the organization—members, who, according to Abdullah "were popular with the cadres

[10]Interview with a former RUF combatant quoted in Peters (2011, 93).

and could have contested the position of leadership"—were executed by firing squad on various charges within just a few months of one another in mid-1992 (1998, 226). Scholars generally agree that Sankoh fabricated the charges in order to "get them out of the way" (ibid.). He then wrangled a group of the RUF's most effective soldiers and created what became known as the "five-man leadership" (ibid.). Having taken over the organization by force, Sankoh relied on these fighters for protection and he ensured their loyalty by adopting a "charismatic style of patrimonial leadership" (ibid.) – thus, ironically embracing the same leadership style that the RUF was purportedly fighting against. Indeed, as Reno notes, "rather than fashioning themselves as states-in-waiting...[the RUF and the NPFL] were organized very much like the regimes that they fought. Their main difference was that they intensified the violent and predatory character of the political authorities that they wanted to replace" (2011, 183). The top officials in the RUF were more loyal to Sankoh than to the movement itself. RUF members interviewed after the war have accused those in the five-man leadership of "undermining the movement through their violence...and political inexperience (Richards & Vincent 2008, 92). As one former member recounts,

> The leadership of the RUF then changed to a five-man group and this changed our motto from "collective ideas and responsibility" to "five-man ideas and responsibility." We, the general body, had no power to talk about changes affecting the success of the movement, which all of us, together with our late leader, had struggled for years to maintain. Anyone apart from the five-man team was considered an *outsider*. Now, most of [the outsiders] have either died or resigned from the party.[11]

This split between "insiders" and "outsiders" represents just one of many such fissures in the organization. By 1992, the RUF exhibited palpable divisions between the leadership and the rank-and-file members, between the military wing and the political wing, and between the Sierra Leoneans and Liberians in the organization. This last division proved especially inimical to the RUF's organizational cohesion and direction. Known as the "Special Forces," fighters of Liberian origin accounted for about half of the RUF's fighting force in the early days and a significant portion of senior officers were drawn from this group (Abdullah & Muana 1998, 188). While a mixed composition is not necessarily problematic in its own rite, the integration of Liberian fighters proved detrimental to the RUF for two reasons. First, as Hazen observed in interviews with former combatants, "many of the Sierra Leoneans who had trained in Liberia resented the Liberian presence in the upper echelons of the group" (2013, 91). Moreover, the Liberian sects of the organization displayed early preferences for making incursions into mining areas in order to exploit the underground economy of illicit diamond sales (Hazen 2013, 102). Sankoh, however, pushed back against taking over mining areas, fearing it would lead RUF troops to become distracted and disloyal to the cause (ibid.). This dispute over the appropriate strategies and direction of the RUF led to further fragmentation—which often manifested

[11]Michael Ganawa, the public relations officer of the RUFP, and two former commanders, Edward Kamara and David Vandi, quoted in Richards and Vincent (2008, 93). Emphasis added.

in the form of violent internecine conflict—and solidified a culture of distrust between the Liberians and Sierra Leoneans at all levels of the organization.

In the wake of the 1992 military coup, the RUF faced its first major external setback. Fed up with the APC's handling of the country and growing civil unrest, leaders were ousted and the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) took over all government operations. The NPRC proposed a ceasefire and negotiated settlement to the rebels, which included full amnesty for RUF fighters. The RUF strategically signed the ceasefire—with the intention that they would use the downtime to rebuild some of their military capacity. Unbeknownst to the RUF leadership, however, the NPRC government was doing the same. The government took extreme measures between 1992 and 1993 to augment and train the national army. As such, when the RUF rejected the full settlement, believing that they could now handle a conventional military struggle against the SLA, they were caught off guard. As Hazen notes, the SLA's military offensive successfully ejected the RUF from mining areas and cornered the group along (and over) the Liberian border (2013, 91). By the end of 1993, "eye witnesses describe a bedraggled RUF leadership contingent quitting Kailahun town...heading in the direction of the border forest reserves" (Abdullah & Muana 1998, 183).

The Shift to a Guerrilla Movement

Lacking the military and organizational strength to face off directly with the SLA, the RUF undertook its first major strategic overhaul in 1993 (1998, 183). They abandoned conventional military tactics in favor of retreating to the bush and adopting a more guerrilla-style strategy. The RUF evacuated the towns they occupied—leaving behind vehicles and equipment—to "adapt to life in a series of secure forest hide-aways" (ibid.). According to Hazen, "rather than trying to secure and hold territory, the RUF only visited villages for looting purposes" (2013, 93). Correspondingly, their combat operations went from more conventional confrontations with the SLA to "hit-and-run" raids against "soft targets" and civilians (Hazen 2013, 92).

While surviving this tactical transition and rebuilding their armed forces contributes broadly to the RUF's resilience, I argue that this shift ultimately had negative implications for the organization and their prospects of transitioning into a political party. One consequence of the RUF's retreat into the bush is that it contributed to the decentralization and fragmentation of the group. To survive in the bush, the organization broke into ever-smaller units and dispersed across an ever-wider swath of territory. Yet, unlike their counterparts in Mozambique and El Salvador, the RUF lacked the communications technology to maintain contact with and control over all of the bush camps. Consequently, as Abdullah and Muana observe, "small units began a pattern of deploying knowledge of bush tracks to strike at all parts of the country, apparently at will" (1998, 191).

As for the crop of Bunumbu College intellectuals, their role transitioned from refining and disseminating the RUF's ideology to internal ideological training. Going into the movement, the purported role of this branch would be to act in a community outreach capacity. However, the curtailed development of this cadre (due to Sankoh's leadership insecurities) and the retreat to the bush meant that the dissemination of the RUF's

ideology was limited to sporadic internal training. Abdullah and Muana argue that this organizational deficiency became a defining feature of the RUF moving forward. "For what marks the RUF," they argue, "is the chronic lack of cadres to disseminate its alleged egalitarian ideology, for which it has come to depend on those whom it abducted in the course of the war" (Abdullah & Muana 1998, 192). New recruits and abductees would receive ideological in addition to military training, provided they were trained at certain bush camps. This message, however, almost never made it beyond the boundaries of the organization.

6.2.3 Second Phase (1994–1997)

The second phase of the war saw the RUF continue their trajectory toward isolationist operations and away from politically-relevant engagement with local populations. I argue that two choices account for the RUF's organizational path in this era: the first is their choice to set up permanent bases in the bush and the second is the leadership's decision to formally pursue mining operations. I demonstrate here that their operations in both diamond-rich and non-mining areas of the country isolated the RUF and incentivized a sort of organizational development that would prove counter-productive to rebel-to-party transition at a later stage.

Retreat to the Bush

After their shift to guerrilla tactics in 1993 the RUF spent the subsequent eighteen months expanding their forest bases throughout the country from which they continued to stage hit-and-run raids on local villages (Denov 2010, 68). The camps themselves were isolated, but not ephemeral. Six permanent bases were established throughout the country that were used both as hideaways and for training new recruits. Many conscripts from this period recall receiving some level of ideological training in the bush camps (Peters 2011). As Peters notes, the camps functioned as "experimental sites where the movement tried to put into practice its ideological agenda" (2011, 148). The RUF, by offering basic education and free healthcare to its soldiers, attempted to implement a small-scale vision of the society for which they were fighting.[12]

The very existence of basic healthcare and ideological training implies some level of politically-relevant diversification; yet, a few important caveats prevent these elements from taking hold as proto-party structures in the organization. First, the RUF only provided intramural education: a couple of teachers in a given camp would instruct recruits on the RUF's ideology. The ideology, however, never really made it beyond the organization's borders. No part of the RUF was dedicated to forging linkages with civilians and instructing *them* on the group's motives. Thus, while many of the soldiers

[12]It is important to note that the extent of education and healthcare offered varied considerably both throughout the camps and over time. In some cases, education was limited to ideological training in which new recruits were introduced to the Green Book egalitarian ideals that sparked the movement. In other—though fewer—instances, bases housed (usually) kidnapped teachers who would provide elementary instruction for young members and children.

knew what they were fighting for, the civilians who bore the brunt of the violence did not. Moreover, by restricting political instruction to conscripts only, ideological "wing" of the organization was limited both in size—usually just a few people in a given camp[13]—and in scope. Specifically, much of what was called ideological instruction (including two internal pamphlets called "Ideology Books") was less about the specifics of a political revolution and more focused on loyalty and rules of conduct within the organization.

The second issue is that the extent of ideological training varied considerably across both space and time. While the headquarters in Zogoda—which housed Sankoh and the rest of the leadership—offered ideological and military training to new members during this phase, some of the other camps provided exclusively military training. As a result, what little coherent political ideology the RUF had was inconsistently disseminated within the organization (Peters 2011, 129). Another former commander estimates that "of the 20,000 RUF only 5,000 were trained in the ideology" (ibid.). Notwithstanding these inconsistencies, the period between 1993 and 1995 represented the peak of ideological training for the RUF. Subsequent shifts in recruitment tactics, organizational priorities, and logistics resulted in a precipitous decline in training as the war went on.

The final caveat to the ostensible diversification is that education and political savvy were not valued by the RUF's leadership. Sankoh, who consolidated his power over the RUF by promoting a five-man contingent of highly-skilled—though uneducated—soldiers, kept with this trend of prioritizing loyalty and military prowess. Scholars and ex-combatants alike maintain that, contrary to the RUF message of democracy and egalitarianism, Sankoh embraced a patrimonial leadership style (Peters 2011, 93)(Richards & Vincent 2008, 95). Not only was advancement within the RUF based almost exclusively on demonstrated loyalty and military success, but Sankoh went out of his way to promote uneducated (often barely literate) people into the upper echelons of the organization. According to one ex-combatant, "Foday Sankoh promoted the semi-literate because these were more loyal to him and were less likely to take over the movement. He did not like the educated ones."[14] As such, not only did the RUF limit the number and roles of the most politically savvy members, but they were perpetually kept at an arm's length within the organization.

Moreover, with the move toward isolated bush camps came a fundamental shift in the RUF's recruitment methods, which further hampered the RUF's political potential. The early days of finding voluntary recruits with commitment to the RUF's political cause were long over. As the war progressed, the RUF "became increasingly isolated and cut off from the wider society" (Peters 2011, 84). Thus, out of necessity, the RUF came to rely ever-more heavily on coercive recruitment tactics and kidnapping children—often as young as eight years old—to serve as foot-soldiers (ibid.). As such, many soldiers filling the rank-and-file of the organization were often barely old enough to understand the notion of a political cause, let alone to subscribe to one.

The RUF's undeveloped and inconsistent ideological training combined with their

[13]One ex-RUF commander estimates that across the whole organization (which numbered around 20,000 at its peak), approximately forty people were in charge of ideological training (Peters 2011, 130).

[14]Excerpt from an interview with a former RUF foot-solider quoted in Peters (2001, 93).

wayward recruiting strategies resulted in an increasingly depraved and abusive relationship with civilian populations. With one or two notable exceptions in the far east of the country, the dominant strategy for controlling nearby civilian enclaves was through the so-called "Ideology System" (Abdullah & Muana 1998, 191). Under this system, RUF battalions would remotely administer nearby villages by (forcibly) appointing civilian collaborators (ibid.). The collaborators—often chosen based on their age[15] and their "lumpen sympathies"—were based in the towns and acted as proxies or conduits for RUF administration (1998, 191). Their role was to keep order (which largely entailed watching out for government sympathizers) and to collect food and clothing "donations" for the RUF camps.

Yet, even the title—*Ideology System*—is a misnomer in its own right, as there were no few-to-no ideological underpinnings of this institution. Instead, the RUF continued a trend established in its earliest days of relying on shared lumpen identity with collaborators as an ersatz replacement for a developed political message. They capitalized on this identity tactic by forcing civilian collaborators to refer to each other as "brother" or "sister." As Abdullah and Muana note, "this policy was designed to effect a kind of lumpen bonding experience to replace the networks which connected members to the wider society" (1998, 191). Moreover, while the "town commanders" were reportedly instructed not to exploit the population, looting was widespread (ibid.). Consequently, this system in no way mirrors the civilian administration institutions evident in other organizations. At best, the Ideology System was a controlled, longterm looting arrangement.

...Under the Soles of Their Shoes

Foday Sankoh's decision to formally pursue diamond mining constitutes one of the RUF's most consequential organizational shifts. While many rank-and-file members of the RUF—especially the Liberian contingent—were also involved in illicit mining, the RUF's official policy was to stay out of the mining sector. This stance shifted in 1994 when the revival of the organization in the bush meant they had both the manpower to capture mining areas and the increased need for resources to arm and supply the larger organization. The move toward organized mining operations had three organizational implications for the RUF: (1) a sudden resurgence of support from Charles Taylor in Libera, (2) an altered funding structure, (3) increased isolation from civilians.

Liberian support for the RUF insurgency waxed and waned throughout the course of the war for a variety of reasons, but due to the lack of other options, Charles Taylor remained the primary arms supplier for the RUF throughout the 90s (Hazen 2013, 80). The consensus is that Taylor's support "fluctuated depending on his own needs" (2013, 87). However, once the RUF leadership decided to move the organization into mining operations, Taylor coincidentally found the resources to "augment his support for the operation...and bolster these operations" (2013, 79–80). From the inception of the RUF, the Liberians had been the ones pushing the organization to control diamond-rich territories. The unregulated mining areas of Sierra Leone represented a prime economic opportunity

[15]The RUF's preference was always for younger recruits.

for Taylor to fund his own insurgency as well as the RUF. While the move into diamond mining meant greater financial stability and an increase in cross-border support for the RUF, it also meant that the RUF was potentially beholden to Liberian interests.[16] While this patronage structure is not necessarily problematic in its own right, it nonetheless puts a strain on the organization's leadership as they try to balance their own interests with those of Charles Taylor.

From 1994 onward, one of the RUF's principal activities was gaining control over the diamond and mineral mines across Sierra Leone. Diamonds, however, have little use to rebels without a relatively efficient mechanism for extraction and sales. As such, the organization evolved to prioritize the tasks associated with this goal. The roles and relations created to facilitate diamond sales became defining features of the RUF. At the lower levels of the organization, captives and children were put to work as miners. At the mid and upper levels, the RUF forged links to buyers in Liberia and elsewhere (Reno 2004, Hazen 2013). The Liberian contingent in the RUF became "overseers of the diamond mining in Kono" and took on the responsibility of transporting diamonds across the Liberian border where Taylor would arrange for their sales and funnel supplies back into Sierra Leone in return (Hazen 2013, 78-9 & 85).

Extant tensions in the RUF between the Liberian and Sierra Leonean members were exacerbated when—unsurprisingly—the carrier units were found to be skimming from the organization. The "accidental disappearance" of diamonds prompted the RUF leadership to again question the Liberians' loyalty to the movement (Hazen 2013, 85). RUF leaders consequently faced a severe organizational dilemma: on the one hand, they exhibited intense distrust toward Liberian-staffed units and felt that the Liberians' economic motives detracted from the RUF's goals; on the other hand, the RUF relied on Charles Taylor's connections for diamond sales and the supplies he provided to the organization. As such, the leadership was bound to maintain relations with a group the leadership viewed as untrustworthy and counterproductive. It is worth noting that even early on in the RUF's foray into the mining sector, Sankoh's original hesitation—that involvement in mining would distract from the organization's goals—quickly came to fruition.

Finally, the RUF's involvement in mining amplified their incentives to keep civilian populations at bay, thereby contributing to the organization's isolation. Again, while the RUF fought to control mining territory, they sought to avoid operating in an administrative capacity, preferring instead to keep civilians at bay. For their part, civilians had no interest in interacting with the RUF, given the group's penchant for wanton violence. Though the RUF did have to work to either coopt, kill, or banish individuals who were taking part in illicit mining for personal gain. Ultimately, the 1990s in Sierra Leone were characterized by a cat-and-mouse game between the corrupt armed forces of the NPRC and the RUF, who continually battled for control of the mining fields. Civilians—particularly in mining areas—profess to barely being able to distinguish the rebels from

[16]This situation is in some ways comparable to the patronage structures under which Renamo emerged. While Renamo had their own agenda, we consistently observe the organization being forced to bend to the will of their Rhodesian sponsors and, later, to that of their South African sponsors.

soldiers.[17]

From the standpoint of resilience and the capacity for political transformation, the RUF's pursuit of diamond sales resulted in three organizational deficiencies from which they never recovered. First, their continued dependence on Liberia both for supplies and as a conduit for diamond sales meant that the RUF was beholden to a patron whose interests did not always dovetail with the RUF's goals. This relationship exacerbated splits within the organization and fostered distrust, thereby jeopardizing organizational cohesion. Second, the RUF's involvement with mining incentivized organizational developments tailored to supporting this funding source. Ultimately, the structures involved in resource extraction and sales prove to be minimally relevant for political transition. Where many groups need to develop administrative roles and forge relations with local communities for wartime assistance (structures that later on can be leveraged into political support), the RUF relied on patronage structures with Liberia for supplies, thereby eliminating the need for other support structures. As such, the third and corresponding organizational deficiency was the RUF's isolation.

As the organization grew and the Liberian influence swelled as the group moved into the mining sector, the RUF faced a crisis of indiscipline. Looting and civilian abuse became increasingly commonplace as the RUF could lacked the organizational resources to vet their recruits and put all of them through ideological training. Moreover, the armed forces proved no match for the RUF, as the bush camps were too well-hidden to be susceptible to air strikes and too far into the impenetrable jungle for the heavy artillery on which the ground forces relied. Civilians were increasingly disenchanted with and vulnerable to both groups. As a result, the combination of restive RUF cadres and an ineffective state army gave rise to a series of community resistance groups springing up throughout the country.

The Civil Defense Forces: A Crackdown from Below

A confluence of events occurring between 1995 and 1997 shifted the direction of the conflict and permanently altered nearly every facet of the RUF. What seem initially like disparate events—the rise of community militias, the government hiring a private security firm to address the RUF threat, the return to popular elections in 1996—are inextricably linked, and together have indelible consequences for the composition, goals, and behavior of the RUF. Moreover, in the broader context of this project, the dynamics illustrated below highlight the importance of considering organizational relations and networks as a crucial explanatory factor in the study of rebellion.

By 1995, the RUF was thriving and government forces—due in part to poor training and in part to widespread disloyalty—were proving evermore ineffective against the mounting insurgency. Having established a network of bush camps that stretched from the east of the country nearly to Freetown (located in the western-most district of Sierra

[17]Indeed, this behavioral overlap was so severe, civilians began referring to the army as "sobels"—a portmanteau between "soldier" and "rebel." Members of the army were said to be "soldiers by day and rebels by night" (Reno 2011, 184). Sobels were notorious for looting from nearby civilian enclaves and even going so far as to collude with rebels, often leaving arms and ammunition in exchange for diamonds.

Leone), the RUF was strategically poised to begin making incursions into the capital. To avoid an all-out military defeat the government hired a private military firm to target the RUF in May of 1995. Executive Outcomes (EO), a private firm based out of South Africa, was brought in to help the government recapture the mines and (ideally) defeat the RUF. To assist in tracking the RUF in the bush, Executive Outcomes worked in tandem with hunters and civilians more familiar with the jungle terrain. EO and government forces colluded with the burgeoning civilian resistance, which ultimately proved to be an even more formidable foe to the RUF than any enemy they had previously encountered (Peters 2011, 147).

What began as a collection of scattered community protection groups, eventually coalesced into a relatively cohesive resistance movement known as the Civil Defense Forces (CDF).[18] In many respects, the Civil Defense Forces represent the organizational antithesis of the RUF. I argue that getting analytic traction on the unique threat they posed requires an understanding of the CDF's composition and tactics. While the CDF comprised a variety of militias, the predominant sect by far were the *kamajors*: a group of ethnically Mende hunter-fighters with an established and revered history in Mende mythology (Hoffman 2007, 642). According to Hoffman (2007), "the kamajors' very identity is predicated on the protection of villages" (642); and in stark contrast to the RUF, CDF combatants viewed themselves as inextricably linked to their social landscape (647). As such, the CDF had a two crucial sources of support: from the top, the CDF quietly received material support from the government and EO; from below, the CDF had social support from their local communities.

In essence, the kamajors (and the CDF more broadly) were exactly what civilians had been hoping to get from the RUF: a grassroots resistance force committed to protecting local communities. Indeed, Hoffman explicitly argues that the CDF's "principle organizational logic" comprised the patronage relations pervasive throughout "many spheres of social, political, and economic life" (2007, 656). Thus, while the RUF worked to isolate its members and create an "alternative society" within the camps (Peters 2011, 148), the CDF functioned by leveraging pre-existing social networks and institutions to combat the rebels (Hoffman 2007, 656).[19] Accordingly, one of the most immediate and consequential distinctions between the RUF and the CDF was the amount of civilian support that the CDF enjoyed.

It would be a challenge to overstate the implications of the CDF's civilian support networks on the RUF. First, they proved to be the most effective military foe the RUF had encountered to date. Abdullah and Muana aptly summarize the chokehold placed

[18]The term "Civil Defense Forces" was not coined until later in the war (various sources account for this title arising between 1997 and 1998), I use CDF to refer to the broad contingent of local militias that emerged during this time (Hoffman 2007, 642).

[19]Indeed, the contrasts between the RUF and the CDF are evident in just about every facet of the organization. One of the most interesting and notable distinctions between the two groups are the respective decision-rules governing promotions. Recall that promotions in the RUF were dolled out almost exclusively on the basis of military successes and demonstrable loyalty. By contrast, the CDF hierarchy reflected the extent to which "commanders...were important or respected community members prior to the war" (Hoffman 2007, 652-3).

on the rebels: "armed with *social* as well as with technical skills, Kamajo units began to counter-attack RUF groups moving over bush paths to carry out raids, limiting RUF freedom to organize and exchange supplies" (1998, 185-6). The authors go on to note that the CDF's unexpected and unprecedented efficacy forced the RUF to "admit that their enemy was the Kamajo, not the army" (1998, 186). Yet the military implications were just the beginning. The combination of the CDF's combat efficacy and their social embeddedness forced the RUF to fundamentally shift their tactics. As Peters notes, "the CDF was a movement supported by the majority of the civilians, but it was also based among the civilians. Soon the RUF considered all civilians outside their own areas as CDF supporters, and thus a potential threat" (2011, 149). This paranoia led the RUF to adopt the full-scale terror tactics against civilians—most notably the mass amputations—for which they would eventually become infamous. Their goal was to scare people out of supporting the CDF; their approach achieved exactly the opposite.

The tumultuous politics of Freetown had almost become tangential to the RUF's operations, yet the 1996 election of the SLPP further tipped the balance of the war out of the RUF's favor. In February of 1996—following yet another of the country's nearly countless military coups—Sierra Leone held its first open, multiparty elections in over twenty years. The SLPP won the elections and President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah was sworn in on March 29 of that year. The significance of this election lies in the relations between the SLPP and the kamajor fighters.

Rather than embracing sanguine hopes of transforming the SLA into a viable military, the SLPP together with EO bolstered relations with the civilian militias. Although President Kabbah himself was not of Mende descent, the SLPP is a Mende-dominated party and it had strong links to the kamajors. In essence, this election gave the kamajors nearly unbridled access to state resources. Not only did the government continue arming, funding, and now training the CDF, but leaders in the CDF were appointed to government positions. For example, Sam Hinga Norman, the Regent Chief of Jiama-Bongor chiefdom and a "key figure in the kamajor movement...was appointed as the SLPP's Deputy Minister of Defense" (2007, 642). Hoffman goes on to note that in the wake of the election, the CDF achieved greater "organizational coherence" and was widely considered to be the government's "*de facto* security force" (ibid.).

The RUF felt the effects of this collaboration both immediately and acutely, as they were experiencing increased pressure from both the top down and from the bottom up. Furthermore, paranoia over potential civilian support for the CDF was rampant within the fledgling organization. The combination of these threats took a severe toll on the organization...

Cease-Fire and the Abidjan Accords

Even prior to the election, the RUF was becoming ever more aware of their vulnerability. Toward the end of 1995, Sankoh agreed to peace talks with the government, which continued under Kabbah's supervision after taking office. In May of 1996, President Kabbah and Foday Sankoh of the RUF signed a cease-fire agreement in Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire to be enacted immediately while both sides continued negotiations over a

more extensive settlement. Notwithstanding a wealth of cease-fire violations on the part of the government and the kamajors, the internal strife that arose leading up to and in the wake of the Abidjan Peace Accords had an unraveling effect on the RUF's ideology and organizational coherence.

The problems began almost immediately, as the cease-fire agreement revealed and exacerbated a chasm in the organization between a sect committed to pursuing a peaceful, political solution, and another sect in favor of continued fighting (Abdullah 1998, 227-8). The former comprised what few educated elites remained in the RUF, while the latter comprised mainly battalion commanders and lumpen recruits for whom fighting was a way of life with or without the RUF title. These splits remained unreconciled since Sankoh spent an inordinate amount of time away from the camps negotiating the terms of the settlement. Furthermore, with minimal oversight on either side, both RUF and government forces (including the SLA, EO, and the CDF) repeatedly violated the cease-fire in the interim months. Indeed, Kabbah sought to exploit the RUF's weaknesses and launched a major offensive in October of 1996, which resulted in the destruction of the RUF's main base at Zogoda as well as "several other key camps" (Abdullah & Muana 1998, 187). With their bases destroyed and their ranks beset by internecine fighting, Kabbah was able to strong-arm the RUF into signing the Abidjan Accords on November 30, 1996.[20]

While the signing of the peace accord went relatively smoothly, the implementation was another story entirely. Despite being granted permission to legally register and continue functioning as a political movement,[21] Sankoh acted as an obstructionist at every turn. He intentionally and repeatedly delayed the appointment of RUF members to the Disarmament and Demobilization Committee (Hirsch 2000, 54); and he squabbled over the locations of demobilization centers, and he insisted that DDR forces be limited to only a tenth of the recommended size of 720. According to Abdullah, it was the reduced size of the DDR forces that ultimately "wrecked" the implementation of the Abidjan Accords (1998, 229). Indeed, his tactics had both logistical and organizational implications from which the RUF never recovered.

The conflicts arising out of the fledgling peace process resulted in the RUF's deterioration into the loose bands of violent criminals that their name has come to evoke. Sankoh's intransigence exacerbated the widening chasms in the RUF leadership. Abdullah argues that in response to Sankoh's behavior, many educated members in the upper echelons of the organization "decided it was time to quit" (1998, 229), others denounced Sankoh outright and sought to oust him from the organization (ibid., 230). These conflicts largely

[20]The peace agreement was built around five core goals: (1) an immediate end to the armed conflict, (2) the establishment of the National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace, (3) the creation of an international Neutral Monitoring Group, (4) an immediate disarmament and reintegration of all RUF combatants with a guarantee of full amnesty, and (5) the immediate removal of all Executive Outcomes troops from Sierra Leone.

[21]Article 13 of the Abidjan Accords reads, "the RUF/SL shall commence to function as a political movement with the rights, privileges and duties provided by law; and that within thirty days, following that, the necessary conditions shall be created to enable the RUF/SL to register as a political movement according to law (UNSC 1996, 6).

"deprived the movement of cadres to continue the peace process" (230). All the while, Sankoh continued to accuse the government and the kamajors of violating the ceasefire, which he gave as the reason for delaying disarmament. When his complaints fell on deaf ears, he arranged to go to Nigeria to procure arms for the RUF. This decision set off a chain of events that fundamentally altered the composition of the movement.

On March 6, 1997, Foday Sankoh was arrested in Lagos, Nigeria on suspicion of carrying out an illegal arms deal. Nigerian authorities soon discovered his identity as the head of the RUF and he was detained and jailed for two years. In response, the four RUF members on the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (CCP) staged a palace coup in an attempt to take over the organization and facilitate the path to peace. On March 16—citing Sankoh's refusal to cooperate with the terms of the Abidjan Accord—Fayia Musa, Philip Palmer, Mohamed Barrie, and Deen Jalloh[22] announced over the radio that they had taken over the RUF (Hirsch 2000, 55). This group represented the more educated side of the leadership – committed to the foundational tenets of the RUF's political ideology and finding a road to peace.

The group of four traveled from Freetown to meet with RUF battalions and assert their position at the head of the organization; yet senior commanders had other plans. Loyalty to Sankoh ran deep – far beyond what Musa, Palmer, Barrie, and Jalloh had realized. To combat what they saw as a hostile, government-sanctioned takeover of the RUF, Sankoh loyalists set up an elaborate ruse. They constructed what appeared to be a welcome party for the new RUF leaders—complete with music, dancers, and food. Yet, as the celebration was about to begin, a commander gave the signal, the dancers fled, and armed men leapt from the bush. The four men were kidnapped and detained by RUF commanders, who opted instead to nominate Sam Bockarie—a former diamond miner, professional dancer, and hairdresser—as the interim leader in Sankoh's absence (Hirsch 2000, 55).[23] Thus, in the wake of Sankoh's arrest, hopeful ideologues fighting for a peaceful political resolution to the war were replaced by "a group of embittered fatalists hell-bent on destroying those who had betrayed their leader" (Richards & Vincent 2008, 90).

Taking Stock of the Organization

As the second phase of the war came to a close, the RUF was a shadow of its former self. Three characteristics of the movement in this phase moved the organization away from its political potential: its isolation, its foray into diamond mining, and the deepening fissures between the educated, political cadres and those committed to staying at war. First, the RUF's retreat to the bush in mid-1993 created an isolated movement that quickly lost any ties they had to the country and to their own communities. While ideological training was still relatively common for new conscripts during this phase, the

[22]Recall that Deen Jalloh was one of the Bunumbu intellectuals who joined the movement early on and headed up the ideology wing of the RUF.

[23]Two of the men, Fayia Musa and Deen Jalloh were held in RUF captivity for over two years before being released in November of 1999; the fate and whereabouts of the other two remains unknown (Hirsch 2000, 56).

political message never made it out of the bush camps. Perhaps the starkest evidence for the RUF's isolation came at the end of the war as soldiers from both the RUF and the CDF were disarming and attempting to reintegrate into civilian life. While over 70% of CDF soldiers returned to their villages of origin, fewer than one in five RUF combatants did the same (Humphreys & Weinstein 2007, 548-9). Interviews with former combatants of various ages and ranks reveal that the RUF intentionally used isolation as a tactic to discourage defection. As one boy recalled, "[the RUF] tried to spoil relationships among families...that is why they would assign you to attack your hometown – so that you would have difficulty returning."[24]

Second, the RUF's 1994 decision to formally pursue mining as a means of financing the struggling movement did more to detract from their goals than it did to achieve them. For one, the move to control mining territory only exacerbated the RUF's isolation – as they worked to keep civilians (and government forces) at bay. Moreover, their control over mining areas incentivized recruits whose motivation was to share in the spoils of war, rather than to participate in and advance the group's political ideology. Finally, the RUF's move into the mining sector rekindled ties to Charles Taylor, whose interests in gaining access to Sierra Leone's diamonds were anything but subtle. This relationship had important organizational implications as the RUF had to dedicate more internal resources to extraction, transportation, and trade.

Finally, as I discussed in the previous section, the negotiations surrounding the creation and implementation of the Abidjan Accord revealed a sharp divide in the RUF leadership between those still in favor of a political solution and those who wished to continue fighting toward an undefined end. These splits not only jeopardize organizational cohesion broadly—which diminishes adaptive capacity—but they evince conflict between the majority of the RUF and the cadres most needed for successful political transformation.

6.2.4 Third Phase (1997–2002)

On the heels of the Abidjan Accords, the RUF was lacking in discipline, leadership, and direction. With Sankoh under house arrest in Nigeria and the failure of the educated cadre to take over the leadership, the RUF entered the late stage of the war with ostensibly little hope for even continuing on as a military force, let alone a political movement. However, in mid-1997, the RUF in collusion with the SLA briefly took over the government of Sierra Leone. This interregnum period intensified the organizational shifts—in both tactics and composition—that were evident toward the end of the war's second phase. I argue that the greed, corruption, and brutality that came to characterize the RUF are a function of the organizational trajectory the group took in this period.

[24]Ex-combatant interviewed in Denov (2010, 104).

Strange(st) Bedfellows and the 1997 Coup

The overt collaboration between the SLPP and the kamajors after the 1996 elections left two groups disenfranchised: the RUF and the Sierra Leone Army. Kabbah's desire to sidestep the corrupt SLA—whose members earned the nickname *sobels*, as they were often considered indistinguishable from the rebels they were fighting—was well known (Denov 2010, 72). As a result, Hirsch observes, "the army's upper ranks were rife with resentment at Kabbah's support for...the kamajors" (2000, 56). This resentment boiled over on May 25, 1997, when the Armed Forces Revolutionary Counsel (a group of junior officers from the SLA) together with Bockarie and other RUF leaders staged a coup ousting Kabbah and the SLPP from Freetown.

The joint coup meant that the RUF suddenly had free reign over the capital, no government opposition, and nearly unbridled access to state resources. In Freetown, the coup was characterized by mass looting, arson, and wanton sexual violence (Abdullah 1998, 232). With Sam Bockarie at the helm—whose interests in mining and ties to Charles Taylor were anything but secret—the RUF seized the opportunity to make major incursions into the mining areas in the east. It was during this time that the RUF secured more permanent control over diamond mines (Hazen 2013, 84). Taylor, who by this time was the president of Liberia, became an even more key figure in RUF operations as he now had the capacity to facilitate large-scale trade deals of military resources in exchange for diamonds (ibid., 80). The RUF experienced a rapid and country-wide boost in recruitment. In the cities, lumpen youth were eager to exploit the luxuries available to those in power; in the hinterlands, they recruited to help boost mining production.

The RUF's collaboration with the AFRC eradicated what little political ideology was left in the organization. Ex-combatants recall getting their hands on luxuries that were unavailable in the bush, and the desire for more led to infighting fueled by greed (Peters 2011, 151). The anti-corruption, egalitarian political platform touted in the bush was pushed to the wayside as lower-level combatants clawed their way to the top, amassing followers and wealth as they climbed. As such, in addition to the splits along political-versus-military fault lines in the organization, the new leadership began to fracture as "commanders staked their own claims to diamonds and other resources" (Reno 2011, 185). As one former commander recounts, "From '97, when we joined with the AFRC, the infighting in the RUF started. Because then we saw what officers were entitled to, so everybody wanted to be a commander. and they did not take orders anymore."[25]

Despite the AFRC's calls for international recognition as the legitimate government of Sierra Leone, the coup was widely condemned and ECOWAS[26] with the aid of Nigerian forces under ECOMOG[27] command removed the junta government in February of 1998. President Kabbah was reinstated shortly thereafter at which point Foday Sankoh was flown in from Nigeria for trial, convicted of treason, and sentenced to death. Despite their extrication from Freetown, the RUF remained militarily strong in this period, successfully staving off ill-equipped ECOMOG forces throughout the country and continuing to hold

[25]Former RUF commander quoted in Peters (2011, 151).
[26]The Economic Community of West African States
[27]The Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group

down mining territories.

From an ideological standpoint, however, the organization became increasingly hollow. Where they once relied on internal ideological training and behavioral monitoring wings to keep troops in line, they now relied on drugs and patrimonial exchange relations (**?**, 153–9). Atrocities against civilians worsened during this era as the RUF fought tooth-and-nail to prove the government's ineffectiveness. Crucially, this analysis is not just a retrospective characterization of the RUF. Combatants with longstanding affiliations actually referred to post-1998 recruits by a different name to highlight the changing composition of the organization (Peters 2006, 79). As one commander noted,

> The ones who joined the RUF later on do not have the RUF ideology. We call them "Junta II"" because they joined after the junta period. These RUF combatants were not disciplined and were causing us a real headache. We feel that they betrayed and sabotaged the movement.[28]

It was at this point that wanton violence and mutilations became the official strategy and priority of the organization. This brutal trajectory culminated in January of 1999 when the RUF made a violent incursion into Freetown, which Sam Bockarie called Operation No Living Thing. Over BBC newswire, Bockarie declared the RUF's intention to kill "everything down to the last chicken" (Gberie 2005, 120). His goal was to demonstrate to civilians that "the government could not protect them" and that the RUF would be tolerated one way or another (Reno 2011, 185).

The Lomé Peace Accord and a Protracted End to the War

The Kabbah government—under pressure and guidance from the international community—quickly came to realize that a military solution to the already protracted civil war was untenable (Hazen 2013, 97). In the spring of 1999, the government sought out the RUF leadership to construct a negotiated solution to the war. For their part, the RUF knew they could leverage their military advantage to gain major concessions in the new agreement (ibid., 96). While the negotiation process is beyond the scope of this analysis, I delineate the terms of the final settlement signed in Lomé, Togo on July 7, 1999 and the corresponding internal dynamics of the RUF as they transition from war to peace.

Though similar in most respects to the Abidjan Accords, the Lomé agreement granted the RUF a considerable amount of power in the transitional government. In addition to facilitating a path to transition into a political party to compete in elections set for 2001, the RUF won amnesty for Sankoh and a guaranteed post for him (as well as four additional cabinet posts) in the Transitional Government of National Unity.[29] The accord provided the right for the RUF to legally register as a party within thirty days of signing, set up an international trust fund to finance the transition, and explicitly provided "training for RUF membership in party organization and functions" (S/1999/777 p. 7).

Despite the massive concessions made in the RUF's favor, Sankoh, Bockarie, and other war-profiteering commanders managed to stonewall the accord's implementation

[28] Former RUF commander quoted in Peters (2006, 79).

[29] Governance provisions for the RUF are detailed in Articles III, IV, and V of the Lomé Peace Accord.

at every turn. The disarmament process was marred by everything from inefficiency to outright refusal to relinquish arms. Commanders routinely misled troops about process disarmament and kept them in the dark about the terms of the agreement—fearful that war-weary fighters would jump at the opportunity to take advantage of the reintegration packages.[30] Mitton attributes the continued conflict to Sankoh's awareness that "the RUF would not fare well in national elections" (2008, 200). Sankoh even mobilized a final incursion into Freetown in 2000 in the hopes of continuing the RUF's influence over the country by force.

In the three years following the (attempted) implementation of the Lomé Accords, the RUF deteriorated rapidly. The organization's downfall in this period was the result of numerous events coinciding to stifle the RUF's capacity on the battlefield. From an economic standpoint, a growing worldwide condemnation of blood diamonds and related UN sanctions placed on Charles Taylor disrupted RUF supply networks (Denov 2010, 76). Having lost their main conduit for diamond sales and with buyers in Israel and Lebanon being scrutinized for dealing in the illicit diamond trade, the RUF faced a crisis of demand. From a military standpoint, a combination of UNAMSIL, CDF, and Guinean forces gained the upper hand on the battlefield and rank-and-file combatants became weary and increasingly enthusiastic about demobilizing (ibid.). Finally, in response Sankoh's failed incursion into Freetown and a high-profile kidnapping of UN peacekeepers, Sankoh was arrested in the capital in May of 2000, at which point Issa Sesay took charge of the RUF. According to Keen (2005), Sesay displayed a greater commitment to disarmament and a lower tolerance for human rights abuses than either Sankoh or Bockarie.

Taking Stock of the Organization

While the RUF was never far from roving banditry, the chain of events that ensued following the failed Abidjan Accords unraveled what little political clout the organization had left. According to Peters, the time that the RUF spent in the capital alongside the AFRC, "not only emptied the minds of the ideological commitment generated in the bush, but also undermined the movement's organizational coherence" (2011, 152).

This phase severely calls into question the importance (or at least the sufficiency) of resource mobilization theories for explaining rebel-to-party transition. Supposedly, with greater access to resources, the organization should be less prone to infighting and competition, since scarcity is mitigated. Indeed—particularly during the interregnum period—the RUF had access to state resources, the most consistent control of Sierra Leone's mines since the start of the war, and nearly free run of the capital. Yet, the RUF's sudden resource wealth served to divide rather than empower the organization. Again, this analysis does not mean to discredit the importance of resources entirely. Rather, it illustrates that resources alone are not only insufficient, but in the right (or wrong) circumstances, can actually be inimical to the organization's functioning.

[30]The demobilization packages entailed counseling, a small "reinsertion allowance," and relocation to a community in which the ex-combatants would receive vocational training in any of a variety of fields (Humphreys & Weinstein 2007, 539).

6.2.5 Failed Transition: The Revolutionary United Front Party

After signing the final ceasefire agreement the previous May, the Sierra Leone Civil War was officially declared over in January 2002. To finalize the Lomé Accord's implementation, the RUF needed to demobilize their rank-and-file combatants and transform what was left into a party in time to compete in the upcoming elections in May of that same year. Scholars acknowledging the eventual failure[31] of the RUF, nonetheless argue that "the possibility of transition to democratic politics...cannot be ruled out *a priori*" (Richards & Vincent 2008, 88). This argument is largely a response to others who claim that the RUF was either fighting solely to control diamonds (Collier 2000) or that it was little more than a proxy force against ECOMOG troops run by Charles Taylor of Liberia (Gberie 2005). The authors cite Renamo as a counterexample—an insurgent group that was also a product of external sponsorship frequently used as a proxy to fight regional conflicts managed to transition into a party, so the RUF could (have) too. I argue, however, that key deficiencies in the RUF's organizational structure—identifiable a priori—made it especially unfit for transition.

An assessment of the RUF's structure at the end of the war reveals that the process of transforming into a party would require a ground-up construction of the political wing and a reorientation of the organization's priorities. From the standpoint of organizational adaptation, these challenges together put the RUF at severe risk for death (Hannan & Freeman 1984). Specifically, on the heels of disarming, the RUF would need to recruit politically-skilled members to build a party apparatus from scratch while simultaneously moving away from the anti-intellectual stance that characterized their promotion system from the beginning.

Although the RUF almost entirely lacked cadres dedicated to spreading their ideology beyond the boundaries of the organization, one might ask whether the *internal* ideological wing could be quickly repurposed to spread their political message and bolster the legitimacy of the RUFP. Unfortunately, the acute marginalization of politically educated members throughout the war made for one of the most salient organizational challenges for the nascent party. From early on in the rebellion, military prowess and loyalty were prized (and promoted) over intellectual and political skills. Sankoh's priorities were driven by a fear that politically-driven intellectuals would try to take over the movement. This concern was not entirely unfounded: recall that Deen Jalloh—a teacher from Bunumbu College who became the director of ideological instruction for the RUF—was kidnapped and detained by Sankoh loyalists after he and three others tried to take over the movement after Sankoh's arrest. However, the consistent exclusion and marginalization of intellectuals in the movement meant that the RUF lacked a wing of members with a politically-relevant skill set by the time the war came to an end.

The organizational and behavioral legacy of the RUF gave rise to three challenges that ultimately proved insurmountable for the fledgling party: (1) a small pool from which

[31] As I discuss in the introduction, a number of recent works code this transition as a success because the RUFP appeared on the ballot in the 2002 national elections (Matanock 2013, Acosta 2014, Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz 2016, Manning & Smith 2016), and thus "participated in competitive electoral politics" (Acosta 2014, 671).

to draw willing and politically-skilled recruits, (2) a high risk of resentment from "bush commanders" and other insiders who are passed over in favor of outside recruits, and (3) the challenge of mobilizing constituents from civilians who only interacted with the RUF in a violent capacity. First, the manner in which the RUF developed and dispersed its ideology made political recruitment a formidable task. Specifically, what little political ideology the RUF did have was developed in the isolated bush camps and ideological education was limited to recruits. The early linkages to politically active university affiliates were severed early on in the war, which left civilians largely unfamiliar with the political aims of the organization. Unable to rely on active supporters with ideological commitments to the organization, the RUF was forced to settle for educated opportunists to fill political posts (Richards & Vincent 2008, 93).

This scramble to recruit political outsiders combined with the rampant illiteracy in the upper-echelons of the RUF sparked a profound and endemic resentment throughout the organization. Members with deep loyalties to Sankoh and the RUF's ideology from the bush era were routinely (and by necessity) passed over for promotions in favor of outsiders who were qualified to take on political roles. For example, just after the junta period, university lecturer Paolo Bangura joined the RUF to help form the political wing (Richards & Vincent 2008, 93). During the 2002 elections, it was Bangura who ran for president on the RUFP ticket. However, his short tenure with the RUF was characterized by quarrels with some of the original leaders in Sankoh's five man committee (ibid.). He resigned following the RUFP's electoral failure, after which "he showed no interest in the RUFP whatsoever," thereby suggesting that his participation was driven more by opportunism than by any deep-seated commitment to the RUF cause. [32]

While the scramble to patch together a political party from a mix of insiders and outsiders was a hefty logistical challenge, the real obstacle was a matter of figuring out how to appeal to a country they themselves tore apart. After eleven years of a brutal civil war in which more than fifty percent of the country was displaced and over 50,000[33] people lost their lives, the RUFP faced the overwhelming challenge of convincing what remained of the population to vote for them. Moreover, the challenge of electoral mobilization existed on two dimensions. On the one hand, the RUF would have to find a way to convince the civilians—and, indeed, its own ex-combatants—that placing power in their hands would be wise. On the other hand, they had to figure out what message they wanted people to put their trust in.

The 2002 Elections

In the run-up to the elections, the RUFP did what it could to rehash their bush ideology – painting themselves as a party for socialism, agrarian self-sufficiency, and wiping out corruption in government and mining (Mitton 2008, 202). By any measure, Sierra Leone would have benefitted from implementing policies in any of these dimensions. Given the number of people worldwide who have eventually voted for former rebels, the question

[32]This quote is from Michael Ganawa, who served as the public relations officer of the RUFP (Richards & Vincent 2008, 102).

[33]Gberie (2005, 5) and Hirsch (2000, 31) corroborate this estimate.

becomes, what went wrong? From an electoral standpoint, the RUF/RUFP shot itself in the foot in more ways than one. By continuously failing to exploit the rampant anti-government sentiment during the war in order to forge political ties to local populations and marginalizing the members who were qualified to develop and disseminate the group's ideology, the RUF deprived itself of both a message and a constituency.

Put simply, from the moment of its inception, the RUFP was a company without a product—and it showed. Despite overcoming the severe personnel shortage to field 203 candidates in time for the May elections (Mitton 2008, 202), the RUFP failed to win even a single seat. In all, nine parties competed for all 112 parliamentary seats in the election, yet only three parties—the SLPP, the APC, and the PLP—surpassed the 12.5 percent vote threshold needed to be awarded seats in the legislature.[34] Adding insult to injury, the APC—the party in large part responsible for Sierra Leone's downfall into autocracy and civil war—garnered more votes than the RUFP by an order of magnitude in all but two provinces.

Table 6.1: Vote Share by Party in the 2002 Parliamentary Elections

District	SLPP	APC	PLP	RUFP
West-West	46.3%	25.1%	15.8%	1.1%
West-East	45.5%	34.2%	7.6 %	2.2%
Bombali	16.7%	62.1%	8.1%	5.8%
Port Loko	26.5%	55.6%	5.3%	2.5%
Kambia	56.0%	28.3%	4.6%	2.3%
Koinadugu	61.4%	25.6%	5.0%	2.1%
Tonkolili	16.5%	63.0%	2.4%	5.9%
Moyamba	89.4%	6.0%	0.6%	0.3%
Bo	93.9%	4.2%	0.5%	0.4%
Bonthe	98.5%	0.3%	–	0.3%
Pujehun	99.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Kenema	94.0%	3.6%	0.4%	0.8%
Kono	86.3%	8.6%	1.8%	1.1%
Kailahun	89.0%	0.8%	2.1%	7.8%

The brutality of the war notwithstanding, I argue that the lack of political diversification in the RUF had three implications that ultimately led to its political downfall. First, As Abdullah and Muana observe, "what marks the RUF is the chronic lack of cadres to disseminate its alleged egalitarian ideology" (1998, 2). Without a wing dedicated to ideological development and dissemination, the organization lacked the skills, ideological refinement, and political links that could have been leveraged during the election. Second,

[34]It is worth noting, of course, that a significantly lower threshold of, say, five percent would have resulted in the RUFP taking three seats in the legislature—one in Bombali, one in Tonkolili, and one in Kailahun.

the RUF's promotion criteria not only contributed to a weak ideology, but worse, an ideology that deteriorated over time. Thus, in addition to lacking a cohesive set of principles on which to run, many of the RUF's own rank-and-file members were neither well-versed in nor sold on the ideology that once drove the movement. As a result, electoral mobilization posed a two-fold challenge in which the RUFP had as much trouble convincing civilians to vote for the party as they did their own former combatants (Mitton 2008, 202). The third and related implication of the RUF's poor political capacity during the war is that the baseline doubts accompanying voting for *any* former-rebel party were likely compounded by the RUF's behavior during the junta period. Specifically, the RUF's brief time at the help of Sierra Leone's government gave both citizens and low-ranking members unique insight into how the RUF leadership deals with power. Those who were with the RUF from its early days note that the AFRC collaboration and exposure to "city life" corrupted the leaders and desecrated the RUF ideology (Peters 2011, 151). Consequently, the RUFP had to convince voters that trusting the RUFP with power would not just produce a redux of the junta period.

These obstacles ultimately proved too great for the RUFP. Demobilized fighters left the ranks of the RUF equally bitter about their losses and the disinformation their commanders fed them during wartime. Many were so desperate to distance themselves from the war and the party that they opted to bypass the resources and training available in demobilization camps just to avoid being pegged as an "ex-rebel" (Mitton 2008, 203). Following their brutal electoral defeat, many left the party—including Bangura, who ran for president during the 2002 elections. Though the RUFP retained their party offices in Freetown for a few years following the end of the war, they did not field any candidates for the 2007 elections and the party disbanded with some members joining the APC and others leaving politics entirely.

6.3 The Kailahun Exception

In addition to the other cases in which comparably brutal civil wars culminated in substantial electoral victories for the (former) perpetrators of violence, the most compelling evidence for the role of political diversification for the RUF's failure comes from Kailahun district in the east of Sierra Leone. While the RUFP's electoral defeat was substantial, Table 6.1 reveals that the magnitude of their loss was not uniform. In this section, I explore one of the RUFP's most substantial electoral outliers: Kailahun district, in which the RUFP earned 7.8% of the vote share.

Nestled in the south east corner of Sierra Leone, Kailahun district provides a fascinating shadow case that runs counter to the grim narrative characterizing most of the country. Kailahun was one of the first areas that the RUF settled in after their initial incursion into Sierra Leone. Yet, the group that set up shop in (many areas of) this district evolved very differently from the rest of the movement. Indeed, the RUF's deficiencies in central command—i.e. the amount of discretion incidentally left to local commanders—make for considerably more intra-organizational variation than is typically recognized. In this section, I outline the organizational development of the RUF cadres stationed

in Kailahun. I argue that a confluence of regional characteristics and RUF cadre-level characteristics throws the Kailahun experience into sharp relief relative to the rest of the country.

Kailahun's distance from the capital and lack of mineral wealth meant that the district was severely neglected by the central government. The APC doled out little in the way of resources to begin with and for a district that offered no material incentives for development, state neglect was especially acute. Even state employees stationed in the area often went unpaid or underpaid. Consider, for example, the experience of a teacher from the north of Kailahun:

> I went to Pendembu [in the northernmost part of Kailahun] to start my work as a teacher...in 1986. But I was not paid in time. In fact, I did not like the teaching because the pay was so poor, if it came at all...If you criticized [the APC for not compensating you] they just sent these APC youths to you with their batons. Instead of encouraging you, they threatened you.[35]

As such, anti-APC sentiment ran deep in these areas and the general government absence made the areas ripe for a swift rebellion. Indeed, towns and chiefdoms within Kailahun were among both the first and most consistent areas in which the RUF was able to hold territory throughout the war.

While the RUF is generally characterized as an isolated movement—either hidden away in forest enclaves or intermittently controlling mining zones—certain areas in Kailahun proved to be notable exceptions. Due in part to the local conditions and recruiting opportunities, select RUF cadres stationed throughout Kailahun evolved in a fundamentally different way than most other throughout the country. In stark contrast to the more forward camps (i.e. the westward bases approaching Freetown), the RUF established proper liberated zones characterized by relative stability and consistent interaction between the rebels and local populations (Peters 2011, 106).

Away from the front lines of the war, the RUF was considerably more integrated into local communities. In many areas within Kailahun district, the RUF provided social services, such as healthcare, education, and interest-free banking (Peters 2011, 170). Various civilians also recall working on shared farms, the significance of which should not be understated. Not only did these farms help provide for the communities at a time when famine was rampant throughout the country, but, more importantly, the communal farms represent an instantiation of the RUF's agrarian ideology. As such, the civilians in Kailahun saw a group not only rebelling against the state, but acting as an alternative.

> While in the RUF we made different types of farms: rice, yam, and swamp. We even made farms right inside Kailahun town. It was both the combatants and the civilians who made these farms. There is a big common farm which was aimed to promote unity among us...The produce of the communal farm is for the betterment of the whole community. (Peters 2006, 82)

[35]Former teacher and ex-RUF member interviewed in Peters (2011, 21).

> We worked two times a week at the [RUF] farm in Pendembu, and sometimes we received food for work. Here in Pendembu there were free medicines, but not too much. There was also free primary education. (ibid., 169)

Moreover, the differences between RUF operations in Kailahun and RUF operations throughout the rest of Sierra Leone need not be left to inference. Interviews with RUF commanders reveal not only the nature of the differences, but also the fact that higher-ranking members of the organization knew to some extent how distinct Kailahun was from elsewhere. One commander recalls, "In Kailahun...there were no food-finding missions, because the people were producing it themselves" (Peters 2011, 170). Another makes this point even more explicitly, "The life in the combat zone was different from the life in the rear. In the rear, nobody was formed to work on private farms...everything was for the betterment of the movement" (ibid.). According to Peters, the "rear," and more stable areas (such as Kailahun) also had more reliable and institutionalized mechanisms in place to help prevent civilian harassment (ibid.).

Finally, RUF cadres in Kailahun had a higher retention of educated members due in large part to the contingent of recruits drawn from Bunumbu College. I argue that their retention of politically educated members, institutionalized liaisons with local communities, and lower propensity to engage in the wanton violence that came to characterize the RUF more broadly accounts for the significantly higher vote share for the RUFP from Kailahun as compared to the rest of the country.

6.4 Discussion

The capacity and stability of the RUF waxed and waned throughout the war. It would frequently decline in some periods of heavy counter-insurgent attacks from the government or civil resistance groups, then it would take advantage of negotiations periods to regroup and resupply its forces. On the whole, the organization exhibited considerable *wartime* resilience; yet it lacked the diversity and skill sets needed to undergo a transformation into a political party.

Chapter 7

El Salvador and the FMLN: Building Civil Society from Civil War

At the root of El Salvador's civil war is a 150 year legacy of peasant exploitation in service of a monoculture economy. Beginning in the 1800s, Salvadoran society was forcibly structured at the hands of a repressive government toward the single goal of maximizing coffee production. Peasants were bound to coffee plantations through feudal labor institutions and indigenous communities were broken up and dispersed to forestall the risks of an uprising. Indeed, until the 1970s, the Salvadoran government successfully quashed out numerous revolts and peasant uprisings. By 1972, however, the sharp economic downturn accompanying the Oil Crisis on top of the government's brutal repression got to be too much. Leftist movements began to coalesce across El Salvador and eventually came together to form the *Frente Farabundo Martií para Liberació Nacional* (FMLN). The FMLN waged an eleven year civil war against the state, which in 1992 culminated in a negotiated settlement providing a legal path for the FMLN to transition into a political party. Beginning with El Salvador's first truly democratic elections in 1994, the FMLN party has been consistently successful at both the local and national levels; and since 2009, two FMLN candidates have held the presidency.

The history of the left in El Salvador, however, is fraught with picayune infighting over the best ideological and tactical approach to revolution. The FMLN was not a unified revolutionary movement, but an umbrella under which five different political-military organizations (OP-Ms), with five different leaders, and thus, five different approaches operated in parallel. The factional rivalries were evident throughout the war and continued long after. Thus, where the RUF's obstacle to transition was its utter lack of formal structure and diversification, the FMLN's legacy is a too-many-chefs problem, nonpareil.

This chapter traces the evolution of the FMLN with an eye toward the organizational implications of umbrella movements and the rivalries they typically embody. I begin with a brief discussion of case selection and the unique benefits of studying the FMLN. The first main section couches the revolution in the historical context of El Salvador. The remainder of the chapter is broken into five sections corresponding with five key periods in the FMLN's evolution: its emergence (1970–1980), the outbreak of the war (1980–1981), the new strategic phase (1982–1984), the shift to "a people's war" (1984–1989),

and finally the negotiations and transition into a political party (1989–1994). Finally, I conclude with a discussion of the implications of this case for future analyses of umbrella organizations.

Utility of the Salvadoran Case

The overarching goal of my empirical work is to test whether political diversification of an insurgency's organizational structures during wartime facilitates the transition into a political actor at the war's end. Though I have already presented a case of successful rebel-to-party transformation in Chapter 5, the Salvadoran case provides a unique set of insights beyond those derived from my analysis of Renamo. The FMLN case is particularly valuable to my analysis for two reasons. First, since umbrella structures are not uncommon among insurgent groups, this case study provides broadly applicable insight into how this structure affects adaptability and resilience, and what risks and challenges umbrella organizations may face as a result of their structure. In the context of my theory, the FMLN's structure represents an extreme instance of organizational diversification: its five component groups had different priorities, different skill sets, different alliances, and different approaches to the war. As such, the organization as a whole had a large set of skills on which to draw when it needed to accomplish a given task or switch strategies to adapt to a new environment. The crucial insight of this chapter, however, is that this brand of diversification is *only* beneficial if the leaders have a willingness (and an institutional mechanism) for compromise. Otherwise, the very structural characteristics that facilitate adaptability and resilience can also increase the risks of organizational fracture and disintegration.

Second, two features of the Salvadoran case together provide a unique opportunity to test my theory at the micro level. First, the FMLN leadership allowed each component group to retain its own structure throughout the war—and the component OP-Ms differed considerably in whether and to what extent they built proto-party structures. Second, each OP-M occupied a different area of the country, and as a result, civilians typically only interacted with one of the five groups. By extension, the Salvadoran case exhibits a unique geographical phenomenon in which the likelihood of political and electoral success differs not only within the organization, but these differences are tied to clear areas within the country. The corresponding implications from my theoretical framework, then, are non-trivial. Using departmental- and municipal-level voting data, I test whether the proto-party differences across OP-Ms during wartime translated into variation in electoral success for the FMLN in the first post-war elections.

7.1 Historical Context

The dire sociopolitical conditions that eventually culminated in the Salvadoran Civil War have their roots planted firmly in El Salvador's economy. Throughout its colonial and independent history, El Salvador's economy has been fueled by a single agricultural export—first it was cocoa, then indigo, and then a sudden switch to coffee production

as global demand spiked in the mid-nineteenth century. The reliance on a monocultural export system inevitably has major implications for a country's politics and development. Broadly, monoculture economies result in profound inequality, as power is concentrated in the hands of those who control the means of production while unskilled workers who mine or harvest are exploited. This system also disincentivizes investment in any economic sector that does not directly contribute to production, which results in a stifled economy and high unemployment rates. Finally, with a monoculture economy comes acute volatility, since the economic well-being of the country is tied to global demand for a single commodity. Any one of these issues alone could be enough to incite violent unrest, yet this list barely scratches the surface of the conditions Salvadorans lived through before the war started.

Understanding the emergence and evolution of the FMLN is impossible without first understanding the nature of repression that drove the resistance. Beginning with the expansion of coffee production in the 1860s, this section traces the history of state-society relations in El Salvador to establish the context and motivation for the rebellion that in a very real sense was a century in the making. What began as a set of incentives to expand coffee production to meet global demand, quickly evolved into a set of draconian land tenure and labor policies that endured until 1980s.

7.1.1 The Coffee Economy and the Visible Hand

While monoculture economies are universally prone to inequality and volatility, El Salvador's shift from indigo to coffee exacerbated these trends. Determined to exploit the increasing global demand for coffee, the Salvadoran government took a variety of extreme measures to maximize production at the expense of equality and modernization. At a time when industry and modernization were spreading rampantly elsewhere, El Salvador devolved into a feudal system in which the indigenous population was essentially forced into slave labor at the hands of the state in collusion with coffee producers. The conditions created by the Salvadoran government and what came to be known as the "coffee oligarchy" were rife for a violent resistance movement.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the global demand for coffee was increasing at a near-exponential rate. In response, the Salvadoran government implemented a variety of policies to expand production and capitalize on the growing market. In the early days of coffee expansion in El Salvador, the state offered deep tax breaks and other incentives for people who bought land intended for coffee production. This approach, of course, was not problematic in its own rite. Yet unlike indigo—the cultivation and maintenance of which relies largely on cattle eating weeds around indigo (which they dutifully ignore)—coffee is a (human) labor-intensive crop. However, the people on whom landowners typically rely for agricultural labor (poor, indigenous communities), for the most part lived subsistence lifestyles on *ejidos* or *tierras comunales* in the volcanic highlands of El Salvador (Wood 2003, 27). As such, while the number of coffee plantations rose dramatically, this spike both highlighted and exacerbated an acute labor shortage.

It was in response to the agricultural labor shortage that the government quickly

turned from carrots to sticks, implementing a variety of coercive institutions to maximize production at any cost. Rather than incentivizing peasants to work on coffee plantations by regulating wages and working conditions, the state instead turned to harsh land reforms that forced indigenous populations off of communal lands and onto coffee estates.[1] The single-purpose land reforms in El Salvador resulted in a feudal system in which dispossessed populations—the *colonato*—were forcibly bound through debt to coffee estates or *haciendas*.[2] As Wood notes, this system was so pervasive and enduring that even as late as 1961, "*colonos* accounted for 25 percent of the rural labor force" (2000, 29).

Unsurprisingly, these coercive policies were initially met with intense resistance from peasant communities. Numerous small-scale peasant revolts of the late-nineteenth century were swiftly quashed; and rather than interpreting the pervasive discontent as a need to shift toward a freer market in which higher wages could incentivize labor supply, the state doubled-down on enforcement. They created a variety of institutions to preside over the rural labor market: the Rural Police, the Mounted Police, and later the National Guard (which was a reorganization and amplification of the Rural Police) were assembled as enforcement bodies. They patrolled rural areas to ensure compliance with labor laws, evict squatters, and punish laborers who tried to flee their plantations (Wood 2000, 29). During the harvest season, In an even more extreme regulation of the labor market, the state appointed a group of agricultural judges. Agricultural judges would create lists of available workers and assess the labor needs of coffee estates in their jurisdictions in order to manually direct the flow of labor in the absence of a wage market (Wood 2000, 29).

Implications of Land Reform

El Salvador's monoculture economy and the despotic policies that regulated it meant that global fluctuations in the price of coffee manifested at the social and political levels and had implications that endured until the start of the civil war. Indeed, the trajectory of state-society relations moved in lockstep with the coffee market. Spikes in global demand resulted in even harsher manipulation of the labor market. In the name of efficiency, *campesinos* (farm laborers) were frequently relocated to meet labor needs. This trend of forced internal migration led to an erosion of ethnic identity (Wood 2000, 29), the implications of which become clear when one considers that most of the early resistance groups were ethnically based.

While dips in the coffee market may be expected to weaken the institutions of a state that is heavily dependent on this commodity, the reality was often the exact opposite. Downturns in the market mostly affected smaller farms. In response, *hacienda* owners who could weather small dips in the market would procure the land from a struggling plantation. As Montgomery notes, each depression was followed by a corresponding ex-

[1]The first move in this vein came in 1856 with a law mandating that two-thirds of all communal lands (both *tierras comunales* and *ejidos*) be planted with coffee and failure to comply would result in state seizure of the land (Montgomery 1995, 30). Then, in the early 1880s, the state outlawed *tierras comunales* and *ejidos* while simultaneously ramping up enforcement of vagrancy laws (Wood 2000, 28).

[2]Crucially, *hacienda* refers not just to the physical plantation but also the social institutions of patronage that came to characterize life on the farms.

pansion of *haciendas* (Montgomery 1995, 28). Over time, these acquisitions resulted in an acute concentration of economic power in fewer and fewer hands.[3] As a result, both favorable and unfavorable economic circumstances intensified the asymmetrical power relationship between the *campesinos* on the one hand, and the coffee growers and government on the other.

A final implication of the early land reform policies was the burgeoning collusion both among the owners of coffee estates and between the owners and the government. First, while the landed elite initially concerned themselves only with their own plantations, with the concentration of power into fewer hands came the opportunity to forge alliances with other growers. Beginning in the 1920s when coffee growers founded *La Cafetelaria*, these alliances eventually coalesced into an oligarchy that would go on to direct the majority of the country's economic policies for the next fifty years (Wood 2000, 30). The ease with which the coffee oligarchs were able to influence politics was itself an implication of the earlier land tenure enforcement policies. Beginning in the early 1900s, National Guard troops were often billeted on the larger coffee estates during the harvest season to monitor workers (Wood 2000, 29). In addition to exacerbating tensions between the state and the peasant population, these arrangements forged close ties between the military and landed elite. With time, the line between coffee elites and the state apparatus faded entirely.[4]

7.1.2 The Depression, The Uprising, and *La Matanza*

By the 1920s, the coffee oligarchy had consolidated its power, the relationship between elites and the state was institutionalized, and the coercive manipulation of the labor market was sufficiently refined to provide a constant supply of labor wherever and whenever needed. While the current picture of Salvadoran politics was already grim, a cascade of events set off by the Great Depression in 1929 culminated in a military dictatorship that would last for the next fifty years. The Great Depression in 1929 brought a worldwide collapse of coffee prices, which, in turn, resulted in a fifty percent reduction in harvesters' wages (Paige 1997, 107). Contemporaneously, El Salvador flirted with a liberalization of its political institutions.

President Pío Romero Bosque, rather than hand-picking a successor (as was customary to this point), insisted on holding the first free elections in the country's history. The winner of the 1930 elections was Arturo Araujo. Araujo was considered a "friend of the working class and peasantry" in spite of his background as a wealthy landowner (Montgomery 1995, 35). While this balance should have earned him a trusted position as arbiter between the working class and the oligarchy, the strain of the Depression brought hostility from both sides. On the one hand, Araujo was too moderate to follow through with the labor reform policies that "his labor supporters were making in his name"

[3]By the mid-twentieth century, nearly forty percent of El Salvador's land was concentrated within 0.7 percent of the farms (Wood 2003, 22). Moreover, nearly all of the largest farms were controlled by just a few dozen families (Montgomery 1995, 31).

[4]As Wood (2000) notes, three of El Salvador's presidents—Gerardo Barrios, Francisco Menéndez, and Tomás Regaldo—were involved at varying points in coffee production and in the military.

(ibid.). On the other hand, the coffee oligarchs—who were distrustful of his collusion with labor organizations and free elections more broadly—refused to participate in his cabinet thereby denying much-needed expertise at "one of the most critical points in the country's history" (ibid.).

Any leader would have struggled through such a severe economic crisis, but Araujo's combination of centrism and incompetence exacerbated the social, political, and economic volatility at the time. Disenfranchised workers turned to petitions, then riots, then began threatening violent insurrection; but, at least initially, the military beat them to the punch. In December of 1931, the military staged a *coup*, overthrowing Araujo and installing Maximiliano Hernández Martínez as president. The military government's first order of business was a crackdown on labor organizations and mass arrest of those plotting the insurrection. Undeterred, Farabundo Martí—one of the radical leaders of the Communist Party and the eponym of the FMLN—called for mass uprisings of workers and students across the country on January 22 of 1932. Not only did these groups lack arms or organizational affiliation, but the plot for the insurrection was not a secret. As Montgomery notes, "the result was an unorganized, uncoordinated uprising that met with a swift and brutal response" (1995, 37).

Authorities did not merely stamp out the insurrection. The army, the National Guard, and other security forces around the country engaged in a coordinated retaliation so severe that it earned the name, *La Matanza* – i.e. *the slaughter*. Within a few weeks of the uprising, somewhere between 10,000 and 40,000 peasants were murdered.[5] Indeed, Wood argues that the army only stopped killing at the behest of landlords who "complained that there would be no labor left" (2000, 31).

The Aftermath

Three short years from 1929-1932 shaped the country for the next five decades. In the wake of *La Matanza* the military dictatorship worked to further consolidate the repressive labor institutions that had emerged prior to the depression. As Wood (2000) puts it, the years between 1932 and 1990 are best characterized by "elite resistance to change" (25). The government was structured with a twofold purpose: maximize profits from coffee and control the rural labor force. To the first end, the military worked hand-in-hand with the coffee oligarchy, members of which occupied official economic posts in government (Wood 2000, 33). To the second end, the state engaged in a rapid expansion of military and paramilitary forces with the express purpose of "policing the labor forces" (ibid.). With the exception of church gatherings, all forms of organization and unionization were outlawed. Between the years of 1950–1960, the membership of the National Guard swelled at an estimated rate of 3,500 recruits per year (Walter & Williams

[5]Unsurprisingly, estimates vary widely. Wood (2001, 31) and others contend that the number is about 17,000; Montgomery (1995, 37) puts the number closer to 30,000. The 10,000-40,000 range is cited in a number of journalistic and encyclopedic accounts, but without references.

1993, 47-48).[6] Both the National Guard and state-sponsored paramilitary organizations—most notably, ORDEN—infiltrated rural areas to hunt down communists and communist sympathizers.

In addition to domestic actors' push to consolidate power, one other actor had crucial implications for El Salvador's trajectory in this period. Beginning in the 1960s and continuing throughout the civil war, the U.S. played a key role in El Salvador's political and military developments. In response to the Cuban Revolution, the U.S. augmented their presence across Latin America in the early 1960s to lend economic and military support to right-leaning governments. Indeed, senior National Guard officer, General José Alberto Medrano, recounts that the main paramilitary force in El Salvador, ORDEN, "grew out of the State Department, the CIA, and the Green Berets" (Nairn 1984). According to Nairn and other members of ORDEN, Medrano himself was on the CIA payroll. ORDEN was simultaneously reconnaissance and death squad, and it was U.S. involvement, however, came with a cost to those otherwise resistant to change. In exchange for aid, the U.S. placed increasing pressure on the military junta to move toward a (slightly) more open political system. The 1960s and 70s saw a collection small, titular political reforms including the formation of political parties and introduction of quasi-competitive elections that served only to quell U.S. interests.[7]

Notwithstanding the relative economic success throughout the 1950s and 60s, the confluence of multiple events beginning with the 1972 elections contributed to an unprecedented level of unrest in the 1970s that culminated in the creation of the FMLN. At the time, the National Conciliation Party (PCN) dominated politics, but the Christian Democrats (PDC) had been gaining momentum since the late-1960s. El Salvador's façade of progressive reforms was abruptly torn down when, after the news media announced José Napoleon Duarte of the PDC the winner of the presidential election, the military forcibly suspended all press coverage causing a three-day news blackout. On the fourth day, the media were coerced into broadcasting fabricated election results, which handed the victory to the PCN's candidate, Arturo Armando Molina. The clear election rigging and cooptation of the news media fed into the stirring urban and rural unrest.

7.2 Growing Unrest and the Emergence of the FMLN

The growing discontent with the government was compounded by the oil crisis of 1972, which exacerbated the already dismal economic situation in the country. Agricultural output decreased, food prices rose, and educated youth in urban areas "found little opportunity for upward mobility" (Wood 2000, 43). The disparate movements that eventually coalesced into the FMLN and its support base grew out of two revolutionary trends—one rural, and one urban. Beginning in the 1960s, radical catechists—inspired by the reforms

[6] El Salvador's population at the time was 2,500,000, which amounts to one recruit for every 714 citizens (Walter & Williams 1993, 47). To put this number in context, the recruitment rate of the U.S. Armed Forces is approximately 80,000 per year, or one recruit for ever 4,050 citizens.

[7] In reality, only conservative parties were permitted to compete in elections and the Communist Party remained outlawed since the 1932 insurrection.

of Vatican II and the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM)—brought liberation theology to the rural masses of Latin America. Liberation theology comprises a set of practices and teachings aimed at fostering social and political engagement among its followers. Contemporaneously in the urban centers, labor unions and university students were becoming increasingly radicalized as government corruption waxed and opportunities waned. In concert with the Communist Party, which had been operating clandestinely since the 1930s, a variety of politico-military movements began to coalesce. This section details the mobilization of the peasantry and the emergence of the revolutionary left in El Salvador throughout the 1960s and 70s.

M is for ~~Manzana~~ Matanza: Liberation Theology, Literacy, and Campesino Mobilization

While the FMLN would arguably have *emerged* irrespective of rural mobilization, I argue that its structure, resilience, and ultimate success as a political movement would have been nearly impossible were it not for the shifting role of the church in Latin America. The Second Episcopal Conference (CELAM II) in 1968 was a watershed moment for the role of the church in rural life. At this conference, bishops from all over the region pushed the church in a more socially-active direction and insisted on taking a "preferential option for the poor," and defending the oppressed rather than allying with the wealthy (Montgomery 1995, 83). The collection of practices adopted at CELAM II and put into practice throughout the region came to be known as "liberation theology."

Crucially, both the content and implementation of liberation theology laid a foundation for a political revolution to flourish. As a doctrine, liberation theology begins from the premise that it is God's will that all people's dignity be honored, but that the people must *act* to put God's will into practice (Hammond 1999, 73). In a radical break from the conventional reading that any suffering was the will of God, liberation theology represented a call for the most destitute to reflect on their situation and work to improve it. The path to liberation was to "study the Bible and make it the basis for a political analysis of the situation in which they lived" (Hammond 1999, 70-1). Thus, rather than become activists on behalf of the poor, priests sought to empower the people directly.

This goal was achieved through the construction of Christian base communities (CEBs: *comunidades eclesiales de base*). Priests would travel through rural areas and establish communities of between ten and thirty members who would meet for Bible study. Although ordained priests would lead the initial classes, these groups were "encouraged to develop [their] own leadership" by electing lay teachers and lay preachers (Montgomery 1995, 87). In the early 1970s, the church set up training centers for the leaders of Christian base communities in which the newly elected "delegates of the Word" learned skills that would prove vital far beyond the realm of religious life. According to Hammond (1999, 74), the training program was built around three pillars: (1) biblical study; (2) "national reality," which examined social and economic structures of El Salvador through a Marxist lens; and (3) "techniques of popular organization," which focused on how to plan meetings and manage group dynamics. In just under a decade, more than 15,000 campesinos

were trained as community leaders through church programs (Montgomery 1995, 89).

Yet, as Hammond notes, the emphasis on active participation in studying not only the Bible but also the political and social structures of El Salvador cast a harsh light on the state of literacy in rural areas (1999, 74). With literacy rates hovering around fifty percent, teaching the population to read was an essential first step.[8] In response to this crisis of literacy, public education became the liturgy of these communities. Both the training of leaders and the public education that took place in the communities was firmly rooted in the Freirean pedagogical tradition, in which learning is achieved through political engagement. Literacy was taught by choosing a variety of words—one for each letter of the alphabet—that had religions, social, or political meaning to the campesinos. While simultaneously learning the letters that comprised the word, students were encouraged to reflect on the concept as it pertained to their lives (Hammond 1999, 72). As such, religious activities transformed from a respite from the people's suffering to a solution.

Though originally conceived in the vein of worship, it is difficult to understate the political implications of the Christian base communities. They provided a quasi-legal context and set of strategies for organizing for the first time in decades. The method of education employed in the communities aroused a newfound political consciousness among the peasant class centering on education, social justice, and overcoming oppression. Moreover, the process and pervasiveness of training "delegates of the Word" created a wealth of grassroots leadership throughout the country. Moreover, when the FMLN later encountered these communities, the rebels did not have to struggle against a population content with the status quo.

Indeed, Christian base communities evolve in precisely the way my theoretical framework would anticipate. Armed with organized skillsets that transcend the religious sphere, it was not long before members of CEBs began deploying their newfound confidence and skills in other arenas. In Aguilares, for example, workers at a sugar mill engaged in a mass strike after being denied a raise that had been promised to them (Montgomery 1995, 91). As Montgomery notes, "the strike was not organized by the parish, but many of the workers were members of the CEBs, and some of the leaders were delegates of the Word" (ibid.). Additionally, while the Christian Federation of Salvadorean Campesinos (FECCAS)—an advocacy organization dedicated to defending rural laborers—was founded a few years prior to the establishment of CEBs, both its membership and influence ballooned as CEBs took root (Montgomery 1995, 91). Hammond best foreshadows the role CEBs would play in the burgeoning rebellion in El Salvador: "the people's church had laid a foundation for the future and developed the consciousness of those who went on to wage the struggle on new ground" (1999, 75).

[8] In 1975, 48.9 percent of men and 57.2 percent of women in rural areas were reported to be illiterate (*Statistical Abstract of Latin America* 1987).

Some Assembly Required: Building the FMLN

The FMLN's origin story is one of assembly, rather than emergence. In response to the ongoing economic and political crises, the decade preceding the outbreak of civil war is punctuated by a variety of revolutionary leftist groups springing up across the country. Despite their temporal coordination, the history of the left in El Salvador is not one of unity but of fragmentation. Leftist movements often engaged in picayune infighting over the proper approach to revolutionary struggle, which had critical implications for the organizational structure and operations of the FMLN—the umbrella under which the disparate left would eventually coalesce. This section outlines the ideological and tactical approaches of the five politico-military organizations (OP-Ms) that would eventually operate under the FMLN umbrella.[9] The various distinctions across the FMLN's component groups have critical implications for the movement's structure, evolution, and political trajectory. As such, this section not only recounts the historical timeline of the FMLN's emergence, but also, and more importantly, it details key aspects of the insurgency's organizational structure.

The first of the revolutionary groups formed in 1970 when a former leader of the PCS broke away from the party to create the *Fuerzas Populares de Liberación* (FPL) (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 2). Frustrated with the PCS's resolute commitment to peaceful engagement with Salvadoran politics, Cayetano Carpio and a handful of followers began clandestinely organizing militias in preparation for prolonged popular war. The FPL imported their ideas about insurrection directly from the Vietnam model (ibid., 15): combining armed struggle with social and community mobilization. Carpio's belief in the virtues of a Marxist revolution were so extreme that he referred to himself as "the Ho Chi Minh of Central America" (McClintock 1998, 255).

Some have observed that since the FPL formed out of a political entity that Carpio viewed as overly acquiescent with the status quo, developing the political side of the organization initially took a backseat to refining their military strategy (Montgomery 1995, 104). While the FPL's level of political engagement increased markedly over time, it was far from a homogenous, combat-centric organization. From its inception, the FPL had strong ties with the educational sector in El Salvador. Many professors rose to prominence within the movement and the second-in-command, Mélida Anaya Montes, held her doctorate from the University of El Salvador and was one of the founders of the teachers' union, ANDES. Moreover, even the FPL's military strategy had strong political overtones. The FPL's focus was twofold: first, they sought to establish the "infrastructure of resistance" in rural areas (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 15), which entailed creating guerrilla units as well as organizing civilians and forging alliances with mass organizations (Wade 2008, 36). The second aspect of their strategy was to create international support groups, the purpose of which was to disseminate propaganda with the aim of pressuring the United States to stop meddling in Salvadoran politics.

In 1972, disagreements within the FPL over how best to mount an insurrection against

[9]The FMLN themselves used the OP-M designation to refer to the different groups it comprised. I rely on this terminology throughout this section to refer to the composite organizations – as opposed to the FMLN organization more broadly.

the state led to the formation of a splinter group, the *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo* (ERP). Believing that the state was sufficiently weak as to not require prolonged warfare, ERP leaders pushed instead for a campaign of massive and "headline-grabbing" urban terrorism (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 2). Bracamonte and Spencer go on to note that unlike the FPL, the ERP "placed little value on the need to politically organize the masses," choosing instead to prioritize military action (1995, 14). In contrast to the other movements, the ERP initially resisted the pressure to align with a mass organization and was viewed as least ideological among the five organizations (Manning 2008*a*, 117). It would be misleading, however, to view the ERP as entirely lacking a socio-political component. The ERP has its roots in the Christian base communities in Morazán. Many of those who went through the catechist training either aligned with or joined the ERP and helped recruit militia groups in the area (Ching 2010, xxiv). Thus, what the ERP lacked in a political-basis for the struggle, they made up for in a "well-established social network" that comprised educated and radicalized members of CEBs (ibid.). As the ERP evolves, it eventually shifts toward more explicit political engagement, but this move comes only after years of being wrought with internecine debates and violence over their ideological stance. These debates culminated in the murder of poet and prominent ERP member, Roque Dalton (Ching 2010, xxx).

Fearing for their lives after Dalton's assassination and still discontent with the narrow focus on grandiose military action, a more ideological faction of ERP members broke away in 1975 to form the *Resistencia Nacional* (RN). The RN emphasized a mass orientation by organizing civilians and forging strong alliances with labor associations (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 14). For RN leaders, military action was of secondary importance and should be used only in service of other activities. From an organizational standpoint, the RN had the most formal and diversified structure out of the five groups (Montgomery 1995, 105). Immediately after splitting from the ERP, the RN created an affiliated armed wing—the FARN—and they founded mass organization—FAPU—the purpose of which was to mobilize a support base composed of students, workers, and unions.

Yet another break from the ERP in 1976 resulted in the formation of the third OP-M, the PRTC. Comprising mostly radical students from the University of El Salvador, the PRTC was the smallest of the groups (Manning 2008*a*, 117). The PRTC differed from other groups in that they espoused a more regionalist ideology and sought to incite a socialist revolution across Central America more broadly. The group had a political-ideological wing as well as a military wing, which carried out relatively small-scale terrorist attacks throughout the war.

The increasing corruption and militarization of the state throughout the 1970s came to a head in early 1978. When the PCN with the help of ORDEN engaged in a massive voter-intimidation campaign during the 1977 elections and, in response, people gathered in San Salvador to protest the fraudulent elections, state-let security forces responded by indiscriminately opening fire on the crowds. In the wake of this massacre, the PCS had a change of heart, concluding that "once again, the time had come for armed struggle" (Montgomery 1995, 105). The PCS formed an armed wing—the FAL—and became the fifth armed group that would only a year later comprise the FMLN.

The emergence of leftist military organizations in El Salvador is wrought with as much fighting among each other as there was between them and the state. Various attempts at unification throughout the 1970s failed, which served only to magnify tensions between the groups. Yet, to mount the offensive any of the groups had envisioned—whether urban or rural, quick or prolonged—they needed to secure proper military training and adequate supplies. In 1979, the FSLN's victory against the Samoza regime across the border simultaneously established precedent for a successful leftist insurrection in Central America, and created an opportunity to exploit the supply chain from Cuba to Nicaragua. There was only one problem. While Castro viewed the Nicaraguan victory as an opportunity to incite leftist revolutions throughout the region, he insisted that the left in El Salvador would only receive support on the condition that the revolutionary groups form a united front. Not without considerable drama, they agreed.

From December of 1979 to May of 1980, leaders from the five organizations met in Havana to negotiate the terms of unification. Notwithstanding various walk-outs and noticeable absences (usually by one of the RN or the ERP), the meetings led to the successful creation of the Unified Revolutionary Directorate (DRU) on May 22, 1980 (Montgomery 1995, 109). The internal politics of the early DRU have important implications for the FMLN's evolution. Going into the negotiations, one of the most vitriolic relationships was between the RN and the ERP, and this tension was only exacerbated with as the various leaders worked together to iron out a unified organizational structure. As Bracamonte and Spencer recount, of the five groups, the ERP's strategic approach happened to be most similar to that of the (recently successful) Sandinistas in Nicaragua (1995, 16). As such, the Cuban leadership favored the ERP, which, unsurprisingly, incensed the RN leadership, causing them to temporarily withdraw from the organization. Within several weeks, however, RN leader Ernesto Jovel was murdered under mysterious circumstances and the RN begrudgingly rejoined (ibid.). Internal conflict was not limited to the ERP-RN schism. Carpio (the FPL leader) also felt disenfranchised when the group's prolonged popular war strategy was summarily rejected by other members in favor of staging a single popular insurrection in January of 1981.

FMLN Structure on the Eve of War

Negotiations were finalized in October of 1980. To honor the leader and martyr of the 1932 peasant uprising, the DRU choose to operate together as an umbrella organization called the *Frente Farabundo Martií para Liberació Nacional* (FMLN). Despite pushback from the ERP—whose leaders argued that the FMLN should be a truly unified front—the composite organizations each retained their own ideology, structure, and tactical approach throughout the war (Montgomery 1995, 52). Thus, the leaders from each constituent organization together comprised the DRU, which in theory (though not always in practice) operated via democratic centralism (1995, 110); and the OP-Ms on the ground continued operating as they had prior to unification. As Bracamonte and Spencer note, however, the OP-Ms were not the only organizations under the direction of the DRU (1995, 15). Throughout the 1970s, each OP-M had either built or aligned with a political mass organization (which itself comprised a variety of smaller organizations or unions) that

served as a conduit for mobilizing civilians across many sectors.

The popular organizations were broad coalitions made up of labor and trade unions, peasant and farmer associations, groups of revolutionary university students and intellectuals, and a variety of other groups committed to grassroots political change. The goal of the fronts was to coordinate political action among the numerous small organizations they represented (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 5). Similarly to the emergence of the military organizations described above, the popular organizations were initially unable to agree on the best approach to the fight. The result was a different popular organization for every OP-M, depicted in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: OP-Ms and Popular Organization Affiliations

OP-M	**Mass Front**	**Strategic Approach**
FPL (1970)	BPR (1975)	Prolonged popular struggle with emphasis on forging ties to campesinos in the countryside
ERP (1972)	LP-28 (1978)	Emphasis on violent overthrow through insurrection and general strike
RN (1974)	FAPU (1974)	Emphasis on political action through organization of unions and intellectuals
PRTC (1976)	MLP (1979)	Emphasis on pan-Central American socialist revolution through terrorism
PCS-FAL (1978)	UDN (1969)	Emphasis on using armed struggle as a means to political ends

Throughout 1980, the mass organizations went through a parallel unification process as we observe in the FMLN. First, in January of 1980, four of the five organizations united as the *Coordinadora Revolución de Masas* (CRM).[10] In April of 1980, the CRM joined with another broad front of organizations pushing for a democratic revolution in El Salvador, the *Frente Democrático* (FD) and became the *Frente Democrático Revolucionario* or FDR. The goal was to create a unified and coordinated front of left and center-left organizations to be affiliated with the rebellion throughout the war (McClintock 1998, 52).

One trait that set the FMLN apart from many revolutionary groups was its express desire to participate in democratic politics from the very beginning. The revolution was not supposed to be about achieving some utopic vision of communism, but rather a pragmatic

[10]FAPU originally denied entry of the MLP into the CRM on the basis that they lacked the capacity to mobilize supporters (Montgomery 1995, 107). There is reason to believe, however, that FAPU leaders were merely punishing the MLP because they had the support of the BPR, whose leaders were FAPU defectors. The MLP finally became part of the CRM in May of 1980.

struggle to give the left a strong and legal voice in a democratic system (McClintock 1998, 56). The evidence corroborating the FMLN's democratic ambitions is vast. In February of 1980—one month after the formation of the CRM, but eight months *before* the FMLN would officially unify— the the CRM published its political platform calling for a Revolutionary Democratic Government (GDR) (Montgomery 1995, 118). Far beyond just a call for participatory government, this document enumerated detailed structural changes to the political, economic, and social sectors of El Salvador. Even the most staunch Marxist ideologue among the DRU, Cayetano Carpio, went on record saying, "the revolutionary government...will not be socialist...the revolutionary democratic government will support all private businessmen, industrialists, and merchants, and all of those who promote the development of the country" (*Interview with Cayetano Carpio* 1980, 4). The leader of the PRTC, Roberto Roca, echoed these points: "We want democracy and stability" (*Roberto Roca* March 18, 1982), as did ERP leader, Joaquín Villalobos, "The FMLN is struggling for a government of full participation, with representation from all the democratic political forces, including of course the FMLN-FDR" (Villalobos 1983).

Organizational Implications of the FMLN's Umbrella Structure

On the eve of the insurrection, the FMLN unquestionably had among the most complex organizational structures of any insurgent group. To say that the FMLN exhibited organization diversification would be an understatement given its five politico-military groups and nearly countless popular organizations under the FDR. Each OP-M and corresponding mass front brought a distinct set of skills and opportunities to the FMLN. As I illustrate above, however, these diverse pieces did not fit together seamlessly. As such, the FMLN's varied organizational structure came with both advantages and risks.

The foremost advantage of the FMLN's structure—and what I argue proved critical to its capacity to adapt throughout the war and transition into a party thereafter—is that each component group brings a distinct set of skills to the organization as a whole. The ERP, for example, was born out of the Cristian base communities in the northeast of the country. Although the group was less focused on situating the struggle within a well-defined political ideology, they were heavily embedded in local communities—particularly in Morazán. Indeed, according to Montgomery, the ERP "lived among the people and with them" (1995, 115). Similarly, the FPL's emphasis on building a strong support base among campesinos (and the BPR's corresponding alliances with campesino organizations like FECCAS) with an eye toward a prolonged struggle proved crucial to the FMLN when they needed to shift tactics after the insurrection. Not only did this pre-war embeddedness create a base of support among the recently politicized campesinos, but it also created less conflictual opportunities for territorial control than is common for rebellions given its existing relationships in those areas.

The RN and its political wing brought a complementary set of skills to the FMLN. Their close ties to teachers, students, and other intellectuals in San Salvador meant that the RN was one of the conduits to urban support networks. Moreover, their steadfast commitment to the political aspect of the struggle manifested in two ways that would shape the future of the FMLN. First, through its political schools and strong links to

the University, the RN brought to the FMLN a consistent base of educated recruits in urban areas (1995, 107). Second, FAPU (the RN's political front) was widely known for its dissemination of theoretically-driven and politically-incisive publications, which later had "a profound impact on the development of [the FMLN's] unified political program in 1980" (ibid.).

The longstanding PCS presence in San Salvador meant that the FMLN was also able to leverage urban support networks built around the Communist Party. Crucially, since the PCS has been in existence since the 1930s, these networks were well-established. Yet, the most important support networks that the PCS contributed to the FMLN were not those at home, but abroad. The Communist Party in El Salvador had a rolodex of international contacts that exceeded those of the Salvadoran state and proved crucial to the FMLN's ability to secure funding and resources throughout the war (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 3). It was through the PCS's contacts with the socialist world that the soon-to-be Political-Diplomatic Commission (CPD) would be able to travel to and station official representatives in nearly three dozen countries.

The FMLN's existing political and social structures in El Salvador and abroad are among the most diverse and sophisticated of any insurgent group prior to the onset of the conflict. In the early days of the FMLN's coalescence, however, I argue that the advantages of these diverse skills and broad sets of alliances are offset by the intense rivalries between the various OP-Ms. To make matters worse, while the inter-group feuding was initially fueled only by ideological differences, the FMLN's Cuban and Nicaraguan sponsors exacerbated these conflicts by playing favorites—most notably with the ERP (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 4). Due in part to its relationship with Cuba and in part to its strategic position along the Nicaraguan border (through which weapons flowed to the FMLN), the ERP typically had the most and the best weapons throughout the war, despite the official policy that weapons would be distributed equally among the groups.

The severity of the ideological and material rifts between the various OP-Ms—particularly given the short time between establishing the FMLN and the first insurrection—created a risk of fracturing for the nascent umbrella organization. In the context of ongoing friction between the component groups, the FMLN is unlikely to be able to benefit maximally from its myriad political skills. In short, rivalry is the enemy of diversity. As such, the FMLN's capacity for effective fighting—to say nothing of post-war transition—rests on whether whether the organization develops mechanisms for coordination and internal conflict resolution. As of January 1981, such mechanisms were nonexistent.

7.3 The Outbreak of War and the FMLN's Evolution

This section traces the organizational evolution of the FMLN from its formation in October of 1980 to the end of the war in 1992. The FMLN's evolution throughout the war is punctuated by three discrete tactical and organizational shifts around which I organize this section. The first came immediately in the wake of their first incursion, the second shift corresponded with key political changes implemented after the 1984 elections, and the third came in 1990 once the Salvadoran government conceded to negotiate with the

FMLN as the group then reconfigured itself into a legal political party. This section begins with the creation of the FMLN's radio station, *Radio Venceremos!* ("We Will Win!"), and then moves through each of their organizational shifts in turn.

The goal of this section is not to provide a comprehensive play-by-play of the Salvadoran Civil War, but rather to test whether the the organizational structures of the FMLN have consequences in line with my theoretical predictions. In each stage of the FMLN's evolution, I take stock of its structure and discuss the corresponding implications for resilience both on and beyond the battlefield. Despite its popular support going into the war and relative wealth of resources, the FMLN is far from a wunderkind. Its path from formation to transition was mired in obstacles both from within the organization and from the outside. As such, I argue that the FMLN's success is a function not of its initial endowments or innate skills, but from its capacity to engage in self-conscious organizational assessment and adaptation. I demonstrate that with each failure or challenge, FMLN leaders critically reflect on their organizational deficiencies and work to overcome them.

7.3.1 *Radio Venceremos!* The Voice of the Resistance

While their emphases differed slightly, FMLN leaders shared a vision of an insurrection that incited revolutionary fervor in the masses. Strikes, protests, and marches would fill the streets as FMLN brigades captured army bases, brining the country to a screeching halt. There was just one problem: the rebels had no way of getting the word out. The media blackout in the wake of the 1972 elections culminated in the state exerting rigid control over all media outlets. El Salvador had no free press to speak of and the penalty for distributing anti-government literature was usually death on the spot. In his memoirs, José Ignacio López Vigil captures the logic that led to one of the most valuable faces of the movement:

> If you had a leaflet in your bag, it could cost you your life. Was it worth risking the lives of those handing leaflets out, to say nothing of those accepting them? Maybe that's why the idea of a radio station took root—*they can't frisk you for a voice.*

The goal was beyond ambitious: to create a mobile radio station in time for the January insurrection with the broadcast strength to reach the capital. Indeed, any *one* of those three goals (a mobile station, a radio that worked within a month, a station with the strength to reach the capital when only shortwave radios were allowed) would likely have been deemed overreaching, and that is to say nothing of finding the staff to broadcast, run, and defend the station. In just thirteen days, ERP members stole a shortwave radio, found an engineer to convert it to transmit via AM, and found what would become "the most recognizable voice in El Salvador" (Ching 2010, xxxviii): Carlos Henríque Consalvi, "Santiago." Despite a barrage of technical difficulties, the initial broadcast went out on the evening January 10, 1981 to announce the insurrection (Vigil 1991, 20).

What became one of the FMLN's most important resources for their political struggle emerged in perhaps the least likely place. For, it was ERP commander Joaquín Villalobos

who pushed for a solution to the FMLN's communication problem. At the time, of course, Villalobos did not plan for a long-running radio station that would become the voice of the resistance. Nevertheless, it was among the ERP—the least ideologically-motivated of the OP-Ms—that *Radio Venceremos!* emerged. Arguably, its ties to the ERP explain why the *Venceremos!* message was not as politically-charged as one might expect, particularly early on in the war. In his memoirs, Santiago writes, "first and foremost, we'll have to concern ourselves with sticking to the truth in order to get and keep credibility. Our mission will be to inform, stir up, and orient" (Consalvi 2010, 20).

Though the station emerged to coordinate the insurrection, it continued broadcasting with impressive regularity throughout the war. They averaged two broadcasts per day despite being one of the most sought-after targets of the Salvadoran army (Montgomery 1995, 151). The station, though mobile, was based mostly out of Morazán where they were under the protection of the ERP.

7.3.2 Organizational Learning and The "Final" Offensive (1980–1984)

The relatively inchoate organization wasted no time planning their insurrection. While the organization had only officially coalesced in early October of 1980, FMLN leaders planned the general offensive for January 10, 1981 – giving themselves only three months to recruit and train the 15,000-man army they estimated they would need to topple the regime (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 17). Though rebel groups infrequently err on the side of humility when naming their military operations (recall the RUF's "Operation No Living Thing"), it takes an almost impressive amount of hubris to title your debut incursion "The Final Offensive." Nevertheless, the FMLN was so confident in both the weakness of the Salvadoran armed forces and the mass support they would get from the people that the majority of decision-makers felt the revolution would be a swift one.

The Final Offensive

FMLN leaders planned a three-part insurrection to maximize both the military and psychological impact on the government. The first component was a nationwide military offensive in which the five OP-Ms would simultaneously attack bases of the Salvadoran Armed Forces (FAES). The second component entailed calling for a nationwide worker's strike. The goal here was to not only demonstrate the level of popular support for the insurgency, but also to create mass chaos, thus forcing FAES troops to spread their manpower too thin to get control of the country. The third component of the Final Offensive was to encourage a mass defection from the Salvadoran Armed Forces, thus dealing a severe psychological blow to the state (1995, 18). Over the course of the previous year, numerous lower-level members (mostly affiliated with the ERP) had been infiltrating the Armed Forces with a two-part goal: reconnaissance and subterfuge. In addition to gathering intelligence on the state of the armed forces, their goal was to incite unrest within the FAES ranks.

On January 10, 1980 strategic guerrilla attacks enabled ERP leader Cayetano Carpio to commandeer a state-owned radio station to inform the people of the rebellion and call for the mass strikes.[11] According to many accounts, the first few hours of the insurrection played out in the FMLN's favor: popular organizations mobilized supporters to go out into the streets and in some places the Salvadoran Army seemed to be on the defensive (Montgomery 1995, 113). However, the leaders' sanguine hopes of a single insurrection that would hand power back to the people were soon dashed. Unable to secure the radio station for long enough, Carpio was able to tell people to "prepare for a general strike," but not when the strike would be (1995, 113). Defections from the army were far below FMLN estimates and state forces were soon able to regain control of military barracks and public spaces (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 19). Within a few days, FMLN leaders reluctantly announced "the end of the first phase of the general offensive" and withdrew from the cities to regroup in the hinterlands in the north and east of the country (Montgomery 1995, 113).

Causes of the Failure

By all scholarly, military, and self accounts, the "Final Offensive" was a complete failure. Moreover, unlike other military debacles, the Final Offensive was not simply a matter of being overpowered by a well-equipped military. On the contrary, the Salvadoran armed forces faired little better than the nascent insurgency and exhausted many of their resources in the process (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 20). The aftermath of the Final Offensive had critical organizational implications as the FMLN regrouped and moved forward with the rebellion. To understand how this debacle affected the organization, it is first crucial to understand what led to the failure and, more importantly, how the FMLN interpreted and reacted to the crisis.

The causes of the FMLN's failed insurrection can be sorted along three dimensions: organizational problems, logistical problems, and naive miscalculation. At this point in time the FMLN suffered from two organizational problems that (at least in retrospect) severely call into question the feasibility of the three-part plan. The first organizational problem was the FMLN's unresolved internal rivalries. Despite a consensus among Cuba, Nicaragua, and *some* FMLN leaders about the Final Offensive plan, the DRU remained divided over the appropriate military strategy. Neither the FPL nor the RN favored a violent insurrection and many cadres from these OP-Ms neglected to participate entirely in what was supposed to be coordinated military action (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 19). For its part, the ERP only compounded intra-group tensions by hoarding for itself the best weapons coming through Nicaragua. McClintock characterizes the early FMLN as "an unwieldy coalition of quarrelsome groups," and proceeds to argue that were it not for the vitriolic relations between leaders, the FMLN would likely have achieved a swift

[11] Although *Radio Venceremos!* was transmitting, the signal at the time was insufficient to reach enough of El Salvador to rely on that broadcast alone.

victory during that period (1998, 90).[12]

In addition to its internal rivalries, the FMLN made a consequential organizational blunder during its preparation for the insurrection by uncritically repurposing cadres from its political wings into its military wing. The problem originated out of a near-exclusive focus in the late 1970s of building up the respective political cadres with an eye toward mobilizing the masses (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 116). The combination of a homogenous focus on building its political fronts and the lack of military background across the OP-Ms meant that the FMLN had a mere three months to build up the armed forces it needed for the insurrection. Even the ERP, which favored violent insurrection from the start, lacked formal training and a background in military strategy. According to Bracamonte and Spencer, the FMLN's current structure posed a dilemma: the most readily available source of military recruits was its political wing, yet "stripping the political wing of its key cadres [meant that] there was no guarantee that the organizations would come out into the streets for the insurrection" (1995, 116). Nevertheless, they took the risk. On the advice of the Sandinistas, FMLN leaders chose to repurpose key cadres from its mass political organizations into combat units (ibid.).

Unsurprisingly, the FMLN's fears of not being able to mobilize a national strike in the wake of decimating their mass organizations came to fruition. Far fewer people than the FMLN anticipated actually made it into the streets for the January insurrection in large part because the people who would have coordinated the movement, were instead acting in a military capacity. Stepping back from the case, we can see that this misstep represents a complementary example of the risks of repurposing cadres from one organizational subdivision into an unrelated domain. In the cases I describe throughout the manuscript, I argue that groups attempting to place guerrilla cadres into political roles are unlikely to achieve political success given the dearth of relevant skills. While the problem described here represents the inverse—a military failure due to repurposing political cadres into an armed force—it nonetheless highlights the importance of considering how organizational subdivisions affect the operations and success of insurgent groups. non-transferability

The FMLN faced logistical problems alongside its organizational challenges. The lack of coordination among FMLN factions—though rooted ideologically—was made worse by its limited capacity for communication. The movement had not yet established the radio communications system it would come to rely on later in the war. As a result, even the cadres that *did* participate failed to coordinate the simultaneous attacks that the original plan called for (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 19).

The last factor that contributed to the failed insurrection was the DRU's naive miscalculation of its capacity to mobilize popular support. The FMLN knew outright that it lacked the capacity to topple the state by military action alone, which is why the plan included mass political mobilization in the form of a national strike. That facet of the plan, however, was built on an assumption that revolutionary fervor was stirring throughout all sectors of the population. Dominated largely by the ERP's reasoning that

[12]Bracamonte and Spencer (1995), Montgomery (1995), and Manning (2008a) corroborate this point arguing that the FMLN's internecine rivalries were a greater obstacle to success than the Salvadoran state.

conspicuous shows of force would ignite these grievances, sending people flooding into the streets in solidarity with the insurrection, the FMLN "felt no need to prepare for this event" (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 19).

Assessment and Adaptation

While the January offensive was a military failure any way you turn it, the manner in which the FMLN reacted to the blow had beneficial organizational repercussions that shaped its trajectory moving forward. In the immediate aftermath of the failed offensive, the FMLN leadership displayed a remarkable capacity for critical self-reflection and adaptation. The ability to self-consciously reflect was in part a function of the democratic power-sharing structure of the DRU. From an organizational standpoint, consensus-based structure meant that accountability for the failure was dispersed across many people rather than concentrated within a single individual. Psychologically, this dispersal of responsibility makes it easier for leaders to ask *"what went wrong?"* without necessarily needing to point to themselves.

In the wake of the failed insurrection, the various FMLN leaders came to identical conclusions about what went wrong. PCS leader, Shafik Handal, said in an interview "The delay in the united of the revolutionary organizations did not allow us to take advantage of the revolutionary insurrection situation of 1980. Unity should have been consummated a year earlier, but analysis is slower than objective reality" (Bonasso & Gómez Leyva 1992, 35). Joaquín Villalobos—the leader of the ERP—corroborated this point, attributing the failure to take power at that time to "the lack of unification upon a strategic line within the revolutionary movement" (Villalobos 1986, 8). The disunity was evident throughout the organization and when combined with logistical challenges, like the shortage of arms and the absence of a reliable communication network, it made success nearly impossible. Crucially, as Bracamonte and Spencer note, FMLN leaders interpreted the January insurrection as a tactical failure, rather than a strategic one (1995, 21). In other words, the approach was a good one, but at the time the organization lacked the cohesion, communication, and military capacity to execute it.

The pernicious consequences of internal rivalry dealt a sobering blow to the DRU; but rather than pushing them further apart, the leadership used this failure to learn – embracing a shift toward unity and flexibility. Previously, the varied strategic approaches associated with the different OP-Ms were a strain on cohesion and decision-making.[13] Moving forward, the DRU (which was then renamed the General Command) incorporated all of the strategic approaches into a holistic arsenal, thus allowing the FMLN to "change the priority depending on the current strategic situation" (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 8). Indeed, as Bracamonte and Spencer go on to argue, this embrace of tactical diversity gave the FMLN "a flexibility rarely seen in previous guerrilla groups" (ibid.). Flexibility became part and parcel of the FMLN identity, which allowed the group to "pick and choose between what worked and what didn't work" (ibid.).

[13]Recall that the three most powerful voices in the FMLN were the ERP, which sought "direct military action;" the FPL, which sought a prolonged popular war strategy; and the RN, which prioritized political action supplemented by armed struggle (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 7).

7.4 New Strategic Phase (1981–1984)

Just days after the failed insurrection, FMLN combatants retreated to the countryside to regroup, rebuild, and try again. Convinced that all that was missing from the January offensive was sufficient training and cohesion, the FMLN leadership continued to pursue a military-first strategy. The various OP-Ms were instructed to bolster recruitment and training efforts in order to build a standing army capable of engaging the FAES with an eye toward taking power by violent means (Byrne 1996, 107). As such, the orders that flowed from the top down to each OP-M were the same and they reflected an ostensible consensus (or at least compromise) among the FMLN's leaders. The six months following the January insurrection were spent creating a strategic rearguard in rural El Salvador and bolstering military training for its recruits. The insurgents launched their second offensive in July of 1981, which was not only considerably more successful than their first attempt, but was the beginning of a two-year streak of military successes against the army.

A bird's eye view of the FMLN in the early 1980s, would reveal an organization arcing toward the vision of the leadership. The modal account of the FMLN in the early 1980s reflects this trajectory, characterizing the organization as a combat-centric one in which political activity takes a backseat to military prowess (Byrne 1996, 107).[14] This vantage, however, glosses over critical nuances in the FMLN's operations and organizational development. Indeed other (though fewer) narratives appear to contradict this story entirely – depicting instead an organization committed to building political structures and engaging with local populations on both social and political dimensions. These contradicting accounts not only raise important questions about the true nature of the organization's structure during this period, but moreover, they lead to diametrically opposed predictions about the future political capacity of the FMLN.

Yet, the reality is that both narratives are true. The DRU's choice to allow each OP-M to retain its organizational structure—and by extension, its ideological bent—created a unique geographical phenomenon as the five component organizations retreated to *different* regions of the country. Specifically, while the strategic directive from above broadly deemphasized local political engagement in favor of military recruitment, the extent to which this decree played out *in practice* varied tremendously as a function of which group presided over the area and what their political preferences were (Montgomery 1995, 122). The intra-group variation is most stark between the ERP and the FPL, which, respectively, occupied regions in Morazán and Chalatenango. Figure 7.1 illustrates the dispersion of FMLN forces during this period. This section traces the development of the FMLN from its retreat to the countryside in January of 1981 until the Salvadoran elections of 1984. First, I exploit the regional-organizational differences by tracing the parallel evolution of the insurgency in Morazán and Chalatenango. I derive a set of predictions Then, I return to a bird's-eye view of the war – taking stock of the FMLN's standing vis-a-vis the Salvadoran military and their prospects for achieving their goals. Finally, I outline

[14]See Byrne (1996, 114), Montgomery (1995, 173), Bracamonte and Spencer (1995, 22), and Wood (2000, 49) for narratives that characterize the FMLN as broadly apolitical in this phase of the war.

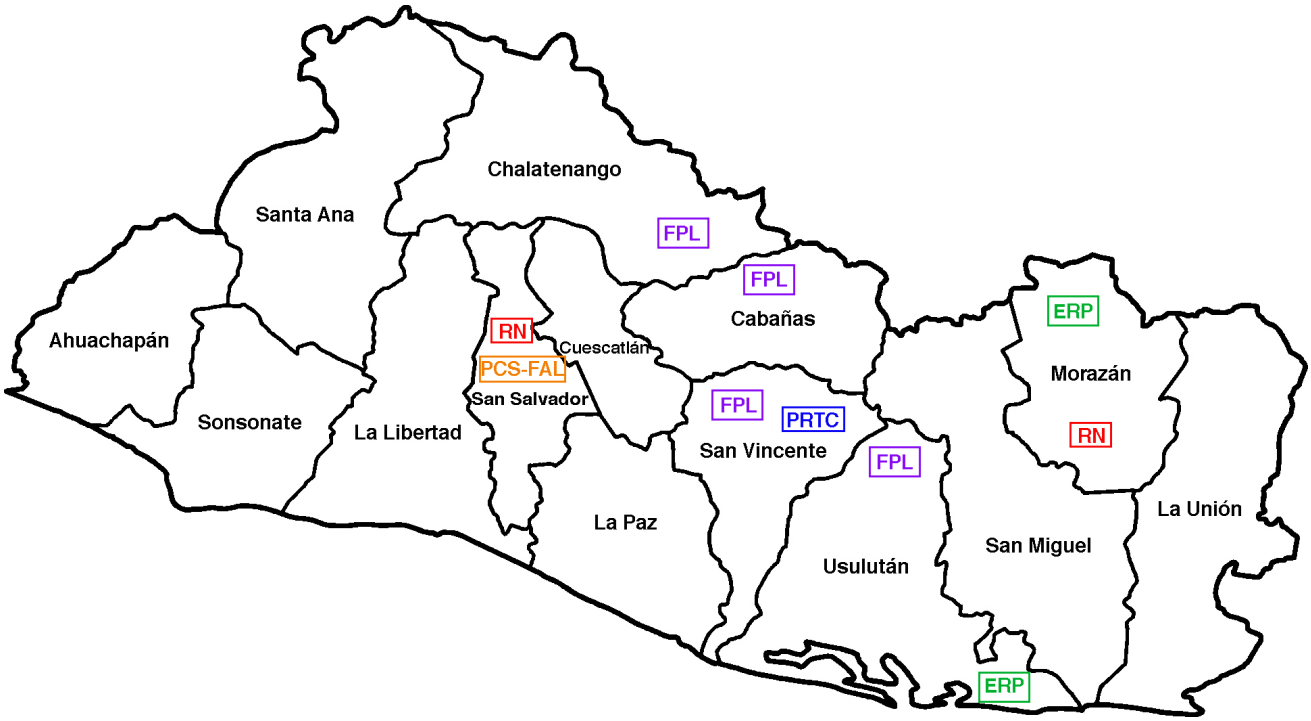


Figure 7.1: Location of OP-Ms (1981–1984)

a fundamental shift in the wartime environment precipitated by increased US involvement in the Salvadoran conflict and culminating in the country's first semi-democratic elections since 1930. The corresponding changes in the wartime environment created a series of obstacles that ultimately made the FMLN's current approach untenable, forcing them to rethink their strategy and undergo yet another major adaptation in the final phase of the war.

7.4.1 One Organization, Many Structures

During this early phase of the war, the FMLN was a chimera—some parts of it bore so little resemblance to other parts that one would hardly recognize them as coming from the same animal. This level of intraorganizational divergence presents an invaluable opportunity to test my theory at the sub-group level. For, if my theory is accurate and political diversification of rebels' organizational structures during wartime indeed facilitates transition into a political actor at the war's end, then we should expect to a comparable story when different sects of the *same* organization differ fundamentally on those dimensions. Specifically, I anticipate that the ERP's combat-centric evolution in northern Morazán will (1) make any non-combat adaptations more difficult, and (2) impede any future pursuit of political goals. In contrast, I expect that the FPL's steadfast commitment to community engagement and building diverse sociopolitical structures in Chalatenango will not only kindle more intense support for the organization from civilians, but will facilitate any transitions into the political realm.

Undertaking this sort of comparison, however, raises two important questions, which merit attention prior to the analysis. First, one might ask, *Why compare the ERP to the FPL rather than any other combination of the five OP-Ms?* This question is important, and it has two answers. The first answer is that the ERP and FPL are similar along a number of dimensions that may otherwise be relevant: their size, their relative influence within the FMLN, and their origins in rural Christian base communities in their respective departments. The main difference between the two OP-Ms is that they hold diametrically opposing views on the importance of political engagement of civilian populations. Thus, from the standpoint of testing my theory, they are the best comparison because they differ almost exclusively along the dimension on which my framework places primacy. The second answer is that we could just as easily look at any of the other groups and derive predictions in a similar manner.

Is there a chance that Morazán and Chalatenango are sufficiently different as to have driven the outcomes? Morazán and Chalatenango represent a useful comparison because they, too, are similar along important dimensions: they are both primarily rural areas, radical Christianity took root in both departments during the 1960s and 70s, they were both targets of government oppression before and during the war, and they were the two largest areas of FMLN control throughout the war (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 47). Moreover, the *combat* operations carried out in Morazán and Chalatenango did not differ. Both the ERP and the FPL fought battles "at a mostly conventional level" in their respective strongholds (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 59). So, the levels and type of violence that occurred in both regions were more-or-less comparable. Where the two narratives diverge is in what the occupying OP-Ms did *in addition to* combat.

Focused Militancy in Northern Morazán

After the January offensive failed to overthrow the government, the ERP retreated to its base in Morazán department in eastern El Salvador. At the time, the FMLN leadership was still pursuing a strategy that derived from the ERP. As such, the operations carried out in Morazán most closely reflected the approach sent down from the General Command. Recall that from its inception, the ERP "placed little value on the need to organize politically" (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 14). With an exclusive emphasis on military action, the ERP viewed the retreat to Morazán as an opportunity to build a large standing army and prepare for another shot at overthrowing the regime through violent insurrection. Thus, their goals upon returning to Morazán were to liberate the northern half of the department by wiping out any government and paramilitary presence, and to establish a rearguard dedicated to military training (Ching 2010, xxxii).

Initially, the situation on the ground was volatile with consistent clashes between both government and paramilitary forces, as the state was far from absent in this region. It was here that state forces committed what many hold to be the worst humanitarian atrocity of the war (on either side). On December 11, 1981—following a clash with ERP militants nearby—a FAES battalion rounded up the entire town of El Mozote and systematically executed nearly 1,000 civilians. Yet, in the two years following their retreat to Morazán, the ERP made significant progress toward their goals. They amassed a large and well-

trained army drawn primarily from the church networks in which the ERP had its origins. By 1983, the ERP had managed to successfully rid the northern half of the department of government forces (Ching 2010, xxxii).

Predictably, ERP operations in Morazán were centered almost exclusively on combat and combat-supporting activities. Thus, while the ERP engaged in some non-combat activities, they were mainly in service of the armed missions. For example, the ERP established numerous clandestine hospitals, but these were used for treating rebels injured in combat. Similarly, the ERP leaned on their prewar church networks (i.e. Christian base communities) for recruits, supplies, and logistical support, yet they kept education and mobilization of these communities to a minimum (Binford 1997, 61). As Binford observes, "between 1981 and 1983 even the church was subordinated to the revolutionary process" (1997, 62). Thus, the group's lack of political engagement was not for want of a viable network of politically-conscious citizens, it was a deliberate choice based on the assumption that civilian support for the revolution was inevitable.

The ERP's narrow focus on bolstering its combat structures—rather than expanding the organization into politically- and socially-oriented domains—had noticeable implications for the dynamic between the ERP and the population as the war progressed. According to Binford, while civilians in the area continued to provide material and logistical support to the rebels, this support was not organized (1997, 61). Civilians were ideologically fragmented and according to Miguel Ventura—a highly influential priest in the area—"there was little sense of community." At the same time, a bolstered counterinsurgency force on the part of the government meant that the ERP was losing personnel faster than they could recruit and train replacements, at which point the OP-M briefly turned to forced conscription. Ideological support for the ERP dropped precipitously and I will go on to show that the problems the ERP was experiencing in Morazán toward the end of 1983 were a microcosm of the FMLN more broadly in that period.

Political Diversification in Chalatenango

The progress of the war and development of the ERP in Morazán were largely representative of the FMLN more broadly during this phase; yet if we turn to Chalatenango, a very different story emerges. In the aftermath of the failed insurrection, the FPL retreated to Chalatenango where—much like the ERP in Morazán—it had originated out of the Christian base communities of the 1970s. Yet, the similarities between OP-Ms stop here. In contrast with insurgent operations elsewhere, FPL insurgents in Chalatenango "placed great emphasis" on developing grassroots governance structures in cooperation with locals (Montgomery 1995, 120). Rather than simply controlling territory, the FPL's priority was to "establish the infrastructure of resistance" among the peasantry (**?**, 15). This approach to territorial administration followed from the FPL's ideological orientation emphasizing "social and community organizations" in service of a prolonged popular war (Ching 2010, xxxii). Here, I detail the social and political structures that the FPL built during this time and their implications for the both the FPL and future of the broader movement.

Before I begin, however, it is worth addressing a potential misinterpretation of the

FPL's activities during this period. Keeping in mind that the orders from the FMLN general command were to build up large battalions for engaging the armed forces in conventional warfare, one might interpret the FPL's political activities as insubordination, and thus, not worthy of comparison. I argue, however, that the FPL's approach represents not insubordination, but a logical interpretation of orders given the FPL's ideology, through which the orders were filtered. Recall that the FPL emphasized a revolution through a popular war achieved by politicizing and mobilizing peasants in the countryside. In essence, FPL ideology does not understand an insurrection as something that can be divorced from political mobilization. According to Pearce, the FPL interpreted the concept of "rearguards" (which OP-Ms were instructed to establish in the countryside) as something more than a military designation. She argues that FPL leaders viewed rearguards and liberated territory "within a broader framework of political mobilization" (Pearce 1986, 242).

To this end, the FPL built a variety of structures aimed at facilitating grassroots mobilization and civilian engagement. Almost immediately following their retreat in Chalatenango, the FPL began setting up *Poderes Populares Locales* ("Local Popular Power" structures or PPLs). PPLs were grassroots structures through which civilians could organize, determine the needs of the community, and devise plans for attending to those needs. Unlike territorial control in many rebel-held areas, PPLS were not imposed structures of local control or even provision of basic needs and services. Rather, they were democratically elected bodies in which the civilian population nominated and voted for representatives "from among their own ranks" (ibid.). According to Pearce, the PPL was "an experiment in popular democracy...[and]...a means by which the civilian population could guarantee their needs and organize their society independent of the *military* command of the FPL" (1986, 242)(emphasis added). In essence, they provided to civilians participatory local governance that had been long-absent in the region (Pearce 1986, 242).

It is crucial, however, to not underestimate the challenge of creating participatory democratic institutions among a mostly illiterate population in a place with no legacy of legal political organization. Faced with this obstacle, the FPL leveraged its prewar networks in Christian base communities. By fostering community, leadership, and political consciousness among peasants, the CEBs provided an ideal medium for transferring the roles and skills from religious communities into an explicitly political sphere. Indeed, many of the early PPL leaders were the catechists (i.e. civilian church leaders) that had received training in the previous decade (Pearce 1986, 282). The way in which the FPL leveraged church networks to help build local political and administrative organizations unfolded in lockstep with my theoretical expectations about how a rebel group with proto-party structures would build a party organization. As such, building the PPLs was not just about building a community *around* an existing church organization, but taking individuals with comparable roles and skill sets and leveraging those to catalyze the building new, but related structures. Priest Rutilio Sánchez, who worked in Chalatenango during this period, confirms this process. "The catechists," he argues "are integrated into the PPL, but they're not in it as the Church, but as normal citizens. [They] of course have

the power to call people together, this is recognized by the community" (qtd. in Pearce 1986, 283-4).

The FPL did not stop at merely helping to establish PPLs in their areas; rather, they operated from the belief that peasant and guerrilla communities should be intertwined. This stance and the implications are evident in one account from an FPL leader station in Chalatenango in the early 1980s:

> At that time, the [OP-Ms] often had camps of their own. One of our contributions was to change people's conception that the militias had to be in camps separate from the population. We believed that as a paramilitary force, they had to be part of the people, living with them and sharing their problems and resolving them together with the people. (212)

As Pearce goes on to observe, "Through the PPLs, the peasants have gained experience and confidence in their capacity to work collectively and solve their own problems" (1986, 242). By helping peasant communities establish PPLs, the FPL created a base of support (and recruitment) while simultaneously contributing to the political mobilization of rural populations. This sort of engagement represents some of the earliest proto-party activity within the FMLN ranks. I anticipate that these local governance structures will translate into electoral rewards for the FMLN later on.

The second organizational structure through which the FPL entreated civilian engagement was a wing dedicated to literacy programs. The FPL's deep commitment to literacy is unsurprising given its origins: many of the highest ranking members of the FPL were teachers or university professors and the organization had strong ties with ANDES (the progressive teachers union) from its inception.[15] To FPL leaders—and FMLN leaders more generally—literacy was a requisite for the revolution. Similarly to the establishment of the PPLs, the process by which the FPL constructed and administered literacy programs entailed the leveraging and strategic repurposing of the FPL's organizational resources.[16]

Prior to the insurrection (and, thus, prior to the existence of PPLs), the FPL attempted to set up literacy programs in Chalatenango (Pearce 1986, 261). These early programs, however, were ad-hoc: lacking consistency in both scheduling and curriculum (ibid.). By late 1981, however, the FPL was now armed with two organizational tools that facilitated the creation of more widespread literacy programs in Chalatenango: its affiliation with ANDES, which provided consistent access to experienced educators, and the PPLs, which provided an ideal organizational medium for administering literacy programs. As Pearce observed in her work in Chalatenango in the early 1980s, the FPL indeed drew on "the teacher's group" (i.e. those who were also members of ANDES)

[15]Many individuals were members of both ANDES and the FPL. For example, the FPL's second-in-command, Mélinda Anaya Montes (aka Ana María), held a Ph.D. from the University of El Salvador and was one of the founders of ANDES (McClintock 1998, 256).

[16]In addition to leveraging its domestic networks, the FPL also relied heavily on the international wing of their organization for assistance with these tasks. While we usually think of international actors supplying money, arms, and military training to insurgents, the FPL implored its donors to send notebooks and pencils for their students (Pearce 1986, 267).

within the organization to create a literacy and post-literacy educational curriculum (1986, 263). Similar to the literacy programs in CEBs, the new curriculum drew on the approach of Paolo Freire's work, using economically- and politically-meaningful concepts to simultaneously enhance political consciousness and literacy. An example of this approach is depicted in Figure 7.2 [17]

The ties to ANDES provided the educational content, but it was the PPLs that allowed the FPL to institutionalize learning. Moreover, the development of literacy programs created a positive feedback look between education and political organizing in the region. A community organizer in Chalatenango during that period recounts this process:

> At first, there was an emphasis on the children...but many others said they wanted to learn too and the PPLs put literacy into their programmes as a fundamental element. We saw that literacy had a great deal to do with the organization of the people...For the first time, there was popular government with a minimum programme which gained legitimacy as schools began to function...The programme contributed to the development of the PPLs because, through literacy, people could be brought into more tasks; it mobilizes the population.[18]

Thus, not only did the PPLs act as an institutional medium through which the FPL could provide education, but the very act of providing education strengthened the administrative wings. According to the same community organizer quoted above, education became so central that the FPL began reframing their revolutionary message in terms of a "war against illiteracy" (Pearce 1986, 266).

The establishment of PPLs in Chalatenango had important implications for the civilians of Chalatenango, the FPL, and the FMLN more broadly. By giving local populations experience with democratic governance, participation, and political organization, the PPLs fostered a civil society. From the perspective of the organization, the evolution of the FPL in this period represents the quintessence of proto-party activity. They leveraged prewar educational networks to create a structured and institutionalized means of providing social services, particularly literacy classes. They mobilized a politically-active base of civilians and worked together to provide local governance. And to foreshadow the next phase in the war, the FPL's actions in this period provided a model toward which the entire FMLN would shift in the years to come.

Taking Stock of the ERP versus the FPL

The narratives above shed new light on the extent and implications of sub-organizational divergence within the FMLN. Notwithstanding the ideological bent of their respective leaders, the FPL and the ERP exhibited negligible differences in their origins. Both

[17]The page depicts an excerpt from one of the workbooks used, in which the word *frente* (front, as in a military front) is presented, broken apart into syllables, compared to similar syllables, used as a means of creating new words, and then discussed in the context of the revolutionary front in Chalatenango. The original image appears in Pearce (1986, 260).

[18]Interview excerpt from Pearce (1986, 266-7).

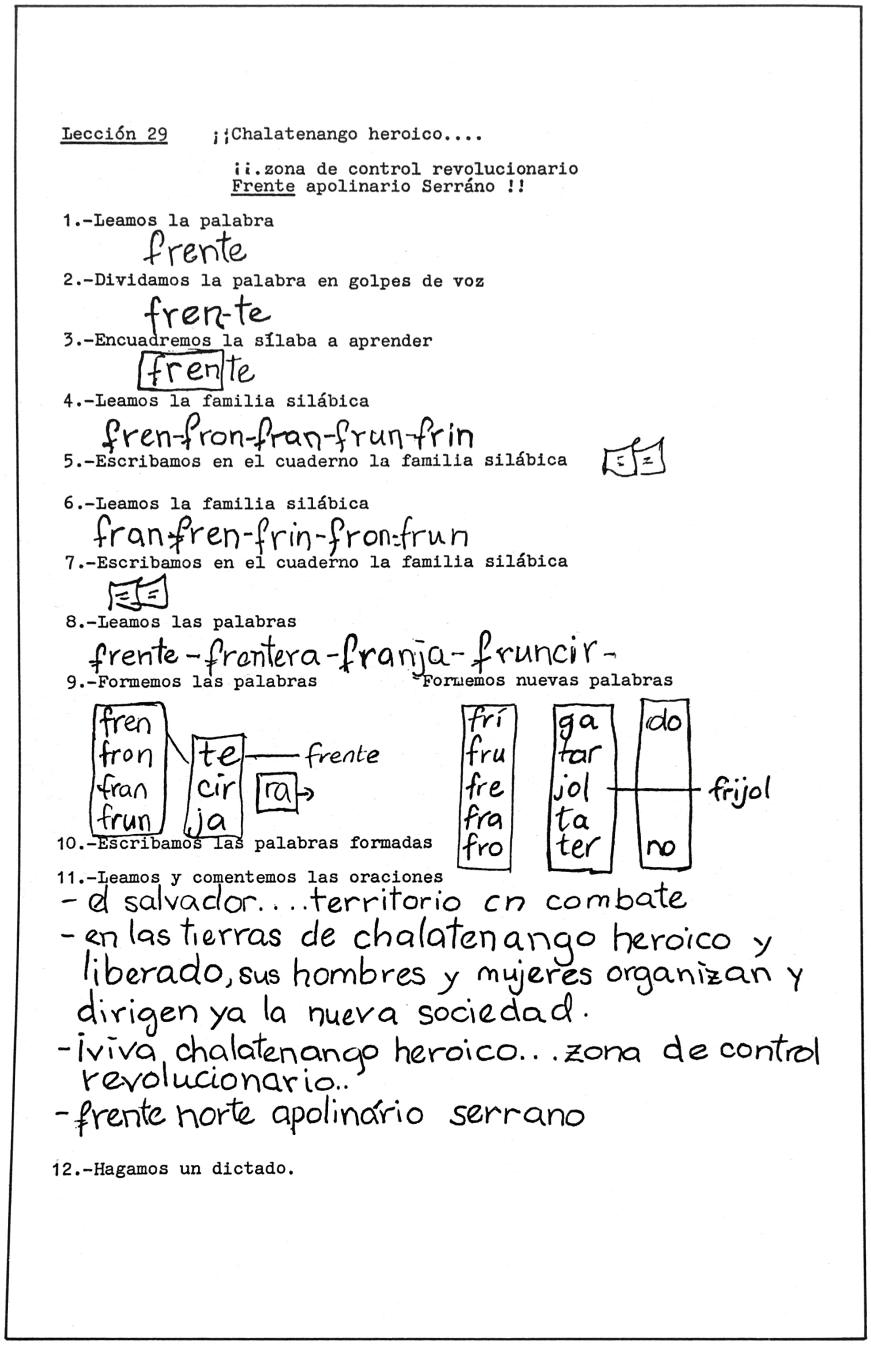


Figure 7.2: Excerpt from an Educational Workbook: *Lesson 29: Heroic Chalatenango!*

groups emerged in rural areas among poor campesinos, both had strong ties to Christian base communities in their respective departments, both groups had a well-educated leadership, and the list goes on. The extent of the similarities between the ERP and FPL—to say nothing of the fact that they are part of the same umbrella organization—throws their differences into even sharper relief. The divergent paths of the two OP-Ms have three

implications that make this comparison especially useful.

The first, and most specific implication from this micro-case study is that provides a within-case test of my theory. According to the framework I lay out in Chapter 3, I anticipate that the political wings of the FPL—and other comparable sects of the FMLN—are more likely than those in the ERP to become active party members once the FMLN transitions. Additionally, since the different OP-Ms operated in (mostly) discrete regions of El Salvador, I expect that the variation in political engagement with civilian populations during wartime will translate into variation in vote-share for the FMLN once it transitions into a political party.

Second, the parallel trajectories of the ERP and FPL in this period provide a key piece of evidence that the *process* of building and (re)configuring an organization proceeds in a manner consistent with my theoretical framework, rather than a structural-functionalist phenomenon in which useful structures emerge organically to fill a need. To recap, I argue that the process of organizational change—whether evolutionary or revolutionary—entails a self-conscious assessment of the organizations needs and resources, then a decision to augment, refine, or repurpose existing structures to meet those needs. In the context of the ERP and FPL cases, the way in which the respective OP-Ms chose to use their *similar* prewar ties to Christian base communities to *different* ends suggests that organizations do not simply progress through some predetermined metamorphosis. Given similar support networks among the civilian population, the ERP leadership opted to view the CEBs as little more than a pool of viable recruits and material support for the rebels. In contrast, FPL leaders strategically leveraged the roles and structures of those networks to integrate civilians into the organization and create a sustainable system of local governance.

The third and most general implication of this comparison is that it highlights the importance of expanding our analytic vocabulary to get traction on consequential differences both within and between organizations. If, for example, we were to limit ourselves to the conventional concepts used in political science to describe organizational features, the ERP and FPL might appear undifferentiable. They were both highly centralized, in which orders flowed reliably from the top downward. They both exhibited relative cohesion.[19] As such, the current toolkit we have for describing organizations would relegate political scientists to describing the dual trajectories of the ERP and FPL as a *behavioral* phenomenon. The ERP and the FPL just behaved differently. The reality, however, is far more nuanced and tracing the implications of these differences requires an expanded analytic toolkit.

7.4.2 Aerial View of the FMLN

While understanding the FMLN's intra-organizational variation is crucial, it is equally important to return to a bird's-eye view of the organization as a whole to take stock of its progress and pitfalls in this phase. As 1984 approached, the FMLN had evolved considerably from the awkward and headlong adolescent that went into the "Final" Of-

[19]Perhaps we could get some traction on the FMLN with this concept by noting that while the individual OP-Ms exhibited within-group cohesion, the FMLN as an organization did not.

fensive. The cohesion among the leadership increased, the international political wing made significant headway in garnering both resources and recognition for the insurgency, and *Radio Venceremos!* made significant advancements as well.

Given the quarrelsome nature of the FMLN general command prior to the start of the war, if the leadership wanted to see unity in action among the OP-Ms, the change was going to have to start at the top. In part the increased cohesion among the leadership was a function of time. Manning notes that FMLN leaders gradually "succeeded in developing mechanisms for dealing with internal conflict" (2008*a*, 117). According to McClintock, these developments were facilitated in large part by the 1983 death of FPL leader Cayetano Carpio (McClintock 1998, 55). Following the suspicious murder of the FPL's second-in-command, suspicions fell on Carpio, who—dramatically and incriminatingly—coped by taking his own life just a month later. Carpio's death was ultimately beneficial for the organization because despite what would prove to be a useful strategy of political engagement with the population, he was also an ideological hardliner who "used Marxist ideology to justify his own ambitions" (McClintock 1998, 255).

Although the political development of the FPL was more the exception than the rule during this phase in the war, the FMLN was not entirely lacking in this domain. The priority of the organization was undoubtedly placed on developing its military capacity, but the FDR (the FMLN's political mass front) and *Radio Venceremos!* continued to work to disseminate the political message of the organization. For its part, the FDR hardly missed a beat in the wake of the failed offensive. Indeed, on January 14, 1981—just two days after the guerrillas retreated from the cities—FDR and FMLN leaders held a press conference to announce a new political branch of the organization: the Political-Diplomatic Commission (CPD) (Montgomery 1995, 114). Montgomery characterizes the CPD as the FMLN's "foreign ministry," the purpose of which was to send representatives abroad to secure funding and shore up ideological support for the rebellion (ibid.). Only seven months into its existence and as a direct result of CPD missions, France and Mexico "issued a joint declaration recognizing the FMLN-FDR as a 'representative political force' that should be directly involved in any political settlement" (ibid.). As such, even though their current strategy emphasized direct military offensives, the FMLN was already gaining international recognition and legitimacy as a political actor.

Radio Venceremos! also continued to evolve during this phase. When the ERP retreated to Morazán, where the station was located, high-ranking station operators became part of the command team of the ERP (Ching 2010, xxxviii). By 1982, "the FMLN made Venceremos its official voice" (ibid.). Moreover, as time went on, they gained access to more sophisticated radio technology, which meant that *Venceremos* was reaching an ever-growing audience. The organizational implications of these developments cannot be understated. First, the decision to make *Radio Venceremos!* the official voice of the FMLN represents a key step in organizational cohesion. As Ching notes, "the rest of the FMLN outside Morazán agreed on the value of Venceremos and were avid listeners," which included RN commander, Eduardo Sancho, and his troops who "listened diligently" hovering around small transistor radios (2010, xxxviii). The RN's respect for the ERP-affiliated radio station provides evidence that the tensions between the two OP-Ms were

beginning to thaw, thereby contributing to greater cohesion. A second implication of the station's continued development in this period was its central role in boosting the legitimacy of the FMLN both at home and abroad (Consalvi 2010, 30). Indeed, as Ching observes, "even its enemies tuned in [because] its news reports were more reliable than the progovernment sources (2010, xxxix).

7.4.3 Two Shocks in the Wartime Environment

The FMLN experienced sizable gains against the armed forces. Initially, their steadfast military focus was paying off and the army was on the defensive for much of 1982 and by the next year, the FMLN drastically expanded the territory under their control (Wood 2003, 28). Byrne (1996) notes that this focus led to a corresponding decline in political support from the civilian population, since political engagement took a sideline to military advancement. Given that the FMLN's goal was to defeat the Salvadoran government through a conventional military victory, their declining political support may not have mattered beyond the associated challenge of finding willing recruits. However, the ramp up of U.S. involvement in the war throughout 1983 brought with it two related changes in the wartime environment that put the FMLN on the defensive and ultimately forced them to rethink their strategy. The first consequence of U.S. support to the Salvadoran regime challenged the FMLN on the battlefield, while the second challenged them in the political sphere.

El Salvador was just one of many anti-communist pet projects in which the U.S. got involved. Viewing the Soviet and Cuban support to the rebels as a direct attempt to spread communism to the Americas, the U.S. provided tactical and strategic support to any forces committed to fighting leftist influences. As a result, Salvadoran forces that had previously been on the defensive found themselves equipped with better weapons, high-technology communication systems, and most importantly the planes and training to launch airstrikes against the standing rebels. As a result of their newfound capabilities, the government began gaining the upper-hand on the battlefield. Suddenly, having large, standing armies in a single location became a monstrous liability for FMLN forces. A single airstrike could result in massive and asymmetric casualties as the rebels lost dozens, while the FAES emerged unscathed. Moreover, recall that the army's newfound technological advantage came at the same time that the FMLN was struggling to attract new recruits.

United States patronage, however, came with a political cost for the Salvadoran regime. While the Reagan administration was fervently committed to ending the spread of communism throughout Central America, they were coming under fire domestically for providing extensive logistical support to the oppressive military dictatorship. Beginning with a diplomatic mission to El Salvador in 1983, the U.S. ramped up pressure on the Salvadorans to open the political sphere and curtail human-rights abuses. The Salvadoran regime complied, albeit begrudgingly. From 1983 to 1984, the number of forced disappearances from the state dropped from 535 to just 53 (McClintock 1998, 118). Then in the spring of 1984, El Salvador held the most competitive elections the country had

experienced since the 1930s.

The 1984 presidential elections represent an important discontinuity in the Salvadoran case by shaping how the FMLN adapts its wartime strategy. José Napoleón Duarte of the Christian Democratic Party won the presidency, but more important than the elections themselves were the policies implemented thereafter. In the wake of his victory, Duarte implemented a series of democratic reforms, the effects of which reverberated throughout the country. One of the most consequential reforms implemented in 1984 was the right to organize opposition groups, which had been not only illegal, but harshly punished since the 1931 revolt. The simultaneous curtailing of human rights abuses and opening of the political sphere had a profound impact on the sociopolitical composition of the country. First, in response to the reforms, the political sphere experienced a flood of popular organizations (Montgomery 1995, 185). Second, El Salvador experienced a massive repatriation—particularly in what were now FMLN-controlled areas—as civilians who had fled for refugee camps in Nicaragua and Honduras at the start of the war began to return (Hammond 1999, 82).

Implications for the FMLN

The augmented counterinsurgency strategies and Duarte's political reforms had two important implications for the future of the FMLN. From a combat standpoint, the FMLN found itself on the defensive. As Salvadoran forces ramped up airborne attacks, the FMLN's large, stationary battalions became increasingly vulnerable to massive losses from a single strike. With the military's sudden capacity to wage a high-technology war, FMLN commanders found themselves struggling to replenish personnel at a rate commensurate with their losses. This struggle was particularly acute in Morazán, where the ERP's atrophying ties with civilian populations made recruitment an even greater challenge. In the later part of this phase, the ERP briefly turned to coercive recruitment strategies for the first and only time in the war. When word got out, ERP commanders were excoriated by the FMLN leadership and they quickly stopped the practice. The very fact that they had to resort to forced recruitment in the first place, though, is quite telling—particularly since Morazán was contemporaneously experiencing a massive repatriation of (former) refugees who harbored strong anti-government sentiments.

On the political side, even the thawing of political rights and repatriation of civilians who had fled war-torn areas (and harbored deep anti-government sentiments) were not foregone benefits for the FMLN. On the one hand, a strategic shift toward political engagement could enable the FMLN to exploit the newfound political rights to mobilize supporters and reify ties to mass organizations and student groups. On the other hand, leftists could view the political opening as a reason to shy away from supporting a revolution, opting instead to work toward gaining representation through legal channels. As McClintock notes, "Duarte's election reduced the appeal of the FMLN's claims to be the exclusive democratic voice in El Salvador" (1998, 83). After all, recall that prior to taking up arms, many of the FMLN's supporters (to say nothing of most of the people comprising the FMLN General Command) were involved in *political* organizations and they only took up arms because years of fighting for a voice through political channels

proved futile. Thus, depending on the FMLN's capacity to assess and adapt to this new environment, the sociopolitical changes that moved the country more toward democratic openness could either be a great asset to or the Achilles heel of the revolution.

7.5 The Shift to 'A People's War' (1984–1989)

The FMLN's ability to bounce back after their initial failure in January of 1981 by critically reflecting on and shifting their strategic approach set a precedent for resilience and adaptation. The question was whether they could envision and successfully implement a second major overhaul without losing supporters or jeopardizing what was still a tenuous level of organizational cohesion. The scope and difficulty of this task cannot be understated. First, the FMLN leadership must recognize the need for a change. Then, they need to devise a new strategy *and* agree on it – which for the FMLN, historically presented a non-trivial challenge. Finally, they need to implement the changes on the ground, which comes with a risk of insubordination and defection. Moreover, not only is a shift in battlefield tactics a major challenge in its own rite, but the new strategic approach put forth by the General Command in 1984 required a complete overhaul of nearly every facet of the organization in order to contend with the new social and political environment in the country.

The FMLN's history of consistent self-reflection and strategic adjustment served them well in this period. As the organizational literature anticipates, this built-in awareness and flexibility should not only make the leadership more ready and willing to shift tactics, but also facilitate the implementation of the new strategy. Indeed, various accounts of the organization in this stage corroborate this expectation. FMLN leaders spent remarkably little time on the defensive before acknowledging the need for a change and the source of their shortcoming(s). Byrne argues that "by late 1983, the FMLN recognized the weakness of a strategy that emphasized too heavily the military dimension" at the expense of rural political mobilization (1996, 98). Similarly, according to Wood, "after its initial strategy proved militarily unsustainable, the FMLN decided to emphasize the building of political as well as military capacity" (2000, 49).

Responding simultaneously to its strategic weaknesses relative to the FAES counterinsurgency strategy and the new sociopolitical environment in the wake of Duarte's election, the FMLN reorganized around three new objectives in this period: (1) to wage a popular war of attrition against the armed forces, (2) to emphasize political work and mobilization of the population, and (3) to revive its presence in urban centers. Beginning in late 1983 through 1984, the FMLN managed to simultaneously overhaul their tactics both on and off the battlefield in service of these goals. This section outlines the process, results, and implications of the organizational overhaul carried out in this period.

I argue that the best tool in the FMLN arsenal was the diversity of strategic approaches represented in the General Command. Recall that the official tactics adopted in the previous period derived from the ERP's ideological and strategic bent. Changing military strategy for the FMLN was as easy as shifting to a different, but *existing* approach of one of the other OP-Ms, which is exactly what they did. In addition to recognizing that

the current strategy was not well-suited to the new environment, they acknowledged the beneficial effects of the political engagement evident in the FPL-dominated areas of Chalatenango. The new FMLN strategy would move the whole organization in the direction of FPL ideology while incorporating tenets from the RN and ERP as well (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 23).

7.5.1 Organizational Overhaul in 3D

The leadership's capacity to recognize their weaknesses and envision the changes they needed to make to succeed in the new environment was still only half the battle. What remained was the Herculean task of implementing the new changes. The FMLN leadership, recognizing the pitfalls of its allocating all of its resources into military engagement with the state, proposed a new approach that entailed overhauling the organization along three dimensions. The first change was to shift from a quasi-conventional war to a war of attrition with an emphasis on small attacks and damage to Salvadoran infrastructure. The second change—designed to exploit the country's newfound political openness—was to rekindle ties with political organizations to put pressure on the government through legal channels. Finally, the third change focused on increasing their social base in both rural and urban areas.

Resilience on the Battlefield

The beneficial effects of organizational diversification are apparent even in the FMLN's shift in military strategy. Having invested two years in training recruits to operate in large battalions and engage in conventional warfare, the FMLN incurred heavy losses in the face of the augmented counterinsurgency campaign. To cope with what leaders realized would be a longer war while also working to minimize battlefield casualties, the FMLN adopted the "prolonged popular war" approach of the FPL (McClintock 1998, 83). On the military front, this shift entailed breaking up the large battalions into smaller units that would rely on guerrilla tactics and economic sabotage (Byrne 1996, 132). The goal was to fight a prolonged war of attrition in which the now-guerrillas exhaust the enemy through smaller, more numerous attacks on both army barracks and state infrastructure. To accomplish this task, large battalions were broken-up into smaller platoon-sized units of about forty guerrillas a piece (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 25).

The changes that the FMLN made to its military apparatus were substantial and the results were even more so. Not only were large battalions broken into smaller units, but the shifting emphasis from the battlefield to the political sphere meant that the FMLN drastically reduced its armed wing from around 12,000 members at its peak in 1983 to only 6,000 by 1987 (Montgomery 1995, 198). The irony is that the FMLN's reach was far greater in this period. With smaller, more mobile units, they were able to infiltrate (to some degree) every department of El Salvador including the capital and other major cities (ibid.).

Resilience *beyond* the Battlefield

The most profound shift during this period was the FMLN's pivot toward local political engagement, which itself entailed multiple organizational changes. As Miles and Ostertag note, organizing politically "became the centre of the rebel plan during this period" (1991, 222). While some foundations for a strong political movement had been laid in the previous decade and to a lesser extent in the early 1980s, this period saw a massive uptick in the FMLN's investment in its political work on two fronts: building political commitment and competence within its own ranks, and then using these new structures to forge links with and mobilize civilian populations. Wood explicitly argues that the FMLN's capacity to pivot toward political engagement was "the diversity of relations between the FMLN and various organizations" (2000, 49).

Placing a greater emphasis on building its base of political supporters meant the organization as a whole had to step up its engagement with the population beyond seeking logistical support in exchange for protection from government forces. On a practical level, this strategy meant that in addition to retraining in guerrilla tactics and forming new mobile platoons, rebels also had to be sufficiently well-educated in the FMLN's political goals that they could engage civilians. The new approach, as Montgomery puts it, "was to turn every guerrilla into a political officer who could talk with the people about the FMLN and its policies" (1995, 198).

The ideological differences across the various OP-Ms meant that the FMLN's strategic shift did not go off entirely without a hitch. While the long-term effects of this change would prove favorable, the FMLN had to weather some internal drawbacks. As one might anticipate, while the FPL already had structures in place that reflected these new priorities, ERP forces had a more difficult time implementing the changes—both logistically and ideologically. From a logistical standpoint, not only did ERP members receive less political training than members of other OP-Ms in its early years, but it also had the lowest levels of civilian support. Consequently, even with the internal training required to engage the population politically, this strategy was difficult to carry out if no one wanted to listen. Wood confirms this problem, arguing that the new strategy "posed a particular challenge to the ERP," and attributing this difficulty directly to the ERP's strict emphasis on combat (2003, 167). On the ideological front, many ERP members remained committed to the ERP approach and opted to defect from the organization rather than change. Crucially, however, these ideological defections contributed to FMLN cohesion. Obviously, too many defections can lead to disintegration, but just enough defection on ideological grounds creates a more distilled group in which the remaining members are the ones most committed to the same cause.

Civilian Mobilization via *Poder de Doble Cara*

The FMLN's approach to mobilizing the Salvadoran population in this period was expertly crafted to exploit the new political freedoms that accompanied Duarte's inauguration. Recall that in 1984, secular civilian organization became legal for the first time in over fifty years. Keep in mind that this new right could have motivated war-weary citizens

to organize around particular grievances looking to *supplant* or side-step the FMLN. Yet, rather than discouraging participation through legal channels and insisting on political change through insurrection, the FMLN saw a new wealth of opportunity and swam with the current.

Across the country, the insurgency enacted a strategy referred to as *poder de doble cara* (literally, two-faced power). They encouraged civilians to organize around locally salient issues—unions and workplace associations in the cities, peasant cooperatives in the countryside—and to present the neutral, legal face of the organization to the state, while maintaining clandestine ties to the FMLN (Binford 1997, 13). As such, this approach worked in service of numerous goals of the organization. First, by encouraging civilians to mobilize and organize, *poder doble cara* got formerly uninvolved citizens accustomed to political participation in anticipation of a new political order. Second, by institutionalizing ties with civilian political organizations, *doble cara* increased the base of political and logistical support for the FMLN and facilitated mass mobilization. This effect, in turn, corrected one of the largest organizational deficiencies evident during the 1981 offensive: their inability to effectively coordinate mass mobilization (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 26).

A Glimpse back into Morazán and the ERP

The political focus of the FMLN's new strategy (to say nothing of its explicit pivot toward the approach advanced by the FPL) raises an important question about the extent to which it was evenly implemented across OP-Ms. The previous period of the civil war was characterized by clear geographical discontinuities in tactics that corresponded with the OP-M present. The increasing cohesion of the General Command—and, by extension, the OP-Ms on the ground—and the greater dispersion of mobile units that served both political and combat purposes, the differences became less severe, but were not mitigated entirely. Given the apolitical bent of the ERP and its atrophied ties with the civilian population in Morazán, I anticipate that the transformation toward political action should be more difficult than for other OP-Ms.

On the eve of the FMLN's strategic shift, Morazán was the site of a disproportionate amount of fighting relative to the population and due to the ERP's combat-centric operations, there was a dearth of political community in the area. But the ERP's hasty cessation of forced recruitment combined with the repatriation of many civilians that had previously fled to refugee camps created an opportunity for the OP-M to implement a political agenda with a relatively clean slate. To make matters easier for them, the population returning from the refugee camps—particularly Colomoncagua in Honduras—had spent the last four years creating strong political and educational networks in the camps, thereby continuing the legacy of the Christian base communities abroad (Hammond 1999, 78).[20] As such, rather than having to facilitate participation from the ground up, the

[20]According to McElhinny's account, the ERP maintained strong ties with the camps, with ERP leaders presiding over major decisions and "as much as thirty percent of the assistance received [in the camps] was sent directly to the ERP" (2006, 152). Nevertheless, the ERP did not have an explicit hand in building the political communities (*auto-gestión*—literally self-management) within the camps.

ERP faced a population with an existing political community born in the camps. The ERP "encouraged members of rural communities to form community councils," which evolved into more extensive organizations tackling illiteracy, healthcare deficits, and economic problems (Binford 1997, 63). By late-1985, Father Ventura—the same priest who previously lamented the lack of community among civilians—changed his tune, noting the "restored sense of community" in Morazán (ibid.).

The existing relationships between the ERP and those returning from the camps gave them a considerable advantage in implementing the new political strategy. Since the majority of the population in ERP areas were landless *campesinos*, the ERP strategically exploited failed land-reform measures and encouraged civilians to form peasant cooperatives (Wood 2003, 166-7). Moreover, since cooperative organizations were legal (or at least tolerated), they "provided a degree of legal cover to supporters" (ibid.). Out of this push emerged some of the most influential peasant cooperative organizations in El Salvador including the Federation of Agrarian Cooperatives (FENACOA), the United Municipalities and Communities of Usulután (COMUS), and the Coordinator for the Development of Cooperatives (CODECOSTA) (Wood 2000, 49). As one

The ERP's involvement in political activity increased sharply during this period, but the work of Binford and others suggest its relationship with civilian organizations was more hegemonic than in other regions (Binford 1998). As Wood notes, the many of the peasant cooperatives were run by "strategically placed ERP political officers" and, at least initially, were fronts to "expand ERP influence" (2003, 167). Binford goes as far as to argue that the "authoritarianism practiced by the ERP...restricted the political space within which relatively autonomous organizations might have proliferated," thereby suggesting that the level of community organization occurred despite, not because of, the ERP's involvement (1998, 30). Moreover, the ERP was more reactionary and opportunistic than other OP-Ms: community programs would emerge independently of the ERP (e.g. literacy programs or the *Pan y Leche* program aimed at feeding schoolchildren), and only "once programs demonstrated tangible benefits" would the ERP "defend them from assaults by the state" (Binford 1998, 29). Thus, while the ERP's implementation of *doble cara* and their broader move to embrace political action succeeded in forging ties to political organizations, the nature of those ties is better characterized in terms of exerting local control than integrated participation.

7.5.2 Implications for the FMLN

Broadly, the successful shift to "a people's war" in this period both provides evidence of and further contributes to the insurgents' organizational flexibility. More specifically, by adopting a strategy that emphasized political mobilization, the FMLN expands its proto-party structures and corresponding political links with the population. The FMLN's capacity to overhaul their strategic approach to exploit the new sociopolitical circumstances in El Salvador not only corroborates previous accounts of their organizational flexibility, but also smooths the way for future adjustments.

The augmentation of the FMLN's political domains made the organization well-suited

to fighting the government both on and off the battlefield. Moreover, the political tactics they employed during this period sparked a civil society in El Salvador, the likes of which were unheard of under comparable levels of authoritarian rule. Despite extant variation across OP-Ms, civilian support for the insurgency increased during this period. As the war was coming to a close

Stepping back from the effects on the ground, the adoption and success of *doble cara* provides strong corroborating evidence for both dimensions of my theoretical framework: how *content* and *process* impact organizational change. First, creating civilian political organizations with leaders that often held dual membership in the FMLN (or otherwise had institutionalized ties with the rebels), constituted an expansion of proto-party structures across the insurgency. The FMLN created wings of liaisons whose job it was to maintain alliances with the mass organizations and educate them in the political message of the rebellion (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 30). By imbuing the FMLN with experienced personnel capable of forging links to mass organizations, these new structures should facilitate the transition into a successful political party.

Second, the wide adoption of the *poder doble cara* approach also provides evidence that organizational change occurs most seamlessly when preexisting skills and structures are repurposed or augmented, rather than built from scratch. Although this strategy was tailored to exploit new political freedoms in the wake of the 1984 elections, the form mirrors the PPL structures created by the FPL in Chalatenango in the early 1980s. Civilians are encouraged to assess their needs and grievances, organize around those needs, and create or fight for solutions. Moreover, in both cases "the rebels" were an integral and inseparable part of the communities and the organizations that they helped build.[21] As we can see, the shift to FPL tactics in this phase of the war was about more than simply the adoption of mobile guerrilla units, or a broad conception of mass political engagement. Instead, we see an explicit transmission of skills from one sect of the organization to the whole, while adapting that approach to exploit the new political environment.

7.6 Negotiations and Transition (1989–1994)

7.6.1 1989: The Beginning of the End

1989 was a watershed year for the Salvadoran Civil War. Following Gorbachev's ascension to power in the U.S.S.R. in 1985, the closing years of the decade were characterized by thawing tensions between East and West. While many across the world breathed a long sigh of relief, both the FMLN and the Salvadoran government were dependent on this rivalry. With glasnost came a loss of interest in funding proxy wars. Insurgents and governments worldwide saw their pools of resources quickly evaporating. Bracamonte and Spencer argue that by 1989, the FMLN knew that they were fighting against the clock, for without Cuban support, they would not have the means to continue the war (1995, 35).

[21] Neither the PPLs nor the organizations under *poder doble cara* were separable from the rebellion, as the goal in both was to break down the line between "insurgent" and "civilian."

In the spring of that year, ERP leader Joaquin Villalobos published an article in *Foreign Policy* calling for a democratic solution to the war and requesting a postponement of the 1989 elections pending FMLN participation. Predictably, the government denied their request and the FMLN retaliated, setting of a chain of events that would culminate in the end of the civil war.

Until the Limit: The Final Push for Power

On November 11, 1989—just two days after the Berlin Wall fell—the FMLN launched its largest incursion since the Final Offensive in January of 1981. By all accounts, the *Until the Limit* offensive was the largest and most well-coordinated military offensive the FMLN had ever pulled off (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 33)(McClintock 1998, 84). With a few tactical exceptions, the goal was similar to their debut incursion in 1981: coordinate a large-scale military occupation with national strikes and mass protests.[22] In preparation for the revolution, FMLN troops spend months clandestinely transporting and caching weapons in sewers and abandoned buildings so that the people could take up arms against the government.

Time and again, the FMLN's Achilles heel is its tendency to overestimate the revolutionary fervor of the population. War-weary and terrified of government repression, civilians did not flock to the streets in the numbers needed to overthrow the government. From a military standpoint, *Until the Limit* was no more successful than the *Final Offensive* launched nearly a decade earlier. From a political standpoint, however, one particular event and its fallout played so strongly into the hands of the FMLN that its military failure became a nonissue. During the fighting, renegade members of the FAES murdered six unarmed Jesuit priests, claiming that they were the ones orchestrating the FMLN offensive (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 35). The FMLN leaned on their international networks to play up this atrocity and ensure international coverage of the army's behavior (and the new leader's inability to control the armed forces).[23] Bracamonte and Spencer argue that "in the eyes of the international community," this event led to a "total loss of credibility" for the Salvadoran government (1995, 35). Facing a loss of support and international condemnation, the Salvadoran government was forced to enter negotiations with the FMLN.

Talk, Talk, Fight, Fight! An Enhanced Negotiation Technique

One of the foremost strengths of the FMLN is that they knew how to seize an opportunity when one presented itself, and this misstep was no exception. Relying heavily on its media and propaganda wings to publicize the human rights abuses of the Salvadoran government, the FMLN exploited the shattered credibility of the state to gain a consid-

[22]Bracamonte and Spencer note that the FMLN gave up on trying to defeat the armed forces directly, so rather than attacking military barracks (as they had in 1981), the new plans entailed occupying neighborhoods on the outskirts of major cities (1995, 33).

[23]After being denied participation in the 1989 elections, the ARENA party found itself back in power and Alfredo Cristiani was elected president.

erable advantage at the negotiating table (Wade 2008, 38). By this point in the war, the FMLN was nearly unified in pushing for a democratic solution allowing for the legal participation of the FMLN and other leftist parties. They also knew (as did the Salvadoran government) that the two sides were facing a military stalemate. The FMLN devised a two-track strategy in service of this goal: "sit at the negotiating table and make demands, and if the government didn't meet its demands, [the FMLN] would threaten to launch offensives" (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995, 35). Appropriately, this strategy was named *Talk, talk, fight fight!*.

Defections and cease-fire breaches on both sides made the negotiation process both bumpier and more protracted than in some other cases. The Salvadoran government and the international community made disarmament and demobilization of FMLN combatants a requirement before proceeding with its legal transition into a political party. For its part, the FMLN did not trust that the government would not renege once the rebels handed over their weapons. As such, the negotiation process extended over a two year period that was punctuated by skirmishes as well as an embarrassing discovery of cached FMLN weapons after they claimed to have fully demobilized. This event did cost the FMLN some of their international credibility, though not enough to jeopardize the negotiations. The war ended on January 16, 1992 when both sides traveled to Mexico City and, under the supervision of the United Nations, signed the Chapúltepec Peace Accords. In addition to allowing for the "full exercise of [the FMLN's] civil and political rights," the Chapúltepec Accords included a variety of clauses for which the FMLN pushed during the negotiation process including, electoral reforms, the creation of an independent judiciary, the disbanding of paramilitary bodies, land reform, and a restructuring and reduction of the FAES (1992, 38).

7.6.2 Transition: Prospects, Process, and Pitfalls

By this point in their life, the FMLN was no stranger to restructuring. Throughout the war, the organization established a legacy of adaptation and continued willingness to throw out old strategies in favor of tactics and structures better suited to the demands of their environment. Moreover, the FMLN exhibited some of the most extensive political diversification in any insurgent group to date. Their international wing continued to thrive throughout the war, they had an advanced wing dedicated to political messaging including *Radio Venceremos!*, numerous publications, and a sister radio station launched by the FPL in Chalatenango. They had strong links to the population through social service provisions (particularly literacy and health programs) and under *doble cara* the FMLN helped create dozens of popular organizations. As a result, the FMLN not only had innumerable cadres qualified to continue political work in the legal sphere, but they had also contributed to building a civil society among the peasantry whose newfound consciousness poised citizens for electoral mobilization.

Obstacles to Transition

That is not to say, however, that the transition would be easy. While the FMLN's sophisticated proto-party structures and legacy of organizational resilience are massive advantages in the transition process, the group faced two noteworthy challenges (one external, one internal) that it needed to overcome to consolidate a functioning political party. The first challenge was material—specifically, unlike many negotiated settlements with a rebel-to-party transition clause, the Chapúltepec Accords made no provisions for assisting with the FMLN's transition (Wade 2008, 30). Although the role of material assistance is not central to my framework, rebel-to-party transition is unquestionably more difficult without the resources needed to function as a party. The absence of material support, however, further calls into question theories of rebel-to-party transition that place primacy on insurgents' resource endowments without paying attention to how the organization is structured to secure and mobilize resources.

The second and more severe obstacle to consolidating a political party concerned the FMLN's current structure and the extant rivalries within the organization. Specifically, although the FMLN's cohesion and capacity for internal negotiation increased dramatically over the course of the war, it was nevertheless still a front for five different groups with five different ideologies (Manning 2008*a*, 115). To be sure, rebel-to-party transformations typically incite some level of internal rivalry as high-ranking commanders in the bush are potentially looked over for promotions in favor of more educated or politically-qualified candidates. The sub-organizational tensions within the FMLN added an additional layer of rivalry that the organization had to overcome in order to consolidate a unified political party.

From Rebels to Party

The FMLN's transition into the political arena began even prior to their signing the Chapúltepec Accords. The insurgent cooperatives that organized around fighting for campesino land rights during the war took on a more open political-economic role during the negotiations process. They began interfacing directly with the government and fighting for land-tenure reforms that ultimately made it into the peace accords (Wood 2003, 183). This transition of the insurgent cooperatives into fully public advocacy organizations is a prime example of both the process and efficiency of structural repurposing.

Assembling the core of the party required a more delicate and politic hand, lest any of the five groups or their leaders feel denied adequate representation. The first stage of the transition involved replacing the five-member General Command with a fifteen-member National Committee, comprising three members from each constituent OP-M (Wade 2008, 40). With only 24 months before their first elections, the push to quickly assemble a working party with minimal infighting took precedent over working out ideological kinks. According to Spence, the new leadership devised a quota system to ensure equal representation across the five groups and selected the first batch of candidates based on "historic command positions in the guerrillas" (1997, 18). In essence, the initial party-consolidation strategy prioritized efficiency over efficacy.

7.6.3 FMLN Electoral Performance: 1994 and After

While the nascent party was far from both an ideal allocation of its skill sets and what it would become, the organization's historical capacity to quickly restructure and adapt to new needs carried it through the first elections. Leaning on their experienced—though formerly clandestine—media wing, the FMLN immediately began publicly disseminating literature articulating their party platform (Wade 2008, 40). Mid-way through 1993, the FMLN party held its first convention in which it decided to participate in the Presidential elections on a coalition ticket with Rubén Zamora's Democratic Convergence (CD) party (ibid.). This alliance is a testament to the FMLN's capacity for organizational repurposing and strategic compromise. Rubén Zamora was one of the key founders of the FDR—the wing comprising all of the FMLN's affiliated mass organizations. After living in exile for much of the 1980s, Zamora returned to El Salvador and founded the CD party in 1989.[24] Thus, not only did Zamora hail from the political wing of the FMLN, but by nominating a candidate that represented the mass organizations of all five constituent groups, the FMLN was able to sidestep the otherwise inevitable fight that would result from nominating *one* of the five leaders for the presidential race.

The FMLN made an impressive showing across the 1994 elections. In the legislative elections, the FMLN ran against eight other parties and garnered twenty-one out of eighty-four seats in the General Assembly. As Allison notes, this victory made the FMLN "into the country's second-largest political party" (2006, 145). On the executive level, FMLN-CD coalition candidate Rubén Zamora lost in a run-off to the ARENA candidate for the presidency, but the FMLN did secure thirteen mayorships across the country (Wade 2008, 40).

Who voted for the FMLN?

The results of the 1994 elections give a broad picture of the FMLN's success in building a political party and mobilizing both civilians and its former combatants on election day. However, the analysis of the geographical distinctions across the FMLN's wartime structure(s) raises new and heretofore unanswered questions about whether wartime variation in proto-party structures had postwar repercussions for voter mobilization. Both department-level and municipality-level data from the 1994 legislative elections provide strong evidence that the FMLN's capacity to mobilize voters—i.e. *their success as a political party*—is highly correlated not merely with FMLN *presence* in an area, but with their level proto-party activity.

The five departments with the highest concentrations of FMLN troops during the war

[24]While the FMLN and FDR maintained strong ties throughout the war—so much so that some authors refer to the revolutionary movement as the FMLN-FDR (Montgomery 1995)—the FDR began operating more autonomously toward the end of the war, particularly as mass political organizations gained legal status in El Salvador. As such, Zamora's return and founding of the CD party was not viewed as a competitive move as much as it was a strategic one given the state of the country and the FMLN.

were San Salvador, Chalatenango, San Vincente, Usulután, and Morazán.[25] If former-rebels' capacity to mobilize voters were merely a function of where rebels held territory during the war, we should expect one of two stories to emerge. Either the areas of high-FMLN concentration should exhibit a similarly high level of support (perhaps due to genuine influence, coercion, or a desire to vote-for-peace), or they should exhibit similarly low levels support (due to the problems or stresses of living under rebel control). Even at the department level, we do not observe uniform voting patters and the variation is even greater at the municipal level. In the departments with the most extensive proto-party structures (i.e. occupied by the most politically-oriented OP-Ms), Chalatenango, San Vincente, and San Salvador, the FMLN garnered nineteen percent, twenty-three percent, and thirty percent of the votes, respectively. In both Morazán and Usulután—which were both occupied primarily by the ERP, and thus lacking proto-party development for most of the war—the FMLN barely secured sixteen percent of the vote.

These differences are even more pronounced at the municipal level. In Chalatenango, the FMLN secured nineteen percent of the vote across the whole department, but it won a majority of votes in five municipalities, which are disproportionately clustered in the north and west of the department, where the FPL was most active. Similarly, in San Vincente—the FMLN's second-most successful department behind San Salvador—the party took the majority of votes in the municipalities of San Esteban Catarina and in Tecoluca, which were occupied by the FPL and the PRTC. San Esteban Catarina, a municipality along San Vincente's northern border, was home to the PRTC, which in the early 1980s set up rather extensive shadow governance structures known as *Consejos Farabundistas* (administrative councils) (Montgomery 1995, 121). Similarly to the FPL in that period, the PRTC leveraged ties with and the political clout of catechists to promote the mission of the revolution (ibid.). In addition to basic administrative tasks (e.g. a civil registrar that kept records on births, deaths, and marriages), the PRTC ran literacy campaigns, facilitated healthcare provisions, and coordinated the distribution of food and goods to locals (ibid.).

The voting patterns in Morazán suggest that despite the ERP's slow start in political engagement, the FMLN was rewarded in areas where insurgent cooperatives took off during the later years of the war. Once again, despite taking only sixteen percent of the votes on average across the department, the FMLN won a majority of votes in six northern municipalities that were home to the most active insurgent cooperatives and the repatriated communities from the Honduran refugee camps. Yet, throughout San Miguel and Usulután—where the ERP was also active, but more in a combat capacity[26], the FMLN not only saw lower electoral support, but they did not win a single municipality in either department.

It is perhaps worth noting that the ERP is distinct from some other combat-centric organizations (say, the RUF). For, the ERP did not lack concrete political aspirations, rather, they did not prioritize political action during war as the best means of attaining

[25]Recall from the previous discussion and Figure 7.1, however, these departments were not occupied uniformly by all FMLN OP-Ms.

[26]The ERP had a training camp in southern Usulután, and frequently made incursions into San Miguel

their goal. This analysis, however, suggests that distinction ultimately does not matter. Whether one lacks political structures because they do not have long term political aspirations or one lacks political structures because they envision an alternative route to their political aspirations, the outcome appears to be similar.

FMLN Split and Unification

Despite the FMLN's relative success in the 1994 elections, its organizational challenges were not over. In the immediate aftermath of the elections, as the party sought to further unify, tensions between the former OP-Ms gave way to arguments about the future direction of the party. Two factions emerged: the *ortodoxos* (orthodox), who remained committed to the original ideology of the revolution, and the *renovadores* (reformists), who pushed to make the FMLN into a "more pragmatic and viable political party" (Wade 2008, 40-1). Perhaps predictably, the fault emerged along traditional OP-M lines, where the *renovadores* comprised the ERP, the RN, and the PRTC; and the *ortodoxos* comprised the FPL and the PCS. This ideological divide culminated in a split in the FMLN only months after the 1994 elections. The leaders and many of the former members of the ERP, RN, and PRTC left the FMLN to form their own party, the *Partido Democrata*, which failed shortly after its inception, at which point many once-defectors returned to the FMLN.

With the benefit of time and at least some existential security following its 1994 success, the FMLN spent the following years working to create a more unified and effective political party. In 1995, the remaining OP-Ms agreed to dissolve and retire their previous sub-organizational affiliations. More importantly, according to Spence's account, the FMLN reorganized by prioritizing roles over rank. Specifically, rather than appointing jobs and candidates based on "historic command positions in the guerrillas," the FMLN adopted an internal democratic system in which committees would debate which "historic *roles*" were best suited to effective "performance in new kinds of tasks" (1997, 18).

Moving forward, the FMLN continued their success at the polls. In the next elections, the FMLN secured an even greater electoral victory—"increasing its overall vote total by 82,000 votes...in a year when there was a decline in voter turnout of 220,000" (Spence 1997, 21). Moreover, as Wade notes, the FMLN also gained an additional thirty-five mayorships in the 1997 elections. As a result, the majority of the Salvadoran population lived under local FMLN governance (2008, 41). While the FMLN was still a victim of its own internal rifts throughout the late 90s and early 2000s, it became clear that the FMLN had established themselves as a permanent force in Salvadoran politics. This case suggests that while rivalry is a drawback of diversity, a legacy of adaptation and resilience can help overcome this organizational pitfall.

7.7 Discussion

One of the central insights from this chapter is that umbrella structures are double-edged swords for organizational well-being. On the one hand, an umbrella structure can fa-

cilitate adaptability and resilience by providing a larger set of ideologies and strategies (whether political or military or something else) that leaders can draw from when the group needs to tweak or change their approach. I anticipate, however, that the capacity to exploit this advantage efficiently is contingent on whether the organization as a whole is run by a leadership committee (with representation from all sub-groups), rather than a single figurehead. In the case of the FMLN, the five-member General Command and the democratic institutional mechanisms that guided their decision-making were conducive to self-reflection, critique, and adoption of alternative strategies. On the other hand, umbrella structures at least potentially jeopardize organizational cohesion and sufficiently acute infighting can compromise an organization's efficiency and effectiveness. Over time, unresolved tensions between sub-groups can increase the risk of fracture along sub-group fault lines. Recall that despite their transitional success, this fate ultimately befell the FMLN in the wake of the 1994 elections. The insights that follow from this chapter are invaluable additions to our understanding of how structural variation shapes organizational evolution, adaptation, and resilience.

Chapter 8

Conclusion: The Analytic Purchase of Organizational Approaches

Why should some insurgencies—organizations built for combat—suddenly be able to transition into political parties—organizations built for peaceful and competitive elections? My dissertation provides a novel inquiry into the conditions under which insurgent organizations are suited to transition into political parties in the aftermath of civil war. While previous studies have taken up versions of this question and other questions that follow from it, this examination is the first to problematize the *process* of transition and to look to variation across insurgent organizations for the answer.

This chapter proceeds in four sections. First, I summarize the framework and main findings of the dissertation. Second, in light of the findings, I return to a discussion about the state of the literature. I explore the implications that my framework and results have for studies of rebel-to-party transition, more general studies of militant organizations, and our understanding of party formation. The third section pivots away from the academic implications of my work and explores the policy implications. Here, I demonstrate that my framework not only suggests a more nuanced set of guidelines for constructing post-conflict settlements, but that it can help shed light on relevant problems in our world. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the dissertation and the path it creates for future research.

8.1 Summary of Research and Findings

To answer the questions I pose at the outset of the dissertation, I begin with an inquiry into the nature of the outcome: rebel-to-party transition. The first part of Chapter 2 evaluates conventional definitions of rebel-to-party transformation, which typically rely on binary conceptualizations. I demonstrate that the use of almost any binary cut-point causes scholars to lose crucial nuance by uncritically lumping insufficiently similar groups together—either as "failed" or "successful" transitions. In the most extreme example, grouping together insurgencies that register as parties and promptly fracture (thereby inciting the risk of a country returning to single-party rule) with those that go on to

become lasting opposition parties can severely obscure analytic results and the policy implications we draw from it.

To overcome these issues, I identify four discrete outcomes that capture both analytically and pragmatically important distinctions in rebel-to-party transformation: (1) no transition, (2) minimalist participation, (3) single electoral victory, and (4) persistent opposition. I maintain that breaking down rebel-to-party transitions into successive stages has analytic purchase that improves upon dichotomous conceptualizations by adding conceptual nuance, allowing for detailed comparisons among groups that experience different levels of success beyond just *success* and *failure*, and allows for investigation of how former-rebel groups move up in the ladder of successful transition.

Given a nuanced conceptualization of the outcome, Chapter 3 presents my analytic framework of the conditions that facilitate rebel-to-party transition. To understand why some rebel organizations are capable of undergoing massive structural overhauls while others fracture, I turn to an underspecified level-of-analysis: insurgent organizational structures. Drawing on insights from organizational sociology, I develop a three-part framework of rebel-to-party transition that addresses each question in turn. First, I address what changes: what needs to happen to a rebel organization to make it a party organization? I present a novel conception of insurgent organizational structures that reveals an unforeseen diversity in the roles and activities in which rebels engage during wartime. In addition to the structures that support combat, some rebel groups have a variety of political and administrative structures that constitute integral parts of the organization. By comparing the structure of insurgent organizations to that of political parties, I identify three wartime organizational domains that constitute *proto-party structures:* shadow governance wings, social service wings, and political messaging wings. Functionally, proto-party structures in rebel groups mirror the key roles of party organizations; but not all rebel groups have them. My central argument is that these organizational similarities grant insurgencies two decisive advantages when transitioning into a political party on the heels of war. First, proto-party structures imbue rebel groups with relevant political experience needed to function as a political party. Second, for these proto-party insurgencies, transformation only involves augmenting existing structures, which is less taxing on the organization than building new structures from scratch.

Following from this insight, the second part of my framework models the *process* of change. How do rebel groups undergo transformation into a party? How do proto-party structures factor into the process? Moving beyond what I call the *structural-novelty assumption*—in which the post-war period is characterized by a scramble as former-rebels quickly acquire the personnel and resources to build a party from scratch—I show that rebel groups face two paths to transition depending on their wartime structure: building anew (as the literature posits) or reprioritization. The latter path occurs when organizations change by personnel and resources to existing structures (rather than building structures from scratch). This path is easier and and it significantly reduces the changes of organizational death (March 1991, 71). I argue that rebel groups with proto-party structures face an easier path to transition by repurposing politically salient departments. In contrast, more homogenous, combat-centric insurgencies must proceed by building a

party from scratch.

Finally, since rebel groups neither emerge nor operate in a vacuum, the third part of my framework addresses the external conditions affecting organizational change. I identify three environmental or institutional factors that shape the path to legitimate politics: weak governance, lootable resources, and post-war political institutions. I argue that weak state governance provides opportunities for many proto-party structures to take root. Crucially, this is not a functionalist argument; I do not assume insurgencies will fill in administrative structures wherever needed. I do, however, expect that civilian engagement is easier where state oversight is minimal. Conversely, I argue that the presence of lootable resources acts as a spoiler to transition—incentivizing rebels to support the organization through extraction and sales, rather than through social and political engagement. Finally, since electoral institutions shape the barriers to entry into the political arena, I argue that proportional representation systems present fewer obstacles as small, nascent parties get off the ground.

The next part of my dissertation, Chapters 4–7, test empirically the claims I posit in the first three chapters. Chapter 4 served three purposes, to evaluate the validity of previous approaches to quantitatively modeling rebel-to-party transition, to introduce the Insurgent Structures and Organizations (ISO) Dataset, and to test my theoretical framework alongside existing explanations from the rebel-to-party literature. The results from my analysis suggest that variation in rebels' organizational diversity during wartime play a central role in their capacity to transition into and succeed as a political party in the aftermath of civil wars. Moreover, when theories from the literature are tested on a dataset with more critical inclusion criteria—omitting groups with no aspirations to transition into parties and groups that were defeated militarily by the state—results that once looked promising are suddenly washed out. Finally, by running tests on a variety of different coding schemas of the outcome (rebel-to-party transition), my analyses suggest that different factors are important for moving up up into successively higher levels of transition success. In conjunction with the findings from my case studies, these results suggest that the added level of complexity in coding the outcome is justified.

While my statistical findings suggest a broad and promising correlation between proto-party structures and successful rebel-to-party transition, the tests I can perform at this level are insufficient to test the transition mechanism I posit in Chapter 3. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 delve into three different cases to allow not only a further test of the association between proto-party structures and transition, but also whether transition occurs through structural repurposing. Chapter 5 tackles a difficult success case—Renamo's transition to the largest persistent opposition party in Mozambique. This case illustrated that organizational endowments trump resource endowments when it comes to resilience. The Renamo leadership consistently turned to their non-combat structures for continuity during the war: the radio station helped smooth the transition to South African leadership, the burgeoning political wing helped interface with civilians as the group sought to move in a more political direction. Moreover, the process of transitioning into a political party is rife with examples of repurposing existing structures from clandestine into related, but public roles.

Chapter 6 traces the evolution and eventual failure of the RUF in Sierra Leone. Although the economic and governance conditions during the Sierra Leone Civil War were comparable to those in Mozambique, the RUF was not able to make muster as a party. I trace the structure of the RUF and demonstrate that their funding structure (primarily through the sale of diamonds) fostered organizational homogeneity and disincentivized the creation of proto-party structures. Choosing the RUF as a failure case is important for my dissertation specifically because it is a contested case in the literature. Specifically, the three existing studies that run statistical analyses on the correlates of rebel-to-party transformation all code the RUF as a *success* case in their data, while those who rely on qualitative narratives tend to characterize the RUF as a failed transition. If what we care about is the group achieving some level of political longevity, the RUF is an ideal case to study particularly *because* it makes it as far as the first post-conflict election before failing. As such, this case nullifies other material or institutional obstacles to electoral participation.

Finally, Chapter 7 examined a more organizationally-complex insurgency, the FMLN in El Salvador. Since I argue that organizational diversity plays a central role in resilience and adaptation, I bring my framework to bear on the most extreme case: a full umbrella organization in which each subgroup retained their own organizational structure during wartime. The findings from the FMLN study both corroborate the importance of proto-party structures and provide further evidence of structural repurposing. Two key insights derived from this case. The first is that in extreme cases, diversification comes with a downside: rivalry. Rivalry likely upends the beneficial effects of diversification: diversity makes change and adaptation more fluid, while rivalry makes fracture more likely. As such, this problem is one researchers should take into account in future studies of organizations.

Second, one of the most consequential findings from my case work stemmed from a geographical discrepancy in rebel organizational structures in both Sierra Leone and the Salvadoran cases. The RUF and the FMLN both exhibit sub-group organizational variation that happens to be associated with different regions of their respective countries. In both cases, I was able to identify geographical areas that had the most extensive (and least extensive) proto-party development, which in turn was highly correlated with vote share for the rebel party in the first post-conflict election. This finding has broader implications for how we understand militant organizations. Specifically, not only is it an oversimplification to conceptualize all insurgent organizational structures as fundamentally similar to one another, in some cases, it is an oversimplification to assume structural similarity *within* the same rebel group.

8.2 Scholarly Implications

The theoretical insights and empirical findings from this study have implications for how we understand three phenomena in political science. First, at the most specific level, my research suggests that conventional models of rebel-to-party transition are fundamentally incomplete. Second, this research contributes to a burgeoning movement dedicated to

getting better traction on the varying composition of militant organizations. Third, my framework for organizational transition has important implications for the literature on political party formation both within and beyond the civil war context.

8.2.1 Understanding Rebel-to-Party Transition

Previous work on rebel-to-party transition continues to occupy a central role in our understanding of the phenomenon. However, I argue that existing explanations restrict the analytic vantage to individual-level factors (e.g. battle fatigue or leaders' desire to transition), institutional factors (e.g. whether an agreement included rebel-to-party provisions or whether peace-agreements included third-party mediators), or fully exogenous factors (e.g. the end of the Cold War). As a result, these explanations are capable of explaining why the war ended, and perhaps whether the rebels *wanted* to transition, but they can not explain *how* an insurgency transitions into a political party, nor can they parse success from failure.

My dissertation makes a critical contribution to our understanding of rebel-to-party transformation by placing the insurgent organization at the center of the analysis. I argue that since nature of the outcome occurs at the level of the organization, we should look to characteristics and variation in organizational composition to get traction on the process. To place my research in the context of the existing literature, my work demonstrates that current explanations overlook a crucial source of variation across insurgent groups: the nature and distribution of non-combat roles during wartime. My quantitative findings suggest that more diversified insurgent organizations are more likely to become enduring political parties in the aftermath of war; and my qualitative findings confirm the central role that non-combat structures play in the transition process. The framework I offer here is not intended to supplant existing work, but I demonstrate that variation in organizational structures during wartime provides analytic leverage in parsing both transitional and electoral success that existing explanations cannot.

8.2.2 Getting Traction on Militant Organizations

Modeling non-combat variation across insurgent organizational structures enables me to get unprecedented traction on rebel-to-party transition; but this framework has critical implications for studies of militant groups far beyond the context of post-war transitions into politics. I argue that this set of tools illuminates crucial dimensions of variation across militant groups, provides insight into organizations' differential capacities for change and adaptation, and more broadly, specifies an under-examined level of analysis.

One of the primary contributions of this framework is that it highlights the need for—and provides—a comprehensive conceptualization of militant organizations. As Parkinson and Zaks (2017) observe, the last ten years of civil war studies have exhibited an analytic pivot toward group- or organization-level analyses. Scholars are increasingly looking to the organizational level for sources of variation (such as their structural com-

position[1] or recruitment tactics[2]) and for important outcomes (such as fragmentation[3] or rebel-to-party transition[4])—all of which have ramifications for our understanding of civil war dynamics. In short, scholars from across the literature are beginning to agree that organization matters.

Unfortunately, the literature has gotten ahead of itself on a crucial front: scholars have begun studying organization-level phenomena before the concept has been adequately fleshed out. As a result, "organization" has taken on an ad-hoc meaning (Parkinson & Zaks 2017, 4). In some cases, "organization" refers to levels of centralization and hierarchy (Staniland 2014), in other cases, "organization" refers to recruitment profiles and resource endowments (Weinstein 2007), and in others still, "organization" refers to local embeddedness and variation in participation (Wood 2003). While taking one facet of organizations as a *primary* focus for a given analysis is often perfectly acceptable, the problem in this literature is that authors focus on one organizational trait *to the exclusion* of all others. Ultimately, however, this concept should not be treated as a chameleon—becoming one thing in one situation, and another thing in a different situation. Using it as such is as problematic for that study as it is for future scholarship—and that is to say nothing of the potential policy recommendations that may stem from this work.

A prime illustration of the chameleon problem concerns two militant groups explored here: Renamo and the RUF. A broader examination of these two insurgencies throughout the rebellion literature reveals that depending on who is doing the talking and to what end, Renamo and the RUF are either considered fundamentally different—as in the case of de Zeeuw (2008) and Richards & Vincent (2008)—or fundamentally similar—as in the case of Weinstein (2007). In the first case, de Zeeuw (2008) explores the divergent paths of Renamo and the RUF as they attempt to transition into political parties. de Zeeuw focuses on the respective disarmaments of the organizations (behavioral differences) and the developments (or lack thereof) of a party organization (which he *frames* as a set of behavioral differences) to account for their different levels of success.[5] In the latter case, however, Weinstein argues that we can better explain patterns of violence against civilians by examining the organizational microfoundations of the conflict, which he defines in terms of the recruitment profile (who fills the roles) and resource endowments (behavior) of the group.[6] In his work, he characterizes the RUF and Renamo as representations

[1](Parkinson 2013, Staniland 2014)

[2](Weinstein 2007, Humphreys & Weinstein 2008)

[3](Staniland 2014)

[4](Manning 2004, Manning 2007, de Zeeuw 2008)

[5]It is crucial to note here that de Zeeuw lays out only the behavioral components of building a party organization: hiring skilled people, fielding electoral candidates, organizing election campaigns, etc. (de Zeeuw 2008, 13-14). Given the framework developed here, however, I contend that building a new wing of an organization (whether from scratch or through repurposing, as discussed in Chapter 3) is fundamentally about the construction, augmentation, and disintegration of roles and relations. As such, I argue that this aspect of de Zeuuw's framework and the ensuing analysis could have been enhanced given a more extensive template of organizational components.

[6]I characterize Weinstein's use of "resource endowments" as a behavioral aspect because his argument is ultimately about how different internal behaviors (paying insurgents versus relying on unpaid volunteers) incentivize different external behaviors (the level of violence exhibited toward civilians).

of the *same* type of organization (comprising low-skilled, opportunistic recruits), which exhibit the same type of behavior toward civilians. These divergent conclusions about the relative difference *or* similarity of Renamo and the RUF illustrate the problem with ad-hoc conceptualizations of organizations. Readers of just one study would come away with an inaccurate picture; readers of both might likely come away confused.

The divergent characterizations of Renamo and the RUF highlight the contribution of my analytic framework of rebel organizations beyond its application to rebel-to-party transition. My framework—by highlighting that organizational structure is more than hierarchy and roles are not (necessarily) limited to combat—implies that a comprehensive analysis of militant organizations must acknowledge the various components of organizational structure: roles, relations, behaviors, and goals. In the context of the example above, the RUF and Renamo are similar on some dimensions and different on others. Their *combat* recruitment profiles were remarkably similar—as Weinstein observes; yet the diversity of roles and subdivisions within the respective organizations differed considerably. As such, a corollary purpose of my dissertation is to demonstrate the utility of bringing a comprehensive organizational approach to bear on studies of militancy and civil war. This insight represents an important set of standards for future analyses of rebellion that take into account organization-level characteristics or outcomes.

8.2.3 Political Party Formation

Finally, since my research concerns how pre-transition organizational structures affect the success of political party consolidation, this framework can potentially shed new light on unanswered questions regarding party formation and democratic transition. Despite the wide acceptance that democracy is untenable without political parties—and more specifically, without *strong* parties—scholars of democratic transition spend little time accounting for parties' origins. Too infrequently does the democratic-transition literature address the role of party formation and consolidation in the success of democratization. And unfortunately, turning to the party formation literature leaves just as many questions unanswered. A lot of ink has been spilled on tracing extant party systems back to their origins in pre-existing social cleavages or revolutionary groups (Lipset & Rokkan 1967, Kitschelt 1994, Zielinski 2002), religious organizations (Kalyvas 1996), or labor and trade unions (Collier & Collier 1991). Yet, for every party traceable to a social movement or organization, we are left with twenty movements that do *not* develop into parties—either because they never try, or because they try and fail. As Henry Hale astutely notes, "many outstanding works on the formation of party systems tend to treat the 'preparty period' as a shapeless transitional phase" (2006, 8). By identifying the pre-transition structures that make organizational transformation from rebel group into party organization more likely, my research gives shape to this transitional phase. While in this dissertation, I specifically address the wartime structures of insurgencies, I anticipate that the framework can be used more broadly to examine party formation in a variety of contexts.

Finally, my research addresses the construction of post-conflict democratic institutions. In accordance with previous research, my findings suggest that proportional-

representation systems lower the barriers to entry for new parties, thereby facilitating the early stages of transition. This finding can help guide institutional choices in post-conflict state-building.

8.3 Policy Implications

Beyond its contribution to filling the gap in our understandings of rebel-to-party transition and party formation more broadly, the research presented here can provide key insights into some of the most pressing and intractable problems of global and regional security. I argue that this framework can help scholars get traction on parsing the successful from the unsuccessful democratic transitions in the wake of the Arab Spring. If we consider the actors from an organizational standpoint, the ostensible disconnect between revolutionary participation and party consolidation comes into focus. Looking to Egypt, for example, it becomes unsurprising that the Muslim Brotherhood was able to seize the opportunity, but no other parties formed to compete. As a preexisting organization with diverse political structures supplementing its militant wing, it was better poised to become a party than the masses of disenfranchised students and other citizens who flooded the streets along side them.

This research also has predictive utility and can potentially be used to guide more nuanced negotiated settlements. Specifically, it can be used to assess whether an insurgent group has the organizational capacity to operate in a party capacity. If so, perhaps more resources should be dedicated to assisting the transition process. Alternately, if the group seems to be lacking in key areas that make party success a likely outcomes, perhaps more resources could be dedicated to demobilization and other contingencies to reduce the likelihood of a return to conflict.

8.4 Future Directions

My preliminary findings in Chapter 7 suggest that geographical variation in proto-party structure development have visible implications for electoral success. This hypothesis is also corroborated by the last section of Chapter 6 in the Sierra Leonean case.

My research paves the way to new inquiries into two central aspects of democratic participation. On the one hand, it can shed light on ballot participation: What are the long-term effects on democracy when former-rebels participate in elections? What are the implications for democratization if former rebels only participate once and then disintegrate? On the other hand, it can shed light on citizen participation. What factors affect post-conflict vote-share for each party? When citizens are voting for former insurgents, are they voting for the party or voting for peace? Under what conditions do we see voter coercion and electoral violence?

The revisions I have planned for the book are twofold. First, I plan to construct and test a more nuanced set of empirical measures for insurgent organizational structures. The current measure comprises binary indicators of a variety of organizational

roles including administration, political messaging, social service provisions, engagement in community organizations, and education. My goal to move toward more nuanced quantitative indicators of organizational diversity and rebel governance. The new set of indicators will be based on scraping local newspapers for accounts of insurgent activities, interviews, and coding of primary source documents.

The second initiative for the book manuscript is to conduct more geographically-detailed research in the Salvadoran case. This case tests my theory at the sub-state level and represents a unique opportunity to examine how variations across insurgent behavior (including rebel governance, repertoires of violence, and civilian engagement) affect post-conflict political performance and longevity. During the war, the FMLN was an umbrella organization comprising five distinct groups, each of which operated in different regions of El Salvador. Tactics and organizational composition varied across the subgroups and I plan to conduct further qualitative and quantitative research to examine how intra-organizational variation affected crucial outcomes for El Salvador's eventual democratization. Specifically, I plan to assess three outcomes in greater depth: FLMN vote-share by district, variation in support for the nascent party, and post-transition retention of the various sects of the movement.

In 1832, Carl Von Clausewitz observed that "war is the continuation of politics by other means" (1976 [1832], 87). Over a century later, Renamo, the FMLN, Hezbollah, and many others showed us that sometimes, the reverse is true as well.

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Appendix A

Contested Rebel-to-Party Transformations

Table A.1: Positive Instances of Rebel-to-Party Transitions from Existing Data

Group & Country	MGEP	REVMOD	Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz	ROD
UNITA (Angola)	X	X	X	
EPL (Colombia)	X	X	X	
FMLN (El Salvador)	X	X	X	
URNG (Guatemala)	X	X	X	
GAM (Indonesia)	X	X	X	
RENAMO (Mozambique)	X	X	X	
RUF (Sierra Leone)	X	X	X	
SPLM/A (South Sudan)	X	X	X	
Croatian Republic	X		X	
Serbian Republic	X		X	
CNDD (Burundi)	X		X	
CNDD-FDD (Burundi)	X		X	
FUNCINPEC (Cambodia)	X		X	
KPNLF (Cambodia)	X		X	
M-19 (Colombia)	X	X		
RCD (D.R. Congo)	X		X	
MLC (D.R. Congo)	X		X	
FRUD (Djibouti)	X		X	
FARN (El Salvador)	X	X		
FPL (El Salvador)	X	X		
FAR (Guatemala)	X	X		
Amal (Lebanon)	X	X		
Hizbollah (Lebanon)	X	X		
NPFL (Liberia)	X		X	
SWAPO (Namibia)		X	X	

Group & Country	MGEP	REVMOD	Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz	ROD
CPN-M (Nepal)	X		X	
ANC (South Africa)	X		X	
PIRA/Sinn Fein (UK)	X	X		
Jamiat-i Islami (Afg.)			X	
Hizb-i Wahdat (Afg.)			X	
FNL (Angola)	X			
JSS (Bangladesh)			X	
FROLINA (Burundi)			X	
PALIPEHUTU (Burundi)			X	
PALIPEHUTU-FNL (Burundi)			X	
FPMR (Chile)		X		
MIR (Chile)		X		
FARC/UP (Colombia)	X			
Quintin Lame (Colombia)	X			
PRT (Colombia)	X			
Anjouan People's Movement (Comoros)	X			
Cocoyes (Congo)	X			
Ninjas (Congo)	X			
RCD-ML (D.R. Congo)	X			
FRUD-AD (Djibouti)	X			
AVC (Ecuador)		X		
Gamaat Islamiya (Egypt)		X		
ARENA (El Salvador)		X		
ERP (El Salvador)	X			
EPRDF (Ethiopia)		X		
EGP (Guatemala)	X			
ORPA (Guatemala)	X			

Group & Country	MGEP	REVMOD	Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz	ROD
PGT (Guatemala)		X		
FPRLZ (Honduras)		X		
Adivasi Cobra (India)		X		
Bodo Tigers (India)		X		
Dal Khalsa (India)		X		
TVP (India)			X	
JaM (Iraq)		X		
Iraqi National Congress		X		
Kaetaeb (Lebanon)		X		
SSNP (Lebanon)	X			
LURD (Liberia)	X			
anti-Qadaffi Rebels (Libya)		X		
LIFG (Libya)		X		
DPA (Macedonia)	X			
UÇK (Macedonia)	X			
Medhesi People's Rights Forum (Nepal)		X		
Contras (Nicaragua)		X		
FSLN (Nicaragua)		X		
PLO (Palestine)		X		
Fatah (Palestine)		X		
Hamas (Palestine)		X		
PLFP (Palestine)		X		
PLF (Palestine)		X		
DFLP (Palestine)		X		
MNLF (Philippines)	X			
RPF (Rwanda)			X	
AFRC (Sierra Leone)	X			

Group & Country	MGEP	REVMOD	Söderberg-Kovacs & Hatz	ROD
APLA (South Africa)		X		
EPRLF (Sri Lanka)	X			
EROS (Sri Lanka)	X			
TELO (Sri Lanka)	X			
TMVP (Sri Lanka)		X		
SLM/A (Sudan)	X			
SLM/A Minni Minawi Faction (Sudan)	X			
SLM/A Unity (Sudan)	X			
UTO (Tajikistan)	X			
Kurdish Hezbollah (Turkey)		X		
NRA (Uganda)			X	
Tupamaros (Uruguay)		X		
Bandera Roja (Venezuela)		X		
KLA (Yugoslavia)			X	
ZANU-PF (Zimbabwe)			X	
ZAPU (Zimbabwe)			X	