After Civil War: The Demobilization of Armed Forces in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala

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Chapter 1: Introduction

What factors explain success in demobilization efforts after the termination of civil conflict? This thesis examines this question with reference to three Central American cases: Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. This issue is very important in both theoretical and real-world terms. Theoretically speaking, we know very little about the intervening variables that account for variation in success. Empirically speaking, demobilization processes are critical not only for supporting democratic sustainability and economic recovery, but also for reestablishing a feeling of national unity and safety. The destruction wrought by civil war is immense and affects all people in all walks of life.

Most of Latin America today is democratic, but the vast majority of countries did not experience a transition to democracy at the end of a civil war. There is a class of new democracies with an added problem: how to demobilize the forces that fought a civil war. In this thesis I do not attempt to explain democratization writ large. Instead, I focus on evaluating democracy in a particular context: post-conflict democratization. This means not just the survival of democracy, but also the civilianization of politics and the demobilization of former combatants. We know of many challenges that new democracies face,[1] but are less clear on how these are compounded by the post-conflict environment.

The research that exists seems to fall into two categories: generally very theoretical studies without grounding in close examination of a few cases,[2] or in-depth historical accounts of a country's experience with demobilization without attention to specific

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[1] Challenges that new democracies face: see books on institution-building, transition, rule of law, etc.

[2] For example, *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy*, edited by Paul Collier, or *Demobilizing Armed Civilians,* by Steffen Jensen and Finn Stepputat.

variables or any attempt toward theory development.[3] In this thesis I argue that there are four central variables that account for variation: political parties, international actors, distributive economic policies, and peace accords. In this chapter I lay out the basic problem of demobilization and how it has been approached by the post-conflict literature. I then examine the variables that I have extracted from this literature before discussing and defending my case selection.

Theoretical Considerations on Post-conflict Situations

Demobilization is most simply defined as combatants' transition from military to civilian status.[4] Though complicated by political issues, the process consists of a straightforward checklist of matters that must be addressed.[5] A slightly expanded definition of demobilization is "the formal disbanding of military formations and, at the individual level, the process of releasing combatants from a militarized state."[6] In practical terms this phase comprises, for example, documentation, pre-discharge orientation, discharge, sometimes health-screening, and transportation to sites of resettlement. Successful demobilization is measured by the number of ex-combatants who have given up arms and do not rearm, while the completion of demobilization implies that the military force no longer exists. Regular armies typically remain in place, though components of the security apparatus may be demobilized (certain units or squadrons, for example) since post-conflict reforms of the

[3] Such as David Garibay, "A Peace Built on Forgetting Demobilized Combatants in Post-War El Salvador," *International Social Science Journal*, vol. 58, no. 189, 2007. pp. 467-78.
[4] Steffen Jensen and Finn Stepputat, *Demobilizing Armed Civilians* (Copenhagen: Centre for Development Research, 2001,) p. 12.
[5] Jensen and Stepputat, *Demobilizing Armed Civilians,* p. 11.
[6] Mats Berdal, *Disarmament and Demobilization After Civil Wars*, Adelphi Paper no. 303 (London: IISS and Oxford University Press, 1996,) p. 39.

regular military almost always include some kind of reduction in force.[7] The variables I evaluate affect ex-combatants on both sides of the conflict, not just the demobilizing opposition.

Most research relating to the study of post-conflict demobilization of armed forces falls into the broad category of "post-conflict literature." This burgeoning subfield of academic literature looks at questions ranging from the prosecution of war criminals to the establishment of law and order to ethnic reconciliation.[8] The aim of post-conflict studies is to ascertain what factors and conditions facilitate the development of a stable, lasting peace after conflict. In the context of comparative politics, post-conflict literature focuses on the period following civil war and the subsequent establishment of domestic institutions and policies.

Demobilization can have complex political significance. Dirk Salomons wrote: "The successful disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants after violent conflict represents the touchstone, the moment of truth, for any peacebuilding process."[9] When combatants are asked to give up their arms, they face a point of no return; they must have faith in a future where the advantages of peace outweigh those of war. Without such a vision, "they will not make the choice for peace—and if they remain a threat, no one else will be able to make that choice either."[10] Violent conflicts at the end of the twentieth century devastated many developing countries and thwarted development efforts in which vast amounts of human energy and money were invested. Many countries

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[7] Ibid.
[8] Christopher Waters, "Post-Conflict Legal Education," *Journal of Conflict and Security Law*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2005, p. 105.
[9] Dirk Salomons, "Security: An Absolute Prerequisite," in Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren, eds., *Post-conflict Development: Meeting New Challenges* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005,) p. 22.
[10] Salomons, "Security: An Absolute Prerequisite," p. 23.

were worse off after civil war than they had been at their initial independence. Even after the signing of peace accords, tensions can exist for years. In 44% of all post-conflict situations, civil war resumes in the first five years after the violence has ended, and about 50% of post conflict counties revert back to war within a decade.[11]

Unlike either conflict mediation or long-term peacebuilding, very little analytical consideration has been devoted to the immediate challenges of implementing peace agreements. Those responsible for translating peace accords into meaningful action have had to proceed quickly, without an accurate map of the hazards of the war-torn terrain in which they find themselves, or a reliable plan for managing challenges when they arise. In a 1996 study, Mats Berdal found that success in demobilizing soldiers after an armed conflict depends on "the extent to which warring parties and individual combatants believe that their physical and economic security will not be adversely affected by relinquishing arms."[12] Berdal postulates that as far as possible, "specific provisions for demobilization…should be agreed in the course of negotiations leading to a formal peace agreement,"[13] and that assistance by international organizations, NGOs, and donor countries should concentrate on creating and rebuilding local and national institutions that can mitigate conflicts and grievances without the risk of renewed violence. Baranyi and North argue that demobilization must be fully integrated as an activity, and that short-term emergency concerns should not be allowed to undermine long-term developmental goals.[14] In other words, there is a subtle interaction between the dynamics of a peace process and the

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[11] Paul Collier, et. al., *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* (Washington DC: World Bank, 2003,) p. 7.
[12] Berdal, *Disarmament and Demobilization After Civil Wars,* p. 73.
[13] Ibid., 74.
[14] Stephen Baranyi, and Liisa North, *Stretching the Limits of the Possible: United Nations Peacekeeping in Central America* (Ottawa: Canadian Center for Global Security, 1992,) pp. 15-6.

manner in which the demobilization provisions associated with that process are organized and implemented.[15]

At the most elementary level, what is missing is clear knowledge of those factors that make the difference between successful peace implementation and failure, between the assurance of peace and the resumption of war. Leading democracy studies focus on elite transitions in non-conflict situations. Scholars (and politicians) interested in conflict transformation and conflict resolution often pay attention to a conflict as long as it is "hot," but once the violent phase is over and the situation starts to stabilize, they lose interest.[16] This is one reason why the literature relating to the demobilization of armed forces is unacceptably thin. This study aims to provide a corrective to this problem, redressing the shortcomings of the literature by attempting to identify those factors.

Four Variables Explaining Variation

This thesis investigates the demobilization of armed forces following civil conflict by evaluating the scope of the capstone peace agreement, influence of international actors, strength of political parties involved in the conflict, and the degree of distributive policies targeting ex-combatants. It contributes to the post-conflict literature by providing insights into factors that facilitate or hinder the demobilization process, a subject that has heretofore only been addressed obliquely in the literature. The end of the Cold War led to the conclusion of civil conflict in several countries, which then had to face the serious challenges of reconstruction and demobilization. The strategies used to meet these challenges resulted in varying outcomes. A review of the literature indicates four variables

[15] Berdal, *Disarmament and Demobilization After Civil Wars,* p. 73.
[16] Junne and Verkoren, *Post-conflict Development*, p. 5.

on which there is significant variation in the cases that explain the differences in outcomes. They are the design of the *peace accords*, the ability of *external actors* to keep domestic actors from reneging, incentives for demobilizing combatants through *economic policy*, and the degree of representation of the *political parties*.

Peace Accords

Peace accords are the foundation for post-conflict peacebuilding. The scope of the accords, defined as the specificity of their contents, has potentially great implications for the success or failure of the demobilization and the continuation of peace. Many peace agreements deliberately ignore key issues. Joanna Spear writes that "although such silences may be a means to avoid derailment of negotiations, they may also result from negotiators not appreciating what is involved in disarmament and demobilization."[17] One of the consequences of these omissions is that the onus is on the implementers to decide how to proceed. "The details of the peace agreement can be regarded as a ceiling for action or a floor from which agents can move forward to implement their interpretation of the intent of the peace accords.[18] During the negotiation of a peace settlement, there is a potential clash of organizational interests over schedules for demobilization that may lead to setting unrealistic timetables. In some cases, the very incentives required to reassure weaker parties and gain commitment to a bargain in the initial period can cause political instability later on. Knowing whether there is a trend for more successful demobilization based on the scope of the peace accord could greatly enhance the probability of success.

I contend that peace accords that are somewhat narrow in scope, but that encompass

[17] Joanna Spear, "Disarmament and Demobilization," in Stedman, Rothchild, and Cousens, eds., *Ending Civil Wars,* op. cit., p. 148.
[18] Ibid.

certain provisions, will make the process of demobilization more focused and therefore more expedient. They will also allow for a reasonable and comprehensive timetable for implementation. Addressing the fundamental grievances of the actors involved will give demobilizing forces the confidence in the new regime that gives incentive to laying down arms. A comprehensive timetable for implementation is essential for building confidence in the integrity and sustainability of the peace process. While the short-term provisions of the peace accord cannot address the entirety of grievances, having at least some acknowledgement of these issues will provide a basis for future policy development once more stable political institutions are in place, and in the meantime give the demobilizing troops the confidence to proceed.

External Actors

While the violence may have abated at the signing of peace accords, the underlying sources of conflict may take years, if not generations, to overcome. The presence of an external actor can add the necessary pressure on the competing groups to cooperate and follow through with commitments included in the accords. International actors almost always have some role in the demobilization process that results from the peace accords, and some of these external actors may have had a role in the conflict itself. Doyle, Johnstone, and Orr contend that informal multilateral diplomatic mechanisms that join together states legitimize the pressures that interested states can bring to bear to further the purposes of peace while allowing them to pursue a division of labor that enhances their joint effort.[19] This means that external actors, though they may be acting individually, have an aggregate

[19] Michael Doyle, Ian Johnstone, and Robert C. Orr, eds., *Keeping the Peace: Multidimensional UN Operations in Cambodia and El Salvador* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997,) p. 376.

effect.

I focus my analysis on three external actors that played a significant part in the Central American peace processes: the United Nations (UN,) the Organization of American States (OAS,) and the United States (US.) I assert that external actors matter because they reduce the level of fear and insecurity that accompanies treaty implementation and thereby facilitate settlement. External actors guarantee that groups will be protected, terms will be fulfilled, and promises will be kept and thereby reduce uncertainty between parties. I also demonstrate that there is a limit to this influence and that the behavior of domestic actors is a determining factor. Domestic actors are not influenced equally by third parties. There is no guarantee that domestic actors will be willing to work with third parties, and external actors have no direct authority over domestic actors.

Economic Policy

Supporting a demobilization process is not just a technical military issue. It is a complex operation that has socioeconomic dimensions as well. Economic stabilization requires the implementation of the measures negotiated in the peace accords.[20] In order to support political stabilization, economic policy after civil war must promote not only redistribution in the narrow material sense, but also the set of incentives that leads actors to shift their loyalties to a new political order. What gives ex-combatants material incentives does not necessarily give them the political incentives to reintegrate into society. Salomons puts this in the context of the post-conflict tensions, stating: "It is important to pursue a specific type of economic development that addresses the grievances of different groups, allows

[20] James Boyce, "El Salvador's Adjustment Toward Peace: An Introduction," in James Boyce, ed., *Economic Policy for Building Peace: The Lessons of El Salvador* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1996,) p. 4.

compromises between contending factions, and offers sufficiently attractive alternatives to the main opponents."[21] These policies are often included in the peace accords, and the responsibility for fulfilling them typically falls to the incumbent government. I assert this kind of targeted policymaking facilitates demobilization, but that the absence or poor implementation of these policies exacerbates tensions between the government and former combatants.

Political Parties

The political parties representing the opposing factions of the civil war are responsible for implementing the demobilization program and making it feasible. According to Downs and Stedman, during this time "strategies become less predictable, balances of power become more tenuous, and alliances become more fluid."[22] A key component keeping the fragile political state of affairs from erupting back into war is whether these former warring parties have effective political representation. The attention of the political system is focused on founding elections, the first congress, etc., giving parties an immediate and critical role. These countries may not necessarily be undergoing an initial transition to democracy. Parties may have existed before and elections held, but not necessarily in a free and fair political environment. Post-conflict democracies put enormous responsibility on parties, some that are untested and new. I claim that the effectiveness of political parties in representing the former combatants is critical to explaining the post-conflict transition to democracy and the variation in the success of demobilization.

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[21] Salomons, "Security: An Absolute Prerequisite," p. 22.

[22] George Downs and Stephen John Stedman, "Evaluation Issues in Peace Implementation," in Stedman, Rothchild, and Cousens, eds., *Ending Civil Wars,* op. cit., p. 55.

Case Selection

This thesis consists of a small-N comparison of three countries following their initial signing of peace accords: Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. I selected these because they are from the same analytically meaningful universe of cases and have a high degree of unit homogeneity. Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala are situated near each other in Central America, meaning that they also share similar background conditions: colonial histories, cultural factors, language, and religion. All three countries experienced violent civil war, pitting state militaries against irregular armed forces, which ended with the signing of peace accords. By holding these factors constant to some degree, I was able to more accurately estimate what was actually doing the work in the causal relationships. These factors neutralize any concerns about selection bias, as these cases have differing experiences of the process of demobilization. The peace accords for each of these cases included direction and timelines for the demobilization, but with other varying provisions across cases. Since the random sampling Barbara Geddes suggests for case selection[23] would not be practical for this project, the research question is phrased such that it seeks not to explain demobilization, but rather to assess the effect of different factors within the domain of the post-conflict literature.

This thesis does not attempt to explain democratic transition or the decision to pursue peace following conflict. While Cold War ideology did affect the experience of conflict in each of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, I intentionally exclude a discussion of ideology because it would not explain any differences that occurred regarding

[23] Barbara Geddes, *Paradigms and Sandcastles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003,) pp. 125-35.

the experience of post-conflict demobilization between the three countries. Demobilization processes occurred following the end of the Cold War.

Some assumptions are inherent to a research design such as this. The first is that the cases are fully independent. The civil war and peace process in each country is autonomous from that of the other cases, but there are areas that I was unable to explore in this framework, such as the contagion across cases, the sequencing of cases, and the interaction effects between independent variables. Nonetheless, what I have done is to identify a series of independent variables that have significant explanatory power across the three cases and I remain confident that although this does not account for all of the explained variance, the framework clearly shows critical differences across outcomes.

Secondly, there is an assumption that there is no reciprocal causation. The nature of demobilization processes is such that it cannot happen until after the cessation of conflict. Thirdly, there is an assumption that there is no systematic correlation between the causal variables included in the analysis and other variables omitted from the analysis. While there are certainly a great many factors interacting with each other during the establishment of peace following a civil conflict, based on the existing literature, the four evaluated in this thesis are the most causally relevant.

One methodological pitfall of small-N analysis is the issue of "too many variables, too few cases."[24] Given that I have chosen only four explanatory variables, I endeavored to keep the number of cases small. I have chosen only three in order to maintain a relatively parsimonious framework. This allows for thorough research of the cases within the limited time available, while varying the context of demobilization.

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[24] Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 65, no. 3, September 1971, pp. 687-89.

Lastly, because this is a small-N analysis, it is true that the findings that result from this study may not be generalizable over a large number of cases. However, the background conditions are such that the analytically meaningful universe of cases is wide enough to allow comparison of cases across space and time, a possibility for further research. Given that the three cases included in this thesis are all in Central America, there would not be much, if any, conceptual stretching involved in applying the theory to other sub-regions of Latin America.

Methodology

This thesis is based on qualitative analyses of the independent variables discussed earlier in this introduction. These data come from both primary and secondary sources, such as participant and non-participant observations, interviews of party elites, and archival documents. Collecting these data involved dissecting and analyzing the peace accords themselves, qualitatively analyzing how aspects of the peace accords affected the process of demobilization. I evaluate the degree of representation of the political parties by examining the legitimacy, party organization, and roots in society. The third parties involved, their motivations, and actions taken are all part of the evaluation of the influence of external actors. This information comes largely from historical or archival documents, in particular participant observations from the United Nations. Secondary sources will also be utilized to evaluate the role of foreign actors in post-conflict situations. The evaluation of the degree of targeted economic policies uses data such as income distribution, land distribution, and number of demobilized combatants, aside from the peace accords themselves and other secondary sources. The numerical data come from previously administered surveys and

existing statistics, for example from the World Bank, the UNDP Human Development Index, Inter-American Development Bank, IDEA, etc.

A Look Ahead

This chapter has justified the importance ascribed to the problem of how to demobilize armed forces following civil war, has laid out the key variables and hypotheses, and has defended the case selection. As mentioned earlier, the literature about post-conflict demobilization falls into two categories: broad theoretical studies without grounding in close examination of cases, or in-depth historical accounts of a country's experience with demobilization without attention to specific variables or attempts toward theory development. This research represents a diversion from these two categories, as it evaluates four variables that have not yet been analyzed in conjunction across the cases of Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Expanding knowledge of the specific challenges to demobilization during post-conflict peace implementation will hopefully improve the chances of a sustainable peace. In the following chapter I provide brief historical synopses of the three cases before proceeding, in Chapter Three, to a discussion of the peace agreements that ended each civil war. In Chapter Four I discuss the influence of external actors. In Chapter Five I analyze the effect of economic policies in providing incentives to demobilizing soldiers. In Chapter Six I evaluate the degree of representation of the primary political parties. In Chapter Seven I summarize my findings and draw conclusions about the demobilization processes in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

Chapters 1 – 6 are currently embargoed form release in ORA under author request.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This thesis has examined the factors that explain success in demobilization efforts after the termination of civil conflict by evaluating the scope of the capstone peace agreement, degree of international brokerage, strength of political parties, and effectiveness of socioeconomic policies targeting ex-combatants across three Central American cases. It contributes to the post-conflict literature by providing insight into factors that facilitate or hinder the demobilization process, a subject that has heretofore only been addressed obliquely in the literature. The end of the Cold War precipitated the end of civil wars across several countries in Central America. The strategies used to meet the challenges of the post-conflict environment resulted in varying experiences with demobilization.

Demobilization is the first step toward maintaining peace following the end of civil war but often one of the hardest tasks to achieve. At the most elementary level, what is missing is clear knowledge of those factors that make the difference between successful peace implementation and failure, between the assurance of peace and the resumption of war. This thesis redresses the shortcomings of the literature by attempting to identify those factors. In this chapter, I first summarize my findings regarding the experience of demobilization across the three cases in relation to the four variables. I then draw some final conclusions based on these findings.

Four Variables Explaining Variation

In this thesis I have evaluated how the design of the capstone peace accords, the ability of external actors to keep domestic actors from backsliding, the development of distributive economic incentives for demobilizing, and the degree of representation of political parties varies across cases in relation to the demobilization process in each

country. A review of the post-conflict literature highlighted significant variation across these four variables that explains differences in outcomes. I now summarize the findings for each of the variables across the three cases.

Peace Agreements

Evaluating the scope, participants, and sustainability of peace accords provides an insight into their direct and indirect effects on the demobilization process. Beyond issues of scope and content, peace agreements tend to enshrine the correlation of forces at the time of signing, and this correlation of forces then becomes an independent variable on its own. In Nicaragua, the lack of a capstone peace agreement directly affected the length of time it took to achieve agreements that were credible and amenable to all parties. The Contras were excluded from nearly all the negotiations and did not feel obliged to follow the dictates of the accords. The result was a series of agreements that focused on a single issue (demobilization) and that largely ignored other key issues that contributed to the conflict. The "freezing effect" of peace accords was not as pronounced in Nicaragua because of the absence of a capstone agreement, and because the Contras were only signatories to the final agreements.

In El Salvador, the Chapultepec Accord included a clear plan for demobilization negotiated by both parties to the conflict. The main weakness of the Accord was that it did not provide a framework for resolving the extreme social and economic disparity that contributed to the outbreak of civil war. The accords were therefore narrow in scope, but deep on issues of security and political inclusion. The Salvadoran civil war ended in a stalemate, which meant that the Accord froze into place a roughly equal correlation of forces.

The Accord for a Firm and Lasting Peace in Guatemala addressed a broad range of pertinent issues, but did not include sufficient mechanisms for implementation. The

relative weakness of the URNG meant that the government could manipulate the implementation to suit its own interests. Despite its wide scope, the shallowness of the Accord meant that some aspects were completely ineffective. The freezing effect of peace accords was most obvious in the case of Guatemala, where the peace agreement locked in a serious inequality of power.

External Actors

External actors matter because they attenuate the level of fear and insecurity that accompanies treaty implementation and thereby facilitate settlement. They guarantee that groups will be protected, terms will be fulfilled, and promises will be kept and in doing so reduce uncertainty between parties. In my evaluation of the role of external actors in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala, I narrowed the discussion to three main actors: the Organization of American States (OAS,) the United Nations (UN,) and the United States (US.) In all three cases these external actors influenced different actors in different ways through their collective actions. External actors in El Salvador were able to clearly influence the domestic actors to follow through on commitments made in the peace accords, and when problems arose these external actors effectively mediated in order to keep peace processes on track. What this meant for demobilization was that weapons were collected, political objectives were met, and key issues at the root of the conflict were addressed. In Nicaragua, external actors were almost solely responsible for keeping the demobilization moving forward. Had they not been involved, it is possible that violence would have been ongoing. In Guatemala, external actors met with some success in promoting human rights, but lacked clear standards for enforcing the peace accords' implementation. Thus, El Salvador was the most successful case, followed by Nicaragua and Guatemala.

Economic Policies

Economic and social inducements such as land, education, or technical training provide a reason for ex-combatants to remain unarmed, a means to support themselves and their families and to reintegrate into society. Economic policy during post-conflict transition must support political as well as economic stabilization. This means implementation of the measures negotiated in the peace accords in the material sense, but also means the inclusion of incentives that lead actors to shift their loyalties to the new political order. In Nicaragua there was an attempt to provide economic incentives to the demobilizing Contras, but the program failed in its implementation and ended up exacerbating tensions between ex-Contras and discharged members of the EPS. In El Salvador, there were several economic policies targeting the needs of ex-combatants, but these programs were short-lived and only assisted a portion of the people they were meant to help. In Guatemala, the immediate demobilization of the URNG as soon as the Accord was signed meant that the government had no need to use economic policy as an incentive. Despite the mixed degrees of success in all three countries, El Salvador had the most comprehensive socioeconomic policies targeting demobilizing FMLN and discharged members of the military. Nicaragua and Guatemala provide more complicated cases for analysis, since the failed efforts in Nicaragua fueled the rearmament of some groups and the complete absence of any such policies in Guatemala resulted from the URNG's trust in the government to follow through on commitments once it was unarmed.

Parties

In this chapter I evaluated whether political parties represented supporters' interests well enough to successfully implement the demobilization program. I focused on three particular party characteristics that are of paramount importance in the post-conflict

period: legitimacy, organization, and roots in society. In Nicaragua, the FSLN and the UNO together received a high percentage of the overall vote, implying a high degree of legitimacy. In terms of organization, both the FSLN and the UNO experienced fragmentation following the election of Chamorro. The FSLN was strong enough to overcome this and survived to compete (and win) in later elections. The diverse and often competing factions of the UNO resulted in its dissolution soon after the election.

In El Salvador, ARENA and the FMLN together garnered nearly three-quarters of the total votes, implying a high degree of legitimacy. Both ARENA and the FMLN were highly organized. For ARENA, this was most likely due to its hierarchical military origins and programmatic coherence. Historically organized along the five different party lines that made up the original FMLN coalition, after the end of the war these were successfully unified into one organizational structure. ARENA's combination of marketing linkages and programmatic linkages ensured support by a broad range of people, from military officers to members of the elite to the urban poor. The FMLN had strong foundations in grassroots organizational blocs. The comparatively low level of electoral volatility in the elections following the cessation of conflict provides evidence of the dyad's strong roots in society.

In Guatemala, the PAN and URNG together obtained less than half of the votes, suggesting that the electorate was ambivalent about these parties. The URNG, despite its programmatic coherence, could not extricate itself from its own tradition of hierarchy and vanguard politics and ended up alienating its grassroots supporters. The PAN was so closely identified with the Arzú government that the government's structure essentially became the party's. Neither party had strong roots in society, a legacy of the thirty-five years of the harsh repression of organized social activity by brutal military governments and the volatile nature of parties in Guatemala.

Understanding Demobilization

Table 7.1 is an integrated model summarizing my findings. This table assigns scores to each of the countries for each variable, based on the analyses of the previous chapters, on how that variable positively or negatively affected demobilization. It is important to remember that I make relative judgments about the three cases in Central America *against one another*, not against an arbitrary benchmark. The goal here is intra-regional comparison.

Table 7.1 Integrated Model of Findings

Country	Variable 1: Peace Accords (Chapter 3)	Variable 2: External Actors (Chapter 4)	Variable 3: Economic Policies (Chapter 5)	Variable 4: Political Parties (Chapter 6)	Total
Nicaragua	• Contras were excluded from negotiations • No capstone agreement, but series of agreements • Narrow scope: focused on demobilization • Did not freeze an unequal balance of forces	• Made sure elections were free and fair, assured transfer of power to Chamorro • Expanded mandates for verification and monitoring • Continued demobilization negotiations/agreements • Deficient arms control • Aid predicated on demobilization • OAS/CIAV excluded ex-EPS	• Development poles failed to provide basic needs, unrealistic land transfer goals • Contras were pushed away from centers of power • Ex-EPS received no consideration, were suspicious of focus on Contras	• Parties were legitimate- two parties earned high percentage of vote share in presidential and legislative elections • UNO was organizationally weak and was not rooted in society • FSLN was well organized and had strong links in society. • UNO won election but fragmented shortly afterward	
Score	1	1	-2	1	**1**
El Salvador	• Capstone agreement • Somewhat narrow in scope (did not sufficiently address socioeconomic issues, but clear on military and political inclusion issues) • Deep in terms of number of commitments and implementation, schedule • Froze a relatively equal correlation of force between ARENA and FMLN	• Pressured government to follow through on commitments made in Accords (i.e. purged military of officers, accept FMLN in political arena after arms caches found) • Influenced FMLN to give up all arms • Convinced military of need for peace negotiations • Aid conditional to demobilization • Limited OAS presence	• Vague language in accords, but land transfer and professional development programs were created • Some ex-combatants from FMLN and military received land • Establishment of programs was not timely, ex-combatants could not afford to wait • Programs eventually halted	• Parties were legitimate, ARENA and the FLSN earned around 75% of votes in presidential and legislative elections • FMLN was very organized and had some strong links in society. • ARENA highly organized and rooted in society	
Score	2	3	1	2	**8**
Guatemala	• Capstone agreement • Very broad scope • Vague language meant shallow, unenforceable commitments • URNG was "frozen" in its weakened state • Politicization of accord implementation	• MINUGUA's mandate often unclear • Success in human rights issues • Legitimized URNG at negotiating table • Success in building conflict resolution infrastructure at local level	• No policies targeting any ex-combatants • Limited land transfer program did affect peasants who fought in URNG • Vague language regarding socioeconomic reforms in Accord	• PAN and URNG earned <50% of vote; low score on legitimacy • PAN organizationally weak, no roots in society. Focused around Arzú. • URNG more rooted, but organization hindered transition to political party.	
Score	-1	1	0	-2	**-2**

Note: scores assigned on a scale from -3 to 3 in terms of their effect on demobilization. A score of 3 is strongly positive, 2 is positive, 1 is weakly positive, 0 is null, -1 is weakly negative, -2 is negative, and- 3 is strongly negative. Therefore the scale in the "Total" column has a potential range from -9 to 9.

The table clearly illustrates that El Salvador had the most successful demobilization, with positive scores across all four variables. Guatemala clearly scored the lowest, and Nicaragua occupies an intermediate position. These component indicators are not perfectly independent from one another. There are a number of issues that I did not address in this thesis that can affect outcomes, such as the contagion across cases, the sequencing of cases, and the interaction effects between independent variables. Nonetheless what I have done is to identify a series of independent variables that have significant explanatory power across three cases. I remain confident that although this is not all of the explained variance, the framework clearly shows critical differences across the outcomes.

What made the case of El Salvador such a (relative) success? All four of the variables I evaluated positively affected the demobilization process in El Salvador. Even though the highest score was for Variable 2, External Actors, the peace accord and political parties had substantial positive influence. Since the civil war in El Salvador ended in a military stalemate, the balance of power between the FMLN and government was relatively equal. This correlation of forces was clear in terms of the design of the peace accord and the representativeness of the parties. The provisions of the Chapultepec Accord were characterized by a fairly equal balance between what each side gave up and what they got in return. This could not have happened if the FMLN and ARENA, as parties, had not had relatively high levels of legitimacy, organization, and rootedness in society to back up their claims. Even though the FMLN did not win the presidential elections in the years following the signing of the peace accords, it maintained a large base of support and earned a solid proportion of the votes. The variable that was the least successful in El Salvador is Variable 3, Economic Policies. ARENA did find a way to immediately include economic incentives without upsetting

its supporters, and the FMLN was able to achieve some limited land transfer and professional development. However, ex-combatants on both sides were not able to maximize the limited opportunities that were available because of difficulties in their administration, and the programs ended up falling flat. Leaders did not feel pressured to persist. El Salvador's highest score for Variable 3, External Actors, was because the government and the FMLN had clearly-stated obligations in the peace accords. When actors attempted to renege it was easier for the external actors to effectively determine how to enforce domestic actors to be accountable. Neither the government nor the FMLN wanted to be seen as intransigent, thus the "naming and shaming" strategy of the third parties was effective.

The case of Guatemala is problematic. The URNG demobilized fairly swiftly following the signing of the peace accord, yet the Guatemalan experience across the four variables was largely negative. The URNG counted on the government to follow through on promises for reform, but left itself no way to enforce the government's accountability. The main variable hindering Guatemala was its political parties. Brokering a peace accord when the PAN and the URNG jointly garnered less than 50% of the total vote signaled serious challenges for implementation. The PAN's presence in government was tenuous, given the volatility of Guatemala's party system, and made it difficult for international actors to demand compliance and for the URNG to achieve its goals (or secure reasonable compromises.) The URNG, despite its roots in society and the strength afforded to it through international support, was unable to adapt its organization to become a viable political party. The unbalanced power structure was reflected in the shallowness of the Accord for the Firm and Lasting Peace, which froze it into place. The government had no incentive to specifically address the needs of ex-combatants, since the URNG was not a threat politically or militarily once it had given

up its weapons. The effectiveness of external actors was limited by the vague language of the Accord and the volatility of the political parties.

Nicaragua fell short of achieving a higher degree of success largely because of its ineffectiveness in addressing the economic needs of ex-combatants. The Recompas, Recontras, and Revueltos were comprised of ex-combatants from all sides, angered by the fact that after years of war they did not get what was promised to them. The peace agreements' narrow focus on security concerns meant that key issues at the root of the conflict were never thoroughly addressed. Nicaragua's weakly positive experience with the other three variables meant that none counterbalanced the negative effect of the failed economic policies. The main reason the success of the other variables was only weakly positive was because of the weakness of the UNO as a political party. Despite its success at the polls, it did not effectively represent the Contras in the political arena, which meant that the demobilization process dragged on for nearly two years. In the meantime, soldiers from both sides re-armed because it was the only way they felt they could get their needs met.

Conclusion

The thesis has shown that peace agreements that are somewhat narrow and deep in their commitments allow for the most feasible implementation. It has also demonstrated that the positive influence of external actors is somewhat dependent on the domestic actors and that international actors tend to have somewhat short attention spans. The role of economic policies in providing incentives to ex-combatants is a crucial determinant of whether ex-combatants will rearm. Lastly, it has shown that demobilization is less likely to occur in cases where political parties are unable to structure democratic politics in the first decade after transition. These Central American peace processes were largely

treated by external actors as part of a single basket of interrelated cases. The cases are geographically and temporally proximate. This means that my findings are less generalizable, unless a single sub-region elsewhere in the world experiences several civil wars simultaneously. Nonetheless, the framework has clearly shown critical differences in demobilization processes across the cases.

While the four variables I have evaluated all play an important role in the demobilization process, two stand out as particularly critical to its success: peace agreements and political parties. These two variables structure the balance of power in the immediate post-war period and determine if commitments to peace will be met through the full implementation of the peace accords and participation in the political arena. Peace agreements that lock into place correlations of forces that are roughly balanced are more sustainable because no actor is able to become dominant. A peace agreement that locks in a serious inequality of power will be harder to implement, regardless of the level of its commitments, because there are fewer incentives for compliance on the part of the dominant signatory. In a transition to democracy after a civil war, where the former fighters must fight for objectives in the political arena instead of the battlefield, locking in an equality of power restricts the ability of those parties to effectively represent a broad range of social forces, thus limiting the success of democratization.

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