

After Insurgency: Revolution and Electoral Politics in El Salvador**Ralph Sprenkels****Publication Date**

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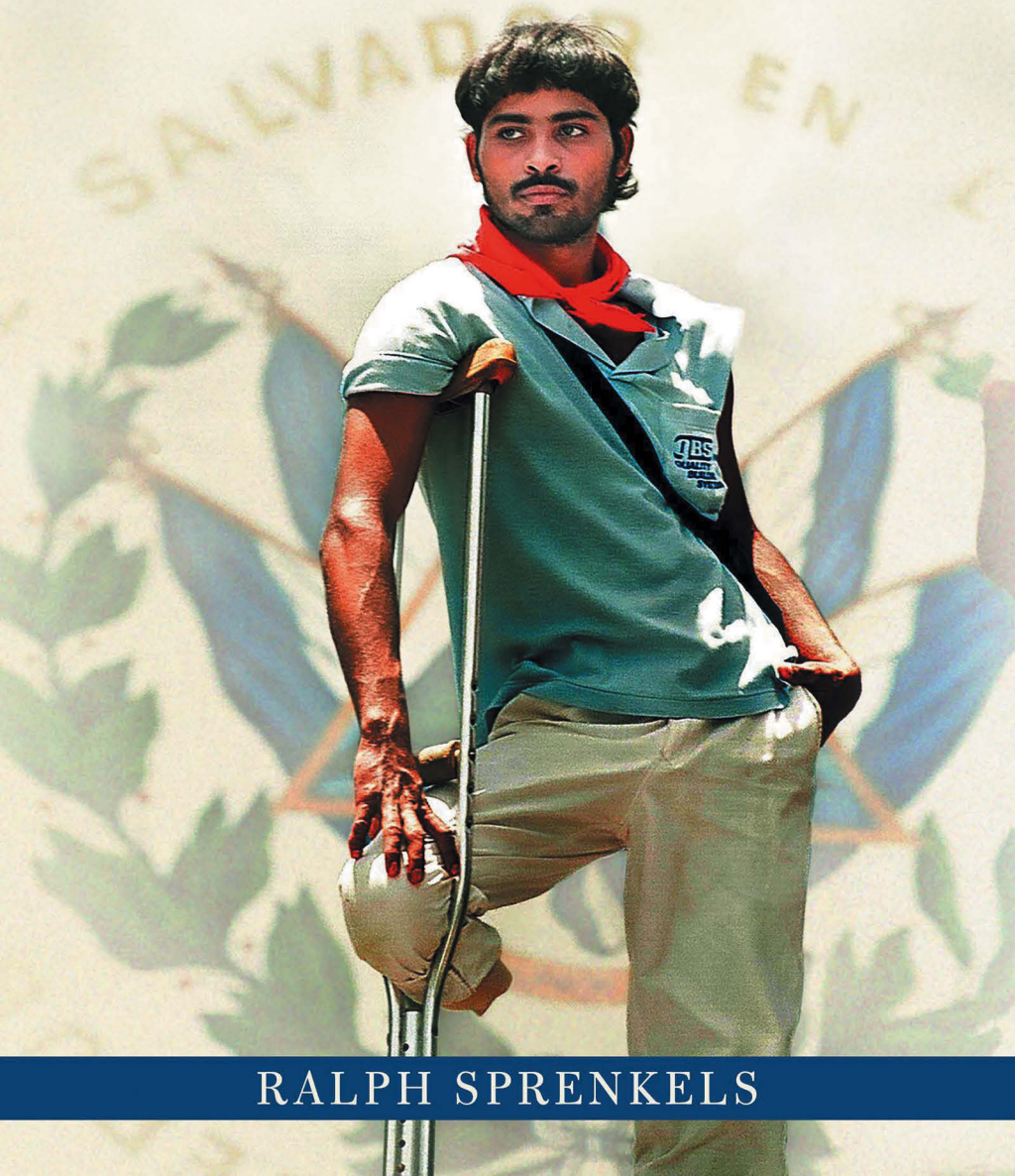
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AFTER INSURGENCY

REVOLUTION *and* ELECTORAL POLITICS
in EL SALVADOR



RALPH SPRENKELS

After Insurgency

AFTER INSURGENCY

Revolution and Electoral Politics
in El Salvador

RALPH SPRENKELS

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For Michelle

entregamos lo poco que teníamos, lo mucho que teníamos,
que era nuestra juventud,
a una causa que creímos la más generosa de las causas del mundo
y que en cierta forma lo era, pero que en la realidad no lo era.
De más está decir que luchamos a brazo partido, pero tuvimos jefes corruptos,
líderes cobardes, un aparato de propaganda que era peor que una leprosería,
luchamos por partidos que de haber vencido nos habrían enviado
de inmediato a un campo de trabajos forzados,
luchamos y pusimos toda nuestra generosidad en un ideal
que hacía más de cincuenta años que estaba muerto,
y algunos lo sabíamos, y cómo no lo íbamos a saber
si habíamos leído a Trotsky o éramos trotskistas,
pero igual lo hicimos, porque fuimos estúpidos y generosos,
como son los jóvenes, que todo lo entregan y no piden nada a cambio.

—Roberto Bolaño

Each man
has a way to betray
the revolution.
—Leonard Cohen

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Acronyms

ACISAM	Asociación de Capacitación e Investigación para la Salud Mental
ACJ	Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes
ACRES	Asociación de Colectivos de Refugiados Salvadoreños
ACUS	Acción Católica Universitaria Salvadoreña
ADC	Alianza Democrática Campesina
ADESCO	Asociación de Desarrollo Comunal
ADG	Asociación de Discapacitados de Guerra
ADIC	Asociación para el Desarrollo Integral Comunitario
AEAS	Asociación de Empresarios de Autobuses Salvadoreños
AES	Asociación Estudiantil de Secundaria
AGEUS	Asociación General de Estudiantes Universitarios Salvadoreños
AIP	Agencia Independiente de Prensa
ALGES	Asociación de Lisiados de Guerra de El Salvador “Héroes de Noviembre del 89”
AMES	Asociación de Mujeres de El Salvador
AMS	Asociación de Mujeres Salvadoreñas
ANDA	Administración Nacional de Acueductos y Alcantarillados
ANDES	Asociación Nacional de Educadores Salvadoreños “21 de Junio”
ANTA	Asociación Nacional de Trabajadores Agrícolas
APDECA	Asociación para la Salud Dental en Centro América
APROCSAL	Asociación de Promotores Comunales Salvadoreños

ARDES	Asociación Revolucionaria de Estudiantes de Secundaria
ARENA	Alianza Republicana Nacionalista
ASALDIG	Asociación Salvadoreña de Lisiados y Discapacitados de Guerra
ASALVEG	Asociación Salvadoreña de Veteranos y Veteranas de Guerra del FMLN “Farabundo Martí”
ASDI	Asociación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Integral
ASIPES	Asociación Salvadoreña de Investigación y Promoción Económica y Social
ASOTRAMES	Asociación de Trabajadores de los Mercados
ASOVET 12 DE ABRIL	Asociación de Veteranos y Veteranas del FMLN Histórico 12 de Abril
ASPS	Asociación Salvadoreña Promotora de Salud
ASTAC	Asociación Salvadoreña de Trabajadores del Arte Comunitario
ASVERS	Asociación de Veteranos Revolucionarios Salvadoreños
ATACES	Asociación de Trabajadores Agrícolas y Campesinos de El Salvador
AVDIES	Asociación de Veteranos para el Desarrollo Integral
AVEELSALCOMAR	Asociación de Veteranos de Guerra Comandante Marcial
AVEGUEFOFA	Asociación de Veteranos de Guerra Frente Occidental Feliciano Ama
AVERCH	Asociación de Veteranos de Chalatenango
AVERD	Asociación de Veteranos Roque Dalton
AVERSAL	Asociación de Veteranos Revolucionarios Salvadoreños
AVRAZ	Asociación de Veteranos Rafael Arce Zablah
BFA	Banco de Fomento Agropecuario
BPR	Bloque Popular Revolucionario
BRES	Brigada Revolucionaria de Estudiantes de Secundaria
BTC	Brigada de Trabajadores de Campo

CAM	Cuerpo de Agentes Municipales
CBO	Comité de Base Obrera
CCR	Coordinadora de Comunidades Repobladas de Chalatenango
CCS	Central Coordinadora de Sindicatos
CD	Convergencia Democrática; Cambio Democrático
CDH-ES	Comisión de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador
CDR	Coordinadora para el Desarrollo Rural (San Vicente)
CDU	Centro Democrático Unido
CEBES	Comunidades Eclesiales de Base de El Salvador
CEMUJER	Instituto de Estudios de la Mujer “Norma Virginia Guirola de Herrera”
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIAZO	Comité Interagencial para la Alfabetización en la Zona Oriental
CIDAI	Centro de Información, Documentación y Apoyo a la Investigación (at the UCA)
CIDEP	Cooperación Intersectorial para el Desarrollo y el Progreso
CINAS	Centro de Investigación y Acción Social
CISPES	Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador
CNR	Coordinadora Nacional de Repoblaciones
COACES	Confederación de Asociaciones de Cooperativas de El Salvador
CODECOSTA	Coordinadora para el Desarrollo de la Costa
CODEFAM	Comité de Familiares Pro-Libertad de Presos y Desaparecidos Políticos de El Salvador
CODESMA	Coordinadora de Desplazados y Marginados de La Libertad
COMADRES	Comité de Madres y Familiares de Presos, Desaparecidos y Asesinados Políticos de El Salvador
COMAFAC	Comité de Madres y Familiares Cristianos de Presos, Desaparecidos y Asesinados
COMIN	Comando Internacional de Información
COMUS	Comunidades Unidas de Usulután

CONADES	Comisión Nacional para los Desplazados
CONAMUS	Coordinadora Nacional de la Mujer Salvadoreña
CONARA	Comisión Nacional para la Restauración de Areas
CONAVERS	Coordinadora Nacional de Asociaciones de Veteranos y Veteranas Revolucionarios Salvadoreños del FMLN
CONFRAS	Confederación de Federaciones de la Reforma Agraria Salvadoreña
CONIP	Comité Nacional de la Iglesia Popular
COPAZ	Comisión Nacional para la Consolidación de la Paz
COPPES	Comité de Presos Políticos de El Salvador
CORDES	Fundación para la Cooperación y Desarrollo Comunal de El Salvador
CPDH	Centro para la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos “Madeleine Lagadec”
CPDN	Comité Permanente para el Debate Nacional
CRC	Comité para la Reconstrucción de Cuscatlán y Cabañas
CRD	Coordinadora para la Reconstrucción y el Desarrollo
CREFAC	Centro de Reorientación Familiar y Comunitaria
CRIPDES	Comité Cristiano Pro-Desplazados de El Salvador
CRM	Coordinadora Revolucionaria de Masas
CRS	Corriente Revolucionaria Socialista
CSM	Ciudad Segundo Montes
CUTS	Confederación Unificada de Trabajadores Salvadoreños
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DM-1	Destacamento Militar No. 1
ELAM	Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina
END	Ejército Nacional para la Democracia
ERP	Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo
F-16	Fundación 16 de Enero
FAL	Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación
FAPU	Frente de Acción Popular Unificada
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
FARN	Fuerzas Armadas de la Resistencia Nacional

FARO	Frente de Agricultores de la Región Oriental
FASTRAS	Fundación para la Autogestión y Solidaridad de los Trabajadores Salvadoreños
FDR	Frente Democrático Revolucionario
FEASIES	Federación de Asociaciones y Sindicatos Independientes de El Salvador
FECCAS	Federación Cristiana de Campesinos Salvadoreños
FECMAFAM	Federación de Comités de Madres y Familiares de Presos, Desaparecidos y Asesinados Políticos de El Salvador
FEDECASES	Federación de Asociaciones Cooperativas de Ahorro y Crédito de El Salvador
FEDECOPADES	Federación de Asociaciones Cooperativas de Producción Agropecuaria de El Salvador
FENACOA	Federación Nacional de Cooperativas Agrarias
FENASTRAS	Federación Nacional Sindical de Trabajadores Salvadoreños
FESTIAVTSCES	Federación Sindical de Trabajadores de la Industria del Alimento, el Vestido, Textil, Similares y Conexos de El Salvador
FLACSO	Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales
FMLN	Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional
FOCCO	Fomento y Cooperación Comunal
FPL	Fuerzas Populares de Liberación
FRS	Frente Revolucionario Salvadoreño
FSLN	Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional
FSM	Fundación Segundo Montes
FSR	Federación Sindical Revolucionaria
FTC	Federación de Trabajadores del Campo
FUAR	Frente Unido de Acción Revolucionaria
FUERSA	Frente Universitario Estudiantil Salvador Allende
FUMA	Fundación Maquilishuat
FUNDABRIL	Fundación 1 de Abril
FUNDASPAD	Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo y la Democracia

FUNDE	Fundación Nacional para el Desarrollo
FUNDELIDDI	Fundación de Lisiados y Discapacitados para el Desarrollo Integral
FUNDESA	Fundación para el Desarrollo
FUNPROCOOP	Fundación Promotora de Cooperativas
FUNSALPRODESE	Fundación Salvadoreña para la Promoción del Desarrollo Social y Económico
FUR-30	Fuerzas Universitarias Revolucionarias 30 de Julio
FUSS	Federación Unitaria Sindical de El Salvador
IEHAA-UES	Instituto de Estudios Históricos, Antropológicos y Arqueológicos de la UES
IEJES	Instituto de Estudios Jurídicos de El Salvador
IMU	Instituto de Investigación, Capacitación y Desarrollo de la Mujer
ISD	Iniciativa Social para la Democracia
IUDOP	Instituto Universitario de Opinión Pública (at the UCA)
JEC	Juventud Estudiantil Católica
LL	Ligas para la Liberación
LP-28	Ligas Populares 28 de Febrero
LPC	Ligas Populares Campesinas
LPO	Ligas Populares Obreras
LPS	Ligas Populares de Secundaria
MAM	Movimiento de Mujeres “Mélida Anaya Montes”
MCM	Movimiento Comunal de Mujeres
MCP	Movimiento de Cultura Popular
MCS	Movimiento Comunal Salvadoreño
MERS	Movimiento Revolucionario de Secundaria
MIPTES	Movimiento Independiente de Profesionales y Técnicos
MLP	Movimiento de Liberación Popular
MNR	Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario
MOR	Movimiento Obrero Revolucionario
MPSC	Movimiento Popular Social Cristiano
MR	Movimiento Renovador
MRC	Movimiento Revolucionario Campesino
MSM	Movimiento Salvadoreño de Mujeres

MU	Movimiento de Unidad
MUPI	Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen
MV-END	Movimiento de Veteranos de Guerra del Ejército Nacional para la Democracia
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NOTISAL	Agencia de Información y Análisis de El Salvador
NRP	National Reconstruction Plan
OIE	Organismo de Inteligencia del Estado
OIG	Organized interest group
OMR	Organización de Maestros Revolucionarios
ONUSAL	United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador
ORDEN	Organización Democrática Nacionalista
ORMUSA	Organización de Mujeres Salvadoreñas para la Paz
PADECOES	Patronato para el Desarrollo Comunal de El Salvador
PADECOMSM	Patronato para el Desarrollo de las Comunidades de Morazán y San Miguel
PAR	Partido de Acción Renovadora
PARLACEN	Parlamento Centroamericano
PCN	Partido de Conciliación Nacional
PCS	Partido Comunista de El Salvador
PD	Partido Demócrata
PDC	Partido Demócrata Cristiano
PDDH	Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos
PMO	political-military organization
PNC	Policía Nacional Civil
PPI	División de Protección a Personalidades Importantes
PPL	Poder Popular Local
PROCOMES	Asociación de Proyectos Comunales en El Salvador
PROESA	Fundación Promotora de Productores y Empresarios Salvadoreños
PROGRESO	Asociación Promo Gestora de Repoblaciones Sociales
PRO-VIDA	Asociación Salvadoreña de Ayuda Humanitaria

PRS	Partido de la Revolución Salvadoreña
PRTC	Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores Centroamericanos
PSD	Partido Social Demócrata
PTT	Programa de Transferencia de Tierras
REDES	Fundación Salvadoreña para la Reconstrucción y el Desarrollo
RFM	Radio Farabundo Martí
RN	Resistencia Nacional
RV	Radio Venceremos
SALPRESS	Agencia Salvadoreña de Prensa
SHARE	Salvadoran Humanitarian Aid, Research and Education Foundation
STISS	Sindicato de Trabajadores del Instituto Salvadoreño del Seguro Social
STIUSA	Sindicato Textil de Industrias Unidas, S. A.
STP	Secretaría Técnica de la Presidencia
SV-FMLN	Sector de Veteranos del FMLN
TD	Tendencia Democrática
TR	Tendencia Revolucionaria
TSE	Tribunal Supremo Electoral
UCA	Universidad Centroamericana “José Simeón Cañas”
UCRES	Unión de Comunidades Repobladas de San Salvador y La Libertad
UCS	Unión Comunal Salvadoreña
UDN	Unión Democrática Nacionalista
UES	Universidad de El Salvador
UIGCS	Unidad de Investigación sobre la Guerra Civil Salvadoreña (at the UES)
UMS	Unión de Mujeres Salvadoreñas Pro-Liberación “Mélida Anaya Montes”
UN	United Nations
UNES	Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNTS	Unión Nacional de Trabajadores Salvadoreños
UPT	Unión de Pobladores de Tugurios

UR-19	Universitarios Revolucionarios 19 de Julio
URNG	Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca
US	United States of America
USAID	Agencia Estadounidense para el Desarrollo Internacional
UTC	Unión de Trabajadores del Campo
UV	Unidades de Vanguardia

List of Protagonists

- “Alex.” Became involved in the revolutionary movement through church activism. A lay worker and resident in one of the FPL repopulations since the late 1980s.
- “Ana.” Grew up in a middle-class family heavily involved in the PCS. Participated in the PCS-FAL in different capacities during the war, mostly in exile. After the war, she has developed a career in NGO work.
- “Anastasio.” A war-seasoned PCS-FAL cadre, he studied law after the war and found employment in a state institution.
- “Angel.” A former FPL combatant and postwar community leader in one of the Chalatenango repopulations.
- “Angela.” Fought for the PCS-FAL during the last years of the war, then went back to the university, held several jobs in NGOs and government, and raised a family.
- “Antonio.” An FPL midlevel cadre, he spent the war clandestinely in San Salvador, mostly in political tasks. After the war, he developed a career in NGO work, without active participation in the FMLN.
- “Armando.” Participated a few years as a combatant with the FPL in the early 1980s. Became an educator in the Mesa Grande refugee camp and later one of the leaders of repopulation efforts.
- “Arturo.” Originally from Chalatenango, he fought as a squad leader both for the FPL and for the FAL. After the war he became one of the community leaders in the repopulation of Ellacuría.
- “Balbina.” From Chalatenango. Developed into an FPL cadre during the war. Settled in a repopulated community after the war and started a farm and a family.
- “Beatriz.” Having grown up working for the RN in exile, she became a professional artist after the war.
- “Bernabé.” An internationalist organized with the FPL, after the war he worked for NGOs on behalf of the repopulated communities of San Vicente.

- “Cándido.” From a family of landowners, he was recruited into the FPL during the 1970s. Lost his wealth during and after the war. One of the animators of FMLN veteran organizing since 2000.
- “Carlos.” From a peasant family in Chalatenango, he fought for the FPL during the last years of the war. After the war, he settled in a repopulation and did some subsistence farming. After 2000 he became part of the San Salvador municipal police force.
- “Carmen.” One of the leaders of the repopulation movement, she worked throughout the war in different organizational tasks for the FPL in Chalatenango. After the war she became involved in NGO work. Active within the FMLN’s CRS.
- “Chabelo.” An FPL midlevel military cadre, he was wounded at the end of the war. Initially, played a prominent role in the organization of FMLN war-wounded, but soon broke with the party and settled in his home town.
- “Danilo.” An experienced ERP cadre, he obtained a government position shortly after the war.
- “David.” Born in San Salvador, he spent most the war in Chalatenango, where he became a midlevel officer in the FPL guerrillas. After the war, he worked mostly in construction.
- “Demetrio.” Involved in the ERP’s urban structures in the 1970s and 1980s. Different postwar occupations. Was offered a government job late 2009.
- “Dionisio Alemán.” A senior military cadre with the RN. Involved in FMLN politics and the veteran movement after the war.
- “Dolores.” Supported the FPL from her family exile and fought in El Salvador during the last years of the war. Worked in several NGOs and, since 2009, with the government.
- “Dora.” A former FPL member, after the war she worked in public service as well as with NGOs.
- “Dorotea.” Participated with the FPL masas in Chalatenango and, later, in Mesa Grande. Settled in Ellacuría.
- “Edgardo Cornejo.” An FPL comandante, he became involved in the FPL radio network after the war.
- “Elizabeth.” An FPL midlevel cadre charged with political and military tasks during the last years of the war, she returned to her hometown to raise a family and run a farm with her husband, also a former combatant.

“Elsa.” Participated with the FPL during the war in different capacities, mainly in the refugee camps. After the war, she ran the family household, which included a tiny convenience store, in one of Chalatenango repopulations. Her husband, a former FPL combatant and political prisoner, migrated to the USA.

“Emanuel.” Economist connected to the PCS-FAL, mostly involved in political tasks. Active in different NGOs and a participant in the CRS current after the war.

“Ernesto.” An FPL supporter trained in repairing light weaponry.

“Evaristo.” Former child soldier and former member of the FPL Special Forces. After the war, he became a police officer and a law student.

“Fabio.” An RN cadre mostly involved in political tasks in the capital city. He had a falling-out with the leadership close to the end of the war. Survived on odd jobs.

“Federico.” A war-wounded former FPL combatant, he received a scholarship to study medicine in Cuba after the war.

“Felipe.” Involved in political work in San Salvador as an FPL midlevel cadre. After the war, he held jobs in municipalities and an NGO.

“Félix.” An FPL midlevel military cadre, he found employment in NGOs, as a municipal employee, and, since 2009, as a government employee. Linked to FMLN reformists.

“Fidel.” An urban FPL midlevel cadre, wounded several times. Spent a large part of the war recovering in Cuba. Found postwar employment at the UES.

“Fidelina.” Daughter of a peasant family from Guazapa, she served in different capacities in safe houses as well as on the rural front. After the war, she settled in a repopulation in Chalatenango, studied to become a nurse, and found employment in a rural health clinic.

“Gabino.” A high-ranking FPL military cadre, he became active in postwar politics.

“Gabriel.” A PRTC member, he mostly worked in exile during the war. Very active in postwar FMLN politics.

“Geraldine.” A political activist from Canada who worked with the FPL in Mexico and in Chalatenango.

“Gerardo.” Participated with the FPL in different capacities. As part of the repopulation movement, he stayed in Ellacuría after the war.

“Gilberto.” An FPL leader who abandoned this group after the death of Comandante Marcial in 1983.

- “Henry.” NGO leader and one of those responsible for the ERP’s civil-political front in San Salvador. Continued to be involved in NGO work after the war.
- “Hernán.” An FPL midlevel cadre, he held military as well as political responsibilities during the war. Close to the reformist tendency, he held several municipal jobs over the years.
- “Herminia.” A leader from the peasant movement in the 1970s, she lived for most of the war in the Mesa Grande refugee camp and settled in a repopulated community at the end of the war.
- “Hugo.” Integrant of the FPL’s Farabundo Martí Radio. Mostly involved in NGO work after the war, he became a government employee under President Mauricio Funes.
- “Ignacio.” A Catholic priest who participated with the ERP during the war.
- “Ismael.” An FPL activist with Mexican origins.
- “Iván.” A fighter for the PCS-FAL, he was killed in the 1989 offensive.
- “Jerónimo.” An FPL midlevel military cadre, he became a local postwar FMLN leader until a conflict with the party ended in his expulsion.
- “Jorge.” An urban ERP member, involved mostly in the NGO support structure of the organization. Witnessed the ERP’s postwar dismemberment from up close and retired from party politics.
- “José.” A former FPL cadre, mainly worked on logistics during the war. With reformist sympathies, became marginalized within the FMLN after 2000. Active in veteran politics.
- “Josefina.” Affiliated with the PCS-FAL during the war, mainly involved in political work. Fought during the 1989 offensive. After the war she distanced herself from the PCS and obtained a job at a state institution.
- “Juan.” Born in Chalatenango, he became an FPL combatant during the last years of the war. For the last two decades, he has combined season farming in Chalatenango with working first as a municipal police officer in the city, and later as a protection agent for FMLN leadership.
- “Justo.” Of urban descent, he worked for most of the war in logistics in Chalatenango, for the FPL. He became a municipal employee after the war; subsequently lost his job because of infighting.
- “Lilian.” An experienced FPL political cadre, she held several positions as a consultant for municipal governments and NGOs before becoming a government official in 2009.

- “Luis.” Joined FPL combat forces in San Vicente at age ten and came out of the war missing a limb. Since 2000, he has worked as a municipal employee in the capital.
- “Magdalena.” An ERP political cadre, she broke with the leadership after the war and integrated into the FMLN after the split of 1994.
- “Manuel.” Part of the RN military leadership toward the end of the war, he became an official in the new police force.
- “Marcelo.” A former FPL urban commando member, he held postwar jobs in the police force and later in the private sector.
- “María.” Participated with the FPL masas. Settled in Ellacuría.
- “María Ester.” A PCS-FAL cadre, she helped organize the reinsertion process for combatants of her organization.
- “Mariana.” Originally from Chalatenango. Unaffiliated with the revolutionary movement. Repopulated the community of El Roble after the war.
- “Mariano.” An FPL midlevel cadre during the war, he has worked as a community leader since the war. He also spent several years working in the United States.
- “Maritza.” An FPL activist from Chalatenango, she settled in a repopulated community after the war.
- “Marta.” Organized first with the FPL and later with the PCS-FAL. One of the leaders of the repopulation of Ellacuría, she continued to be a community leader after the war.
- “Martín.” An important cadre for the FPL during the war, he distanced himself from the party in the years after the peace accords.
- “Mauricio.” From a middle-class family in San Salvador, he participated with the PCS since the 1960s. Served a few years at the front for the PCS-FAL in the early 1980s. Afterwards worked for the party outside the country. Formally renounced party membership after the peace accords and attempted to set up a business.
- “Máximo.” A South American exile, he was recruited in Europe through the FPL support networks in 1983. Mainly operating from Chalatenango, he survived the war to marry a Salvadoran woman, also a former FPL militant, and make a living working for an NGO. With Funes as president, he became a government official.
- “Medardo.” Grew up during the war. His family settled in Ellacuría. Involved in postwar community organizing.

“Memo.” Fought with the ERP. One of the leaders of the war-wounded FMLN veterans.

“Miguel.” A student, he joined the PCS-FAL for the last years of the war.

Currently a university professor, not involved directly with the FMLN.

“Miriam.” Participated most of the war in urban FPL structures (safe houses). Worked for NGOs in the postwar period.

“Moisés.” An RN political cadre during the war. Continued to work with NGOs after the peace accords. Years after the rupture between RN and FMLN, he resumed his FMLN militancy.

“Nadia.” A fighter for the PCS-FAL, she was killed in 1988.

“Napoleón.” A key PRTC cadre charged with military and political tasks. After the war, he worked for several years for an international organization before returning to El Salvador as an adviser to the FMLN.

“Nicolás.” A former PCS-FAL midlevel cadre. Settled in the repopulation of Ellacuría after the war.

“Oscar.” Fought most of the war for the FPL. Severely wounded on several occasions. First became involved as a messenger boy. Ended as a mid-level military cadre. Started a family and a farm in a repopulation in Chalatenango after the war.

“Pablo.” Native of Cabañas and a midlevel cadre for the FPL during the war. Settled in Ellacuría after the war. Sympathizes with the FMLN’s reformist current.

“Pascual.” A low-profile RN collaborator during the war, he became involved in the postwar FMLN, first locally, and later nationally.

“Patricia.” A former PCS-FAL militant, she has worked as an FMLN political party staff member in the postwar period.

“Pedro.” A former FPL military cadre and war-wounded, he worked for years as a security agent at an FMLN office. In 2009, he obtained a security job in one of the ministries.

“Rafael.” A midlevel cadre of the PCS in the 1970s and first half of the 1980s, mostly involved in trade union work. Accused of working with the enemy. Though eventually cleared, did not recover his standing inside the party. Became active in the FMLN as a CRS supporter after the war.

“Renato.” A Guancora native without affiliation to the revolutionary movement. Fled his home and settled elsewhere in the country at the start of the war.

- “René Henríquez.” An FPL military comandante. Became a leading figure in the FMLN veteran-organizing efforts after 2000.
- “Reyes.” A high-ranking FPL cadre. Became one of the leading members of the FMLN renovadores faction after the war and was expelled from the party after 2000.
- “Rigoberto.” Participated with the FPL in different capacities. Helped organize the repatriation to Chalatenango. Settled in Ellacuría.
- “Roberto.” An ex-combatant for the FPL. Settled in a Chalatenango repopulation. Worked as a teacher and became involved in local FMLN politics.
- “Rogelio.” An FPL midlevel military cadre and war-wounded. Worked a range of different postwar jobs. Participated in different FMLN efforts on and off.
- “Ronaldo.” One of the leaders of the PCS-FAL during the war. Participated with the TR faction after the war. Critical of the official party line of the FMLN.
- “Rubén.” Fought for the RN during the war, in different capacities. Became a police officer after the war.
- “Ruth.” Worked for the PCS-FAL leadership in exile during the war. Limited party activism since.
- “Rutilio.” An FPL midlevel military cadre, he found employment in a municipal administration governed by the FMLN.
- “Sandro.” A fighter in the PCS-FAL Special Forces, he became active in FMLN party politics after the war.
- “Santos.” Participated with the FPL in different capacities during the war. A resident of Ellacuría.
- “Saúl.” A midlevel military cadre with the FAL during the war. Involved in FMLN politics after the war. Left the FMLN in 1998 to integrate into the TR.
- “Sebastián.” Of urban descent, he participated with the PCS-FAL during the war. Worked afterwards with several NGOs and municipal governments. Unemployed at the time of fieldwork.
- “Segundo.” Participated the entire war with the ERP in Morazán. Became involved in educational activities and NGO work after the war.
- “Sergio.” An internationalist with the FPL during the last years of the war. Presently involved in NGO work.
- “Severina.” Participated with the FPL masas in Cabañas and, later, in Mesa Grande. Settled in Ellacuría.

“Silvio.” Mostly worked for the FPL in exile. Developed a postwar career in journalism and communications, with no direct involvement in the party.

“Tino.” A former ERP midlevel cadre with vast military experience. Worked for some years for FMLN municipal governments. Unemployed at the time of fieldwork.

“Umberto.” The PCS-FAL sent him to San Salvador for political work in the second half of the 1980s. Broke with the PCS in 1992. Now a professor.

“Victoria.” Participated with the FPL masas and settled in a repopulated community in Chalatenango. In the 1990s and after 2000, most of her family migrated to the United States.

“Wilber.” A PCS-FAL Special Forces member, he worked for different NGOs after the war.

“Yancy.” Born in Mesa Grande during the war. Repopulated Ellacuría as a child, together with her family, of which the older members participated with the FPL in different capacities.

“Yolanda.” An RN midlevel cadre involved in logistics and human resources during the war. Worked with several FMLN municipalities after the war. Involved in organizing FMLN veterans.

“Zacarías.” Supported the RN during the war. Active as an FMLN war veteran.

“Zaira.” Grew up on the front in Chalatenango and performed a range of organizational tasks for the FPL. Became involved in social movement activism after the war.

CHAPTER ONE

Echoes of Revolution

*But so far the most definite self comes from the Struggle.
Whatever that means now.*

—Nadine Gordimer, *No Time like the Present*

The cease-fire of February 1, 1992, ended a hard-fought civil war in El Salvador that had lasted twelve years. The peace accords signed two weeks earlier by the insurgents of the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN)¹ and government representatives received strong international acclaim as “a new beginning for El Salvador” (Wade 2016, 2). “This is the closest that any process has ever come to a negotiated revolution,” the United Nations’ principal mediator, Alvaro de Soto, declared in the *New York Times*.² De Soto’s appraisal became iconic. Many international observers viewed El Salvador’s peace process as a role model for ending armed conflict through negotiation of political reforms under the tutelage of the international community. Scores of articles and books extracted lessons learned from El Salvador to be applied in other post-conflict transition processes.³ Government officials as well as former *comandantes* traveled around the world, sometimes together, to share their experiences as a source of inspiration for other countries crippled by conflict.⁴

The success of El Salvador’s 1992 peace accords hinged primarily on the fact that the elites from the former warring parties, though still

politically divided, embraced electoral democracy (Wood 2000). In retrospect, Salvador Samayoa, FMLN negotiator and a leading Salvadoran intellectual, referred to the final round of peace negotiations and its aftermath as “the explosion of consensus” (2002, 585).⁵ Indeed, the accords constituted the blueprint for an extensive institutional reform process, which included, besides relatively free and fair elections, a new civilian police force, a significant reduction of the armed forces, and an overhaul of the judicial apparatus. The insurgents laid down their arms, demobilized their troops, and entered the electoral arena as a political party. Although scholars also endeavored, to a greater or lesser extent, to point out shortcomings, El Salvador’s peace process emerged as a textbook case of democratic transition, at the time that democratic transition was “the hottest theme of the moment” (Domínguez and Lindenberg 1997, 217), certainly in the study of Latin American politics, but arguably also in the study of international politics at large.

Paradoxically, as I myself witnessed up-close, for most former Salvadoran insurgents the transition was a very difficult and often painful process. What democratic transition theory generally tends to interpret as highly positive steps in the process—the demobilization of the guerrilla troops, for example—raised for many of those directly involved complex and uncomfortable questions about the future of their movement. The insurgents’ desire for peace mixed with their growing anxieties about the value and worth of previous collective efforts and with concerns about their personal future (B. Peterson 2006). Many wondered whether the outcome had been worth the sacrifice.

This sentiment was particularly strong amongst the rank-and-file and midlevel cadres. In contrast, those holding important political positions within the FMLN generally defended the process. Some *comandantes* labeled the transition as the “democratic revolution” they had fought for all along, while others framed it as the highest attainable result at the time given the national and international political circumstances.

In 2009 a new outburst of international enthusiasm over Salvadoran politics occurred. Seventeen years after the demobilization of its fighters, the FMLN became the first former Latin American guerrilla front that, having failed to take power through armed struggle, was nevertheless able to win power through the ballot. It was also the first time the Left had won the presidency in El Salvador’s history. The pacific transfer of power to the

FMLN, seen as the litmus test of El Salvador's postwar democracy,⁶ occurred in a context of left-wing parties rising to power across Latin America, catapulted in part by neoliberalism's waning popularity.⁷ For international observers, FMLN president Mauricio Funes became the latest milestone in Latin America's "pink tide."⁸ For the FMLN and its supporters, the historical symbolism was compelling, as the party obtained by popular vote the mandate they had been unable to garner through military means (Luis González 2011). Some scholars interpreted the FMLN's triumph as the proof that El Salvador's transition process had finalized; others, as a new, crucial step in "the maturation of El Salvador's democracy" (Greene and Keogh 2009, 668). The first scholarly reviews of FMLN performance in government confirmed the idea of a democratic breakthrough, with the FMLN able to "increase inclusion" (Cannon and Hume 2012, 1050) and "making significant improvements in the daily lives of citizens" (Perla and Cruz-Feliciano 2013, 101).

Thus, after first developing into what Russell Crandall (2016, 69) qualifies as "Latin America's largest and most formidable Marxist insurgency," the FMLN subsequently also transformed into a highly effective peacetime political party. For many of those previously dedicated to revolutionary armed struggle, the Funes election smacked of redemption. In subsequent months, the FMLN party offices throughout the country were flooded by guerrilla veterans and other former FMLN collaborators looking for work and offering their services. As the "Funes transition" unfolded, however, a good part of the former rank-and-file and midlevel insurgents did not see their initial expectations fulfilled, and increasingly expressed criticism, doubts, and anxieties about the FMLN's performance in office. They did so not only as individuals but also through organizations such as associations of FMLN veterans, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and a range of social movement organizations.⁹

This book is about how those that participated in the insurgency experienced and helped shape El Salvador's democratic transition. In it, I examine how their historical collective project, what participants refer to as "the Revolution," became remolded in the context of neoliberal peace.¹⁰ I focus particularly on the internal relations of El Salvador's revolutionary movement, and on the postwar accommodations they underwent. The multifaceted transformation of the movement's internal relations played a large part in what I call "the lived experience of postinsurgency." I also

document and analyze how the postwar remaking of the movement's internal relations interlinks with the FMLN's contemporary political performance. By this approach, I demonstrate that the reconversion of the FMLN from insurgent movement to an election-oriented party unfolded as a tense and contentious process, which led to the proliferation of internal conflicts. Its relative success notwithstanding, widespread disillusionment surfaced among participants.

The main argument of this book is that the revolutionary movement advanced its engagement in electoral politics mainly by building on insurgent networks, identities, and imaginaries. I contend that the FMLN's electoral success hinged to a large extent on this organization's ability to reconvert a substantial part of its insurgent networks into predominantly clientelist factions. At the same time, factors like the intense political competition between the FMLN and the dominant right-wing party Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (ARENA), pervasive sectarian struggles in the realm of the FMLN, and the scarcity of state resources available for distribution all rendered these postwar clientelist relations relatively unstable and precarious. Considering these political developments in the mirror of the aspirations and sacrifices of revolutionary armed struggle, many former Salvadoran insurgents lamented what they saw as the postwar scramble for public resources, but few could afford not to participate in it. Hence, the experience of postinsurgent politics developed as a peculiar mix of political ascendancy and disenchantment.

The present study is based on a total of sixteen months of fieldwork in El Salvador between 2008 and 2015 with (former) participants in the FMLN. In total, I interviewed eighty-nine former insurgents for this project, twenty-six women and sixty-three men.¹¹ I furthermore relied extensively on ethnographic case studies, for which I performed fieldwork inside the FMLN's political party apparatus, FMLN veteran groups, and former insurgent communities. I also performed research on the revolutionary movement's scattered archives. Underpinning this research lay my own previous experiences with El Salvador's revolutionary movement. Since I lived in El Salvador for a total of fifteen years, my professional and personal life has been permeated by this country's insurgent history. I became involved with El Salvador's revolutionary movement in 1990, while studying in Mexico. I started on a small Fuerzas Populares de Liberación (FPL)¹² collective in the city of Guadalajara. The FPL was the

largest of the five political-military organizations that composed the FMLN's united guerrilla front. Early 1992, shortly after the signing of the peace accords, I was transferred from Mexico to El Salvador and assigned to the FPL structures in Chalatenango, a mountainous guerrilla stronghold area during the war. In all, I worked for the FPL for four years, performing tasks that included fund-raising, propaganda, education, and research into the human-rights violations perpetrated by the military and the death squads during the war.¹³

With the peace process advancing and the FMLN functioning as a political party, I gradually started taking a different path, seeking to visualize the largely unaddressed legacy of the atrocities that had taken place during the war, a topic the FPL leadership considered of minor interest. In 1994, I helped found an organization called Pro-Búsqueda, dedicated to the search for the hundreds of young children that had disappeared during the civil war, mostly as a result of kidnappings by the army. Most of the people I worked with in Pro-Búsqueda had actively participated in the insurgency, as was—and often still is—the case for the bulk of the personnel of the many left-wing NGOs in the country. To date, the different contacts and friendships I gained from my time with the FPL have continued to play an important role in my life. I also met my partner and the mother of our two children in San Salvador. Her family participated in the war with another FMLN-affiliated organization: the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación (FAL),¹⁴ the armed branch of the Partido Comunista de El Salvador (PCS).¹⁵ Our marriage brought me into close contact with many former members of this organization.

Thus, even if I did not actively participate in FMLN party politics after 1994, I continued to be surrounded by former insurgents in the different political and social environments in which I was immersed. Some were involved in FMLN party politics; others were not. However, they all shared common ties and a common history, and lived lives that intersected to a large extent. The evolving story of the revolutionary movement continued to be an inevitable part of conversation. It included the FMLN's internal politics—its schisms, conflicts, and sectarian plotting—often even more than the electoral successes and setbacks. But the story also involved the well-being of the refugee communities, cooperatives, NGOs, church groups, and social movement groups that used to be an integral part of the insurgency.

A BIG CRASH

"If you take into account how great our revolution was, I consider that after the war *nos pegamos una gran estrellada*," "Justo"¹⁶ told me one afternoon in August 2009. "We made a big crash." Justo made this comment while he and I were trying to make a preliminary inventory of the contents of a stack of old cardboard boxes. They were filled with papers and videocassettes, severely damaged by moths and mold: the leftovers of what used to be the archive of the FPL. I had met Justo, a former FPL mid-level cadre who spent most of the war in Chalatenango, through mutual friends in 1992, but we had lost touch over the years, until a joint interest in the protection and preservation of the FPL's historical archive brought us back together in 2009. In spite of Justo's disappointment with El Salvador's former insurgents' postwar performance, the FMLN had just celebrated what arguably was its greatest success in history: Mauricio Funes's triumph in the March 2009 presidential elections. The FMLN had now become the party in power, and a considerable number of former FPL cadres Justo and I knew were moving into important government positions.

That afternoon, Justo and I talked about how within our social circles of former insurgents, opinions on the significance of the election results varied. A few old militant friends talked about it as if it were the realization of the dream they had long fought for. Some warned against early celebration and saw the electoral win as just one step in the long and ongoing struggle to rid the country of the right-wing oligarchy that has held it in its grip for so long. Others argued that the electoral outcome actually constituted one more proof that the FMLN had negotiated under the table with the right-wing establishment. In this reading, El Salvador's traditional powers and their historical ally, the United States, would only have allowed a left-wing victory to take place if the FMLN had become a relatively innocuous part of the system. Justo himself was skeptical of all these different readings. He said he had lost his appetite for political polemics.¹⁷

Justo's description of the postwar revolutionary movement as a "big crash" acquires depth of meaning when understood within a multilayered and longitudinal context, one that incorporates elements of Justo's own life and personal history within the broader context of the history of the political movement in which he participated. Different episodes of Justo's

life are relevant for understanding how and why he frames the experience of the revolution as he does. For example, in the 1970s, being a self-searching urban teenager interested in rock music, he found that the revolutionary movement provided him and several of his closest friends with a community and a purpose. He performed well in these close-knit clandestine networks, where he experienced friendship, solidarity, and comradeship. Taking on large responsibilities early on in life, Justo learned to live by a different name and to hide his revolutionary identity from public sight. He also participated in and bore testimony to violence, and was forced to withstand the horrors of the mounting military and death-squad persecution. In 1981, while passing a military roadblock as a passenger on a public bus, Justo came face-to-face with an elder comrade from his cell who had been captured by the army. The comrade did not betray him, thus risking his life to protect Justo and the revolutionary organization. Over the years, he lost his closest friend, and other loved ones, in combats against the Salvadoran military. In Chalatenango, the FPL's most extensive front, he functioned for several years as a well-respected, midlevel leader, mainly involved in logistical and political tasks, often working directly with the troops.

After the 1989 offensive, while the insurgents were already beginning to negotiate the end of the war, Justo became aware that he suffered from physical and mental exhaustion. He felt he was unable to continue at the front, but he hesitated to present his personal situation to the leadership, because at the time there had been several executions of alleged infiltrators. Justo himself had been ordered to monitor and report on suspected enemy networks amongst the troops and military cadres. He had been instructed that some of the indications of enemy allegiance were "low morale," "inconformity," "complaints of exhaustion," and particularly, "asking for permission to leave the front." But in time, Justo realized he simply could no longer stick it out. He talked to the FPL's political leader of the Chalatenango front at the time, someone he knew well from when they were both still young activists in the 1970s. This comandante proved responsive to his plight. Justo asked for and was granted permission to go to the capital to rest and recover.

His personal experiences in the postwar period provide relevant context to qualify Justo's disenchantment with the transition process. When the peace accords were signed, Justo had been on leave from the FPL for over a year, working in a café in the capital city. He settled with "Felicía,"

his longtime girlfriend, and their young children, in a small house in the suburbs. Felicia, like him, had spent most of the war in the guerrilla. The FPL did not take him or Felicia into account for the demobilization package, and, though upset with what he saw as their marginalization, he did not insist on being included. Subsequently, Justo did not participate in the FPL final meetings and formal dissolution. Nonetheless, a few years later, with some of his former comrades in public office, he was offered an administrative job in one of the FMLN municipalities. It started relatively well, but after a few years he witnessed his former comrades engaging in personal bickering and become ever more divided. After almost a decade of service, he lost his municipal job as a result of this infighting. It was given out as a prize to one of the participants in a rival faction.

As we were meeting regularly to work on the inventory of the FPL archive, I noticed that Justo had a hard time making ends meet each month. Even though his work on the FPL archives was voluntary, he was hoping that his former FPL comrades would prove sensitive to his economic plight and reward him for his work.

One day Justo told me he had recently searched for the family of “Adelino,” the man who had saved his life in 1981. At the time, Adelino and his family had been providing the cover for a major FPL operation in the western part of the country. With FPL funds, they had bought a small coffee farm. Under the house, the FPL built a clandestine workshop, almost a small factory, to make Vietnamese-style mines and other explosives in preparation of the upcoming 1981 guerrilla offensive, the first nationwide armed uprising. Justo had just been in Cuba for extensive training, and he led the team of twelve people working inside the workshop. At night they would sleep on the floor inside the farmhouse, wake early, take turns bathing, have breakfast, and then pack into the underground workshop before dawn, where they would work the rest of the day and only come out again after nightfall. Adelino’s wife did the cooking, and the children had to make it all appear as if they were a regular family trying to make a living off the plantation. Adelino used a Volkswagen van with built-in secret compartments to distribute the explosives around the country.

The workshop functioned at full capacity for several months. However, shortly after the offensive, Justo’s superior was captured by the military and revealed the location of the workshop. When the raid began, Adelino alerted his comrades through a switch in the house that activated

a red light bulb inside the underground workshop. All twelve managed to escape through a tunnel that ran from the workshop to the other side of the highway in front of the farm, and they dispersed into the cities of San Salvador, Santa Ana, and Ahuachapán. The military only captured Adelino and his family, and they forced Adelino to cooperate in hunting down those that had escaped. Justo stood face-to-face with him a few days later, while riding the bus to Santa Ana.

[At a roadblock] . . . as my bus approached it, I noticed that . . . shit! The place was . . . full of soldiers. . . . I noticed that the buses weren't passing quickly, but rather one bus at a time. They didn't open the two doors [of the bus] but only one, and everybody stepped out of the bus in front of an older man . . . [and] I saw that it was [Adelino]. And everybody was descending in front . . . of him. . . . My body was shaking, my testicles plummeted. "No," I said, "clearly I am fucked . . . they must be torturing his family." . . . I was already preparing myself to resist what was coming. . . . They put us in front of the bus, they asked for our papers, I showed them, and afterwards they gave us the order to get back on the bus. . . . Finally the bus started. When it was starting to move, I turned around to look at him, and he turned to look at me. So, he was well aware that I was there. And I looked him in the eyes. . . . I swear I wanted to cry because the son of a bitch was sacrificing himself.¹⁸

Adelino did not betray any of his comrades. He was later released and fled with his family to Nicaragua, where he died shortly after from the tortures he had suffered. For Justo, Adelino's sacrifice was impossible to forget. Almost three decades later, Justo learned that Adelino's death had been very difficult for his family to overcome. They had moved back to El Salvador. He found them living in truly miserable conditions, in a tiny shack near Lake Coatepeque, not very far from where the farm with the underground workshop had been located. "Abandoned," as Justo put it. He thought the party should have done something for the family, for example let them have the property where the workshop had been located or provide some other kind of economic support for the family. Those who sacrificed themselves for the movement should be compensated or rewarded, particularly now that the FMLN had attained the means to do

so by its access to the Salvadoran state. As Justo pointed out, many people close to the FMLN leadership had already widely profited from benefits like government jobs.

According to Justo, the problem resided in the fact that many compañeros lacked sensitivity; their understanding of the “human dimension” had been diminished by the harshness of war. He pointed out that, in contrast to the collective ethos that had underpinned the revolutionary struggle, many former comrades now mainly looked out for their own. Underneath I sensed that Justo felt somewhat disheartened that as a surviving revolutionary cadre he was unable to assist Adelino’s family by his own means and was incapable of mobilizing sufficient leverage to have the party do so.

BEYOND THE TROPE OF DISILLUSIONMENT

A central theme in Justo’s story is his disillusionment with the trajectory of the revolutionary process after the peace accords. Though mostly ignored in the fields of international relations and political science, the saliency of postinsurgent disillusionment did capture the attention of several students of the Salvadoran transition approaching from other disciplinary fields such as anthropology, history, and literary criticism. For example, anthropologists Anna and Brandt Peterson affirmed that “the sense that the revolutionary struggle lost its meaning appears to have spread in the years since the accords, in which conditions of poverty, suffering, frustration, and uncertainty continue to prevail for most Salvadorans” (2008, 530). Ellen Moodie speaks of “a fragmented postwar staging of frustrated hopes” (2010, 2). Irina Carlota Silber offers extensive narratives of postwar fatigue, deception, and disillusionment amongst the revolutionary rank and file, the people she refers to as “everyday revolutionaries” (2004a, 2004b, 2006, 2011, 2014). Salvadoran historian Jorge Juárez speaks of the revolution as an extinguished myth (2011). Postinsurgent disillusionment also forcefully found its way into Salvadoran literature, most notably in the work of Horacio Castellanos Moya, El Salvador’s leading novelist and also a former participant with the FPL. His plots and characters offer an unsettling tableau of postwar despair.¹⁹

Academic interpretations regarding the causes of pervasive disillusionment among El Salvador’s former insurgents vary. Anthropologist

Leigh Binford emphasizes that the frustration many feel comes from the limited results of the peace accords and the government's obstruction of peace benefits (2002, 205–6). Alternatively, Julia Dickson-Gómez highlights the devastating impact of wartime violence on supporters of the guerrilla and its lasting negative consequences on interpersonal trust and well-being (2002, 2004). Philippe Bourgois points particularly at the insurgents' use of internal violence and concludes that "the revolutionary movement in El Salvador was traumatized and distorted by the very violence it was organizing against" (2001, 19). In his retrospective study *Guerrillas* Dirk Kruijt argues that "the revolutionary ideals of the [Central American] guerrilla generation dwindled away" not just because of the utopian project's failure but also because of important changes in the international political context, including the international demise of the radical left (2008, 171).

The tension between revolutionary aspirations and "on-the-ground" realities constitutes the central element of postinsurgent disillusionment. Such frictions were certainly not absent during the war either. As we see in Justo's case, his wartime experiences—with their kaleidoscope of sentiments—became a heavy load to carry. Postwar developments further deepened the breach between revolutionary aspirations and lived realities, as the utopian horizon receded and participants started weighing what was lost against what was gained, both in collective and in personal terms.

Beyond disillusionment, another element stands out in Justo's story. In spite of manifest disappointment, Justo still expressed a continued sense of belonging. He said: "We made a big crash," not *they* made. Justo still saw himself as part of the revolutionary movement, even though he considered it to be in dire straits, and he doubted whether he could still take any responsibility for it. Revolutionary participation has been a defining experience in Justo's life, the experience that, to a large extent, made him the man he was. For Justo, what came after insurgency was to be considered in the light of the achievements of before: "how great our revolution was." Subsequently, in spite of broken dreams, the friendships and other relationships that Justo forged during his time with the FPL continued to play crucial roles in his life after the war ended, not only in affective terms but also in the political and economic facets of his life. Though damaged, and according to some, unrecognizable as a revolutionary movement, some form of insurgent collectivity continued to exist after the war ended.

My thesis is that in order to grasp the lived experience of El Salvador's former insurgent movement, it is necessary to look closely at the paradox that emerges from Justo's story. The networks and the political imaginaries that the insurgents built before and during the war continued to be of great importance to postwar personal and collective destinies, in spite of strong postinsurgent disillusionment. The end of the war implied drastic changes for El Salvador's insurgent movement, but it did not mean a fresh start. The former insurgents took with them into this new phase the collective project they had built up until then. As Justo's account illustrates, revolutionary armed struggle created strong expectations among participants, and what remained of the revolutionary movement in the postwar period had a hard time coming to grips with these expectations.

THE RISE OF ELECTORAL CLIENTELISM

The development of the FMLN from insurgent movement to electoral party changed the way in which FMLN participants made their claims. During the war the priority lay on claim-making upon the Salvadoran government through armed struggle. In the postwar period rank-and-file participants stepped up explicit and vocal claims upon FMLN leadership as power holders. Former insurgents competed with each other in an attempt to position themselves advantageously in postwar political and societal affairs, and patterns of contention thus started to include claim-making within partisan networks. Such claims received an additional boost with the FMLN's 2009 electoral triumph, which opened up new possibilities for access to government resources.

As becomes particularly clear from the ethnographic case studies included in this book (chapters 5, 6, and 7), electoral clientelism started playing a larger role in the FMLN's political performance toward the end of the 1990s, partially substituting the ethos of revolutionary militancy that had helped sustain participation before and during the war. Clientelism helped provide a new framework for continued engagement between FMLN leadership and former rank-and-file and midlevel participants. Wartime sacrifices provided a strong moral justification to be able to benefit in one way or the other from the access to state resources that the FMLN had acquired through electoral means. From a leadership perspective, clientelism functioned as a tool to build a reliable electoral

machine. From a nonleadership perspective, clientelism helped translate sacrifices and loyalties, past and present, into assistance with practical solutions for pressing economic challenges. As Javier Auyero (2001, 2007) emphasizes, the operation of electoral clientelism requires extensive mediation and brokerage to take place between levels and groups. This task particularly suited former midlevel guerrilla cadres. Thus, the combined outcome of insurgent accumulation and postinsurgent accommodation was that together they produced the interpersonal networks that allowed the FMLN to successfully compete in postwar electoral politics.

These internal FMLN developments link to broader observations on the continued “presence” of the civil war in postwar electoral politics (Ainhoa Montoya 2013; Wade 2016). The country’s dominant political parties are both “sons of war” (de Zeeuw 2010), with ARENA holding a position on the Right comparable to the one the FMLN holds on the Left of the political spectrum. ARENA was founded in 1981, early in the war, unifying factions of far-right anticommunists that saw both the Marxist guerrillas and the US-backed Christian Democrat reformists as their enemies (Baloyra 1982; Melara Minero 2012). ARENA built its wartime partisan networks on traditionally wealthy families, cattle rangers, military officers, urban-based entrepreneurs, and other traditionally conservative sectors (Stanley 1996). Leading figures within ARENA, including founder Roberto d’Aubuisson, an ex-mayor of the Salvadoran army, were also actively involved in eliminating alleged insurgents and other political opponents through death squads and paramilitary groups operating across the country.²⁰ Such precedents did not prevent ARENA from developing into a successful electoral party. ARENA became the largest legislative force in 1988 and took the presidency in 1989. It was an ARENA-led government that signed peace in 1992.

After the accords, the FMLN soon developed into the largest opposition party. ARENA’s and FMLN’s combined stronghold on postwar Salvadoran politics also provides an indication as to the continued practical and symbolic weight of the war. Contemporary political campaigning in El Salvador has been characterized as the periodic recycling of “Cold War polarities” (Ainhoa Montoya 2013), by means of a symbolic restaging of the war. For example, in postwar election campaigns, speakers at rallies frequently referred to the war, and particularly to the rivals’ alleged abuses, to help strengthen bipartisan divides.²¹ Another part of this dynamics played out as a sort of campaigning competition, with “brigades”

of activists marking entire neighborhoods in the colors of either FMLN or ARENA, handing out propaganda, waving flags, and plastering every available wall with posters. Sometimes it resulted in (renewed) tensions between activists from the two parties, including small-scale violent incidents (Sprenkels 2014a).²² And besides “regular” propaganda, anonymous slander campaigns also frequently made their appearance during election time, with false accusations spread through anonymous leaflets or through social media and “troll” activity on the internet.²³ The common thread of all these efforts was that they sought to reframe wartime fears and divides into postwar electoral strategy. The prolonged electoral dominance of ARENA and FMLN suggests this strategy continued to yield abundant dividends.

Hence, it is important to acknowledge that the FMLN’s postwar adjustment processes unfolded in counterposition to, or in competition with, ARENA’s political grip on the country. Though ARENA’s postwar development is beyond the scope of this study, I consider that postwar accommodation processes, albeit with different accents and particularities, also occurred within ARENA-affiliated networks and organizations, where clientelism seems to have played a significant role already during the war (McElhinny 2006).²⁴ At any rate, as becomes clear from the ethnographic case studies included in this book, the prolonged and intense electoral competition with ARENA left strong marks on the development of the FMLN.

POSTINSURGENCY AS A HISTORICALLY CONSTRUCTED SOCIAL FIELD

How to study the aftermath of an insurgent movement? The most common approach focuses on the “reintegration” of combatants. However, as I argue elsewhere, the notion of postwar reintegration suffers from weak theoretical and empirical foundations which strongly limit its research value (Sprenkels 2014c). Studies on postwar reintegration of fighters have been developed principally under the auspices of international organizations active in postconflict reconstruction efforts, and tend to be highly prescriptive, proposing different policy recipes for demobilization and reintegration programs (Humphreys and Weinstein 2007; Jennings 2008; McMullin 2013). As Norma Kriger points out, most of this research “ig-

nore[s] politics, power and history” (2003, 20), while Anders Nilsson takes critique a step further when proclaiming that reintegration research is in fact “a theoryless field” (2005, 35). Nikkie Wiegink forwards the idea that ex-combatants, rather than “reintegrating” into “mainstream” society, are likely to make extensive use of the relations established during insurgency as a framework for postwar social navigation (2014, 2015). In a similar vein, scholars have recently called attention to the durable political and socioeconomic relevance of postwar combatant networks (Sindre 2016; Söderström 2016).

Another scholarly approach to the aftermath of insurgency focuses on insurgent participation as a form of empowerment or emancipation. Most research embracing this approach has emphasized the impact of female insurgent participation in Latin America on subsequent gender roles and emancipatory agendas. Karen Kampwirth, for example, highlights that though Latin American revolutionary movements of the second half of the last century had an egalitarian agenda, gender equality was not a specific part of it. However, as women became mobilized and played important roles in the revolutionary process, gender concerns eventually also rose to prominence, contributing to “vibrant autonomous feminist movements that emerged after the wars” (2004, 165). Ilja Luciak, similarly, argues that women’s “active participation as combatants during the civil wars that ravaged the [Central American] region has now been translated into significant representation in political parties and social movements” (2001, xiii–xiv).

Both Luciak and Kampwirth include the experience of El Salvador in their comparative account. Several additional studies underline how women’s wartime participation in the FMLN may have contributed, after reinsertion, to postwar improvement of the political position of women in the FMLN as a political party (Garibay 2006; Luciak 1999; Moreno 1997). Another line of inquiry emphasizes the importance of former female insurgents in forging El Salvador’s feminist movement (Blumberg 2001; Cagan and Juliá 1998; Falquet 2001, 2002; Navas 2007; Shayne 2004). Jocelyn Viterna, however, warns us not to equate female guerrilla participation with postwar empowerment too easily: “Those who were empowered during their time in the guerrillas by and large . . . filled high-prestige positions” (2003, 206–7). In her insightful and well-documented book *Women in War*, she further evidences that the guerrilla’s internal stratification played an important part in determining what, if any, public

political roles female participants were able to take on in the postwar period (2013, 173).

The analytical limitations of the two concepts, reintegration and empowerment, lie in that they both oversimplify a complex and variegated historical process while adding a teleological bias toward a kind of desired end-stage of “reintegration” or “empowerment.” Thus, in my view, the questions of whether former FMLN insurgents reintegrated into Salvadoran society or became empowered through previous experiences, and if so, to what extent, present significant drawbacks and complications. Therefore, for this book I approach the matter in terms of identifying the movement’s postwar changes and adjustments, and their multifaceted implications, both on a collective and individual level. I focus on the actually unfolding sociopolitical dynamics of postinsurgency and include the complete insurgent demography rather than zooming in exclusively on one particular subgroup. This approach entails thinking about what happens to insurgents after the war as a relational process embedded in a particular historical and political context. It leads me to propose a conceptualization of postinsurgency as a social field, defining this field as a historically constructed space of relations between multiple social agents that were previously connected through participation in insurgency.

Relying on the work of sociologists Pierre Bourdieu (e.g., 1984, 1985, 1990) and Charles Tilly (e.g., 2002, 2003, 2005a, 2008b), theory on social fields has taken flight in recent years.²⁵ Neil Fligstein and Doug McAdam define what they call “strategic actions fields . . . [as] constructed mesolevel social order[s] in which actors (who can be individual or collective) are attuned to and interact with one another on the basis of shared (which is not to say consensual) understandings about the purposes of the field, relationship to others in the field (including who has power and why), and the rules governing legitimate action in the field” (2012, 9). Society, then, is made up of numerous and variegated fields of this sort, with a great deal of overlap—but also competition—among them. Embedded social actors seek to fashion order in a given field, for example by establishing prestige and hierarchy (Bourdieu 1984). People maneuver in fields—also sometimes referred to as “arenas”—relying on their cognitive capacities to interpret the world around them, to plan for action, and to cooperate with others (Jasper 2006).²⁶ A range of particular features endow each of these fields with their historical shape and political relevance.

The Salvadoran revolution created a particularly dense and powerful social field for those involved, forming what—both of them employing relational perspectives—Charles Tilly refers to as an insurgent polity (1997, 123) and Kristina Pirker calls the militant habitus (2008, 248). Though a very complex and variegated phenomenon, El Salvador's revolutionary movement was recognizable as a more or less consistent project involving a range of collectives and of individuals with common aspirations, characterized by a culture of militant sacrifice and clandestinity. With the arrival of peace, so I contend, the revolutionary movement's social field entered into flux, as internal relations were subjected to renegotiation and resignification.

THE VARIED PATHS OF POSTINSURGENT RECONVERSION

The FMLN is not the only insurgent movement to have turned into a successful political party. In fact, such political conversion, often in combination with democratic reform, has become a common route of postwar transition (Manning and Smith 2016).²⁷ Some former insurgent movements turned into dominant political parties, while others shared electoral favor with strong contenders. The phenomenon has been researched predominantly from the perspective of comparative politics, analyzing the strengths and limitations of the conversion process in terms of the new party's political performance.²⁸ Studies from this perspective point to issues such as party bureaucratization (including negative as well as positive effects), limited leadership renewal, and the constraints of post-Cold War international relations. The lack of trust between leaders, correlated to the experience of war, has been known to affect the willingness of parties to cooperate and to build coalitions, often contributing to the continued polarization of the political system (de Zeeuw 2010; Dudouet 2009; Manning 2007, 2008; Wittig 2016). Nonetheless, many insurgent leaders also display a knack for accommodation. One major overview study on the matter concludes that

while revolutionaries may speak the language of democracy, their practices do not always mirror this. Many have become as corrupt as the old orders they have overthrown . . . and others have been reluctant or unable to adjust hierarchical battlefield strategies of leadership

to governance in the political arena. The majority, however, have been forced or pushed into adopting variations of the free market development strategies, an approach fundamentally antithetical to the liberationist goals for which they struggled. (Deonandan 2007, 244)

Thus, former insurgent leaderships often embrace a pragmatic stance, both in service of stability and in order to salvage their careers. Entering the arena of electoral democracy also implies the acceptance of political tenets formerly rejected. Leaders tend to water down the political agendas previously envisioned. In this process, it may be difficult to distinguish the leaders' political goals from their personal interests. Indeed, this is a classical theme in political sociology, as far back as Max Weber, who detected "a tendency that appears in every [political] party that lasts, namely that the party becomes an end in itself for its members."²⁹ Robert Michels extended the argument into what he called the "iron law of oligarchy."³⁰ Building on his own experiences in the early-twentieth-century German revolutionary left, Michels theorized that party organizations inevitably lean on increased internal inequality, with leadership's detachment from the masses growing over time, until "new accusers arise to denounce the traitors; after an era of glorious combats and of inglorious power, they end by fusing with the old dominant class" (1962, 408).³¹

The right of the political spectrum embraced elite theory most fervently, since many right-wing thinkers conceived of inequality as a necessary feature of the human condition and viewed elite theory as an antidote to left-wing anti-elitist claims. But some Marxists were also influenced by it. Leon Trotsky, for example, analyzed the development of the Communist Party under Stalin in analogous terms. He argued that the party cadres had displaced the masses to assume the control of the state bureaucracy and thus betrayed the revolution (1972, 238). And while for Trotsky elite tendencies had to be exorcized by deepening the revolution and making it "permanent,"³² Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci accepted elite tendencies as a given, and argued that revolutionary intelligentsia should profit from it by tutoring for leadership the best and smartest of the subaltern classes (Finocchiaro 1999).³³

Through thinkers like José Carlos Mariátegui and Paolo Freire,³⁴ Gramscian elitism was very influential among Latin American revolutionaries who built organizations that professed a highly egalitarian ideology, while at the same time developing a "vanguard," a revolutionary

elite with the qualities of a “guiding angel” and the devotion of “a true priest,” to recur to Che Guevara.³⁵ Indeed, Marxist insurgent groups in Latin America were stratified organizations, much inclined to revere their leaders, the comandantes of the revolution.³⁶ Salvadoran revolutionaries also embraced this transcendent vision on leadership, with figures like Salvador Cayetano Carpio, sometimes referred to as the “Ho Chi Min” of Latin America, and Joaquín Villalobos, proclaimed by his followers as the guerrilla’s most brilliant strategist.³⁷ Did such revolutionary hierarchies also find their way into postinsurgent politics? And if so, how and with what consequences?

The leadership’s role and behavior constitutes only part of a postwar transition’s story. For a deeper understanding of the process, it is also necessary to look at the insurgency’s broader constituencies. Social movement literature suggests that demobilization frequently pairs up with increased “competition among . . . the main actors and their supporters” (Tilly and Tarrow 2008, 97).³⁸ The high expectations previously generated often fuel internal strife (Owens 2009, 248).³⁹ Social movement theory also holds that, in spite of such conflicts, “movements do not simply fade away,” but instead “leave lasting networks of activists behind them [that] can regroup when . . . new opportunities appear” or that can take on new roles (Tarrow 1998, 164; Kriesi 1996).⁴⁰ While some participants respond to new challenges by radicalizing their demands and methods, others instead favor moderation or disengagement.

Indeed, Justo’s account of postwar accommodations taking place in El Salvador’s revolutionary movement suggests that insurgent participants recurred to different strategies to redefine their engagement with what remained of the movement. While some militants became loyal members of the political party FMLN, others abandoned the movement or sought to voice discontent with the movement’s postwar trajectory.

Participation in social movements and participation in insurgencies both rely on a strong investment of affect and on the far-reaching mix of the personal and the political, both aspects able to mark participants’ lives well beyond the life span of the movement.⁴¹ However, though social movements and insurgencies have a lot in common, differences in scope and impact also deserve consideration, particularly to the extent that they influence how the two types of movement might accommodate to change.

Revolutionary insurgency is a massive endeavor, as participants seek to generate not just a rebel army, but indeed a separate polity, a force able

to effectively topple the regime they challenge.⁴² Such a colossal task requires enormous human, financial, and technical resources, and implies developing extensive alliances and relations with groups and individuals that might contribute to its realization (Kalyvas 2006; Tilly 2008a, 16). Violent persecution and sustained clandestinity, furthermore, hold strong implications for those involved (Broderick 2000; Churchill 2014). Revolutionary violence may produce complicity, but is also likely to leave uncomfortable legacies (Degregori 2012; C. McClintock 1998). Thus, war “reconfigure[s] social networks in a variety of ways, creating new networks, dissolving some, and changing the structure of others” (Wood 2008, 540). Jesuit social psychologist Ignacio Martín-Baró made a similar point, just months before his death at the hands of the Salvadoran military, arguing that “when war drags on . . . its power to shape social reality becomes predominant, both in structuring social orders and in people’s mindsets” (1989, 3). As is evident throughout this book, El Salvador’s long insurgency led to profound entanglements of participants’ personal life stories with the movement.

When applying social movement theory to the aftermath of armed struggle, one should state one final caveat. Aside from the debate on the extent to which an insurgent movement and a social movement might qualify as similar, there is also the question of whether a postwar transition should qualify as a situation of the decline or demobilization of a movement, or rather as a new stage in its development. As we shall see in this study, in El Salvador the views on this matter may differ greatly, as some former insurgents claim that the struggle continues, while others complain that the FMLN has betrayed the cause to become absorbed by the system.

SCOPE, OBJECTIVES, AND OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

The political, social, and economic heritage of the Salvadoran insurgency cannot be restricted solely to the FMLN as a political party. This book, therefore, moves beyond providing an account of the evolution of the FMLN from an armed revolutionary movement to a political party. In El Salvador today, hundreds of communities and organizations trace their origins back to the insurgency. Dozens of FMLN war veteran associations exist, and FMLN veterans play prominent roles in a range of political initiatives, NGOs, and government institutions. In other words, the

political party FMLN is not synonymous with the social field of postinsurgency. The party is, however, a crucial and central element of that field. Hence, the account I offer of the internal development of the FMLN as a political party comes as a by-product of this study's primary focus: the longitudinal examination of insurgent relations in the transition from war to peace. I research how the insurgents' personal and political networks developed after the war, and how this dynamics played out for different subgroups. The central research question for this study is, In postwar El Salvador, what accommodations took place in the relations that previously sustained the insurgent movement? Other questions addressed extensively are as follows: How do the former insurgents themselves discuss and analyze the postwar accommodations in their movement? And what can these accommodations and their multiple interpretations tell us about the enduring legacies of insurgency in El Salvador?

The academic relevance of this study for scholarship on El Salvador lies in that it provides the most comprehensive examination of the postwar FMLN, of postinsurgent politics, and of the legacies of insurgency in the country produced thus far. Besides its in-depth longitudinal inquiry into insurgent relations and these relations' subsequent postwar vicissitudes, this book offers insight into El Salvador's postwar transition at large, providing new perspectives in addition to recent hallmark contributions on postwar Salvadoran politics by Erik Ching (2016), Irina Carlota Silber (2011), and Christine Wade (2016). It joins less than a handful of ethnographies of postwar party politics in El Salvador.⁴³ By its insistence on diverse perspectives involving multiple levels and sectors of the insurgents' demography, this study sets itself apart from the many studies on El Salvador's transition primarily based on interviews and expertise offered by major power brokers in the peace process.⁴⁴ It also takes an approach very distinct from that of the growing number of former comandantes who have published their memoirs.⁴⁵ Though some of these (auto)biographical books hold interesting opinions and anecdotes, they predictably also tend to provide self-congratulatory accounts of the events of the war and its aftermath.⁴⁶ I do draw on all of these available sources whenever possible, but I build primarily on the firsthand perspectives of former midlevel cadres and the rank and file.

This study produces a fresh look at the revolutionary movement's social history. Following the lead of life course scholarship, I documented multiple life stories to use these as "small mirrors of . . . social patterns,

societal dynamics and change,” in order “to grasp these patterns and their dynamics of reproduction and historical transformation” (Bertaux and Delcroix 2000, 70). My personal familiarity with El Salvador’s postinsurgency assisted me in the task of generating historicized understandings of networks and institutions, and of the individuals circulating in them (Scheper-Hughes 1992, 29). By this approach, I was able to zoom in on the social genealogies relevant to postinsurgency (Bertaux 1995; Bertaux and Thompson 2007). My study takes further inspiration from a discipline known as a *prosopography*, a subfield of sociohistorical research dedicated to drawing out and thinking through similarities and differences between individuals in a given group or population (Verboven, Carlier, and Dumolyn 2007, 40).

The academic relevance of this study beyond the case of El Salvador is twofold. First, it provides a novel way of looking at postinsurgency and postinsurgent transitions, by documenting and analyzing the particular dynamics by which an insurgent movement’s accumulated historical relations become a factor in shaping subsequent postwar adjustment processes. Both in peacebuilding literature and in transition literature, peace settlements tend to be seen as a new beginning, rather than as a step in the larger process by which contenders attempt to construe political power in specific territories and among specific constituencies. My findings suggest the latter approach might be much more fruitful. In the case of El Salvador’s insurgency, the many organizational ties constructed on the ground translated into thick webs of allegiances and loyalties, in which (former) participants played pivotal roles. When peace arrived, the movement’s historically constructed political relations, identities, and imaginaries did not simply “dissolve.” Instead, they continued to be highly relevant for the transition process.

This is not to suggest that the shape of postinsurgency is bound to be identical in other postwar countries. Comparative politics have taught us the valuable, though still often ignored, lesson that political concepts do not always translate well from one context to the next, given that political communities are specific historical and cultural constructs.⁴⁷ What I propose is to ground research on insurgent aftermaths in a thorough understanding of a movement’s particular social history. My study proposes to look at what Charles Tilly calls “relational work” (2005a, 77) and how this plays out in insurgent networks as they engage with the transition process. It identifies wartime identities and relations as constitutive elements of

postwar politics, rather than looking at these as fading leftovers of defunct ideologies or animosities.

The second broad academic contribution of this study lies in that it encourages rethinking the legacy of revolutionary armed struggle in left-wing politics in Latin America. Most substantially, it suggests reflecting about the renewed saliency of clientelism in left-wing Latin American politics not only as a contemporary rehashing of this continent's long-standing patrimonial tradition, but also—at least in part—as the outflow of the formerly pervasive political culture of revolutionary militancy adapting to the framework of electoral competition. As the democratic election of several former guerrilla participants as presidents illustrates, remnant networks of revolutionary militants have played important political roles in contemporary left-wing parties and movements in Latin America.⁴⁸ And with clientelism demonstrating its continued contemporary relevance as a model for political aggregation and electoral competition in Latin America, pink tide governments have proven far from immune (Chodor 2014; Goodale and Postero 2013). In the case of El Salvador, contemporary clientelist networks have, to a large extent, built on wartime affiliations to create vehicles for electoral competition on both sides of the political spectrum. While showing how clientelism developed into a functional contemporary element of left-wing political mobilization in El Salvador, making use of people's socioeconomic needs, in-group expectations, and electoral access to public resources, my study also identifies how inherited militant practices and imaginaries, including sectarianism and conspiracy thinking, actually contributed to shaping clientelist networks. This calls attention to how key elements of armed struggle's political repertoire may have hybridized into contemporary left-wing politics beyond the case of El Salvador.

I have structured this book in two clearly distinct parts. Part 1, consisting of chapters 2, 3, and 4, provides a comprehensive drawing-out of insurgent relations and of the institutional dimensions of the reconversion process that unfolded after the peace accords. As a whole, part 1 focuses much more on organizational and institutional trajectories than on personal life stories, though chapter 3 does provide a personal retrospect of my early years in El Salvador. Chapters 2 and 4 are based on literature review and archival research, only occasionally complemented with interview material. The objective of part 1 of the book is to provide an integral overview of El Salvador's revolutionary movement and of its subsequent

multifaceted postwar reconversion process. Its chapters provide insight into the historical development of the movement and, with it, into the “shared baggage” that El Salvador’s former insurgents carried along in their contemporary engagement with the movement.

Within part 1, chapter 2 provides an overview of the insurgent movement, from its origin until the time of the peace accords (early 1970s to 1992). In this chapter I examine how aspects like the Marxist-Leninist organizational model, revolutionary militancy, and clandestinity adopted by the Salvadoran revolutionaries impacted on the movement’s internal relations. Pervasive sectarianism in the 1970s ended up generating five different guerrilla organizations that united to form the FMLN in 1980. Though now under a shared banner, the five insurgent groups continued to largely rely on separate organizations, consisting of a cadre structure and partially concealed and widely branched networks. Evolving political and military aspects of the war strongly influenced the shape and the functioning of the five separate groups. Chapter 2 elucidates the organizational trajectories of the insurgent groups composing the FMLN and clarifies what accumulated insurgent networks and imaginaries existed at the end of the war.

Chapter 3 serves as an interlude in which I present a retrospect on my own experience with postwar insurgent networks in Chalatenango. Besides helping the reader to qualify the relevance of my own involvement with the FPL in relation to the key topics of this book, it also presents a more intimate, personalized view on the “lived experience” of the immediate aftermath of insurgency. Chapter 4 subsequently deals with the development of the FMLN networks in the first postwar transition years, until the late 1990s. Taking into account the movement’s military, political and socioeconomic facets, I document and analyze the insurgency’s interconnected peacetime reconversion processes. As in chapter 2, I still focus mostly on institutional genealogies. The shifting priorities of the leadership and the multiple unfolding adjustments caused quite a bit of disarray in different segments of the movement, even though part of the FMLN soon got the knack of electoral politics. Factionalist struggles inside and around the FMLN also strongly resurfaced during the period, fed by electoral competition, ideological divergence, and historical mistrust among sectarian groups. The multifaceted postinsurgent reconversion documented in chapter 4 constitutes a baseline for the FMLN’s posterior electoral consolidation and its contemporary political performance.

Part 2 holds this book's main empirical contribution: the ethnographic exploration of the experience of postinsurgency in El Salvador.⁴⁹ This effort is subdivided into three case studies, each presented in chapter format. Part 2 grants personal stories and individual experiences of former Salvadoran insurgents a particularly prominent role, while further connecting these stories to insights on the institutional genealogies of postinsurgency.

Chapter 5 revisits the insurgent communities in Chalatenango where I lived during the early postwar years. I present a detailed ethnographic reconstruction of the history of one such community, Ellacuría, in an attempt to straighten out several previously nonclarified issues regarding the specific relations between the insurgency and repopulations like Ellacuría. I then set out to explore the different consequences of these (hidden) wartime connections for postwar community development. Bringing in insurgent history allows for a qualified reassessment of the repopulation's trajectory from its foundation to the present, and helps clarify the principal local legacies of insurgency.

Chapter 6 explores what happened to a group of guerrilla fighters—a particular subset of insurgent participants—after the war ended. It is based on the collaborative effort to trace the identity and the destiny of the individuals represented in eleven historical photographs of guerrilla units. Through an ethnographic technique called photo elicitation, the chapter spins out a dialogue between former guerrilla fighters' postwar life stories and their reflections on the heritage of the struggles that they have been part of. At the same time, the historical photos used in the chapter constitute a detailed sample of postinsurgent life trajectories, putting the former insurgents' postwar destinies and survival strategies on display.

The last case study, presented in chapter 7, homes in on the FMLN war veteran movement, a booming phenomenon in recent years. FMLN veterans' politics constitutes a key facet of postinsurgency. Focusing on the veteran organizing efforts in the first years of the Funes presidency, I provide an intimate account of the political practices among the veteran groups active in and around the FMLN. This last case study unveils the lived experience of postinsurgent politics and examines in detail how the insurgent past is mobilized in postwar Salvadoran politics.

As he did in this introductory chapter, Justo will help guide us through chapter 8, a concluding reflection on contemporary Salvadoran

politics and the legacies of insurgency. Several years down the line from when Justo and I worked together on the FPL archives, Salvador Sánchez Cerén, the FPL's former "comandante general," replaced Funes as president of El Salvador, with the FMLN holding on to power for a second five-year stretch from 2014 onward. Justo remained dedicated to recovering the stories about forgotten comrades that, in his mind, nobody in the party hierarchy cared about anymore. He believed they were too concerned with their new status and wealth and that the "old stories" about the movement had become for them but uncomfortable reminders of other values and objectives.

While Justo was sitting on the couch one Saturday afternoon complaining to me, his new partner looked at him disdainfully from the other side of the room. Some years after Felicia, the mother of his children, fell seriously ill and passed away, Justo got together with "Daniela," a woman he also knew from his days at the front in Chalatenango, where she had served as a nurse for the guerrilla troops. Daniela now worked for the government and considered that speaking badly about the FMLN only served to strengthen right-wing forces. "How are things ever going to change if our own veterans emanate such negativity?" she wondered. Justo lifted his shoulders and smiled, before saying, "You are right, my love," and asking me if we should drink coffee or something stronger.