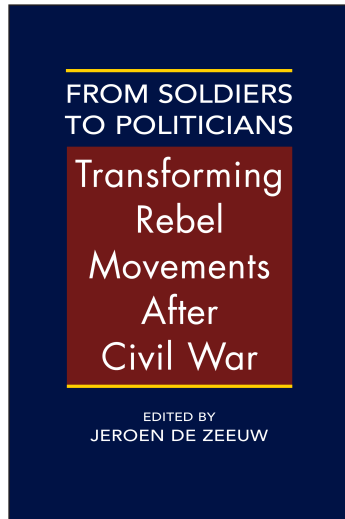


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From Soldiers
to Politicians:
Transforming
Rebel Movements
After Civil War

edited by
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1

Understanding the Political Transformation of Rebel Movements

Jeroen de Zeeuw

One of the key factors defining the success of civil war endings is the ability of former rebel movements to transform themselves into “normal” political organizations. A peaceful rebel-to-party transformation has been a central aspect in efforts to end hostilities and start political dialogues in such diverse places as El Salvador, Mozambique, Kosovo, and many other post-conflict settings in Africa, Asia, Central America, the Middle East, and the Balkans.¹

However, transforming an armed rebel movement into a political party, let alone a democratic political party, is arguably one of the hardest peace-building challenges. It not only requires that former combatants lay down their weapons and hand in their military fatigues, but more importantly compels former rebel leaders to change their military struggles into political ones and to reorganize their war-focused military organizations into dialogue-based political entities. Experiences from people directly involved in the transformations of such movements show that the process is extremely complex and time-consuming and has a high risk of failure.²

In some cases, like the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador and the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), armed rebel groups have successfully transformed themselves into unarmed political parties, ostensibly as a result of peace accords, commitment of key actors, and favorable changes in the broader sociopolitical environment, such as the end of the Cold War. Obviously, war-weariness and diminished support for the fighting from domestic and international sources have also played an important role in these cases. Other examples of relatively successful rebel-to-party transformations include the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in Nicaragua, the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) in Namibia, and more recently, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland.

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In other cases, the transformation process has proven less straightforward. In Sierra Leone, for example, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) has failed to transform itself into a political organization since it surrendered in May 2000. In Burundi, the National Council for the Defense of Democracy–Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) has only partially implemented the necessary steps toward becoming a political party since it won a landslide victory during the 2005 parliamentary and presidential elections. In Sudan, the political transformation of the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) into the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) has barely started and remains problematic. In Afghanistan, since the installation of the new parliament in September 2005, the make-over of “warlord politicians” is far from complete. In Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has become a significant political force in the northern and eastern parts of the island. However, as it still is involved in a civil war–type struggle, it has not transformed itself into an unarmed political party; its military tactics still trump its political strategies. Hezbollah’s political transformation in Lebanon is another ongoing challenge, which has become even more complicated after the war with Israel in July and August 2006. In these relatively nascent cases, much will depend on how the process of transformation takes shape in the coming years. Finally, there are groups that still have to take the first steps toward becoming political parties, such as the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) in Indonesia, the Communist Party of Nepal–Maoist (CPN-M), and various Congolese militias, including the Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC) and the Congolese Rally for Democracy–Goma (RCD-G). This book intends to shed light on a number of these cases.

Despite the importance of the political transformation of nonstate armed movements in the settlement of civil wars and in postwar democratization, surprisingly little is known about this process. Only recently have individual scholars and research institutes started to analyze this issue.³ Building on some of that material, this book reflects one of the first attempts to systematically assess the soldier-to-politician transformation in different post-conflict environments around the world. Based on case studies of several “successful,” “failed,” “partial,” and “facade” transformations, the chapters in this book focus on a number of thematic aspects. First, they provide brief historical and political backgrounds on the specific armed movements under study. Second, they analyze these movements’ attempted transformations into political organizations by highlighting both structural and attitudinal changes. Third, they identify the key factors that help explain the nature of transformation. And finally, they evaluate the role that international actors have played in the rebel-to-party transformation process.

The most distinctive aspect of this book is its focus on the postwar transformation of former rebel movements. Unlike most studies on armed rebel

movements, the case studies in this book concentrate on what has happened inside and outside rebel movements in the period *after* the war. For some rebel movements, the postwar period has meant a clear departure from the use of military tactics in favor of political strategies. Other rebel movements have combined the use of political and military tactics or have used the postwar period to restructure themselves and set up political fronts for what are still essentially military organizations. The rebel movements discussed in this book are illustrative of several of these variations. A second distinctive feature of the book is that the case studies focus on the role of international actors in the transformation process. Whereas existing analyses shed light on the role of regional and international actors in causing or supporting armed rebellion, for example in the African Great Lakes region or West Africa, the chapters in this book instead review the involvement of international actors in the rebel-to-party transformation after the war has ended. Although such international support has not played the same central role in each case of transformation, there are a few cases where international assistance seems to have been one of the determining factors, either stimulating and supporting the transformation process or blocking it. In order to establish what the exact role of the “international community” has been in different rebel-to-party transformations, each chapter specifically deals with this issue and, where appropriate, provides concrete recommendations for future international assistance.⁴ And finally, all contributions to this volume are presented in such a way that they not only address important analytical questions for current and future academic research, but also provide a better understanding of the key issues involved in rebel-to-party transformations, such that practitioners and policymakers can better deal with the difficult challenges in assisting these transformations.

The case studies show that, like other peacebuilding processes, the transformation from rebel movement into political party is neither linear nor one-dimensional. The term “transformation” might therefore be somewhat misleading, since, at least in theory, it seems to assume a certain direction and inevitability of organizational change—from an armed rebel group toward an unarmed political party. In practice, however, this organizational process of change is neither directional nor inevitable. As we shall see, there are several transformation variations. With hindsight we can establish that, for example, even the relatively successful political transformations of the FMLN and RENAMO involved changes in different directions, not always straight toward the outcome of a political party. Also, in both of these cases there were serious setbacks that could easily have jeopardized the whole process. In other cases, like the SPLM/A, the CNDD-FDD, and Hamas, where the organizational reform process is to a large extent still ongoing, the outcome can best be described as a “partial transformation.” Whatever the exact nature of the transformation process, most of the authors of this book therefore use

“transformation” rather loosely, in the absence of a better term, to describe a process of organizational change that might eventually lead to the total conversion of an armed organization into a political one, but that does not guarantee such an outcome.

■ **Rebel Movements: A Short Background**

Before reviewing some of the main arguments put forward by the literature on armed rebellion, it is important to clarify what we actually mean by a “rebel movement.” This book defines a rebel movement as a nonstate organization with clear political objectives that contests a government’s authority and legitimate monopoly on violence and uses armed force in order to reform, overthrow, or secede from an existing state regime or control a specific geographical area.⁵ This definition deliberately emphasizes the politically instrumental use of violence in order to exclude groups—including criminal gangs or transnational terrorist networks—that are generally not interested in creating an alternative government or controlling a particular geographical area within a state.⁶ In theory at least, a distinction can be made between rebel movements whose primary aim is to challenge government power, and other nonstate armed groups that operate drug- and human-trafficking networks or carry out terrorist attacks that cause indiscriminate deaths. In reality, however, this distinction is not clear-cut, as many rebel movements engage in criminal activities to finance their armed resistance, and some resort to terrorist tactics to win the war against government forces or other opponents. Even after the war is over, former rebel groups often remain involved in illicit activities or maintain their ties with armed militias. And there are several organizations that combine political party activities with military and terror-oriented activities or vice versa.⁷ This also explains why the line between what some regard as a “legitimate rebel movement” and what others describe as an “illegitimate terrorist organization” is often blurred. Depending on their background, the way they are portrayed by their adversaries, and their “self-branding,” rebel movements are labeled as “guerrillas,” “armed opposition or resistance groups,” “nonstate armed actors,” “revolutionary organizations,” “insurgents,” and increasingly—in the wake of September 11, 2001, and the global war on terror—“terrorist organizations.” Ultimately, the distinction is a political judgment. Although those terms are often used interchangeably in the literature, this book will use the slightly more neutral term “rebel movements.”

Given that this volume focuses on the transformation of rebel movements into political parties, we also need to define what “political party” in this context actually means. From the broad range of definitions put forward by the literature on party politics, this book uses a slightly adapted version

of Giovanni Sartori's classic definition for a political party as "any political group that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections, candidates for public office" through nonviolent political means.⁸ Different, maximalist political party definitions also refer to the need for intraparty democracy and the fulfillment of key party functions such as interest aggregation and the making of new alternative policies. However, it should be clear that a political party in a postwar developing-country context is not the same as a political party in the established Western democracies. Without denying the relevance of these other elements, we believe that it is important not to put the bar too high, too soon, for former rebel movements in emerging postwar democracies. This book therefore prefers the previous, more minimalist definition, which still captures the most important function of a political party: the fielding of electoral candidates.

While there is a dearth of analysis on what happens to rebel movements after war, a large body of literature exists that details why and how rebel groups make war. Academic analyses of "guerrilla or insurgency warfare" focus particularly on three dimensions. First, there are several studies that investigate the motivation and nature of various rebellions, including how they originated and changed in manifestation over time. Examples include accounts of communist rebellions in Southeast Asia, Marxist-inspired liberation movements in Africa, and revolutionary insurgents in Latin America. These studies are characterized by their in-depth historical and motivational analyses of why groups revolt, analyses that often explain specific ideological backgrounds and the alternative political visions that rebel groups put forward about what society should look like and what the structure of government should be.⁹ In more recent analyses of armed rebellions that use a multicountry comparative statistical method, scholars often propose a more narrow explanation of armed rebellion, in some cases shifting the attention from political or social factors to primarily economic ("greed") motivations and natural resource endowments.¹⁰ Although this new literature has made quite an impact, particularly in international policy circles, it has been criticized by many—including some of its early proponents—for its narrow focus on the maximization of economic gains and its emphasis on conflict dynamics instead of conflict motivations.¹¹ The debate in this particular literature over the primacy of "greed versus grievance" in the causation of war remains unresolved, however. One way forward is to start from the premise that armed rebellions are generally multidimensional, and hardly ever monocausal. This is the underlying argument in studies published more recently, which stress the need to go beyond the simplistic dichotomy of economics versus politics, toward a more comprehensive explanation that includes a broader range of motivations.¹²

Connected to this, but having a slightly different focus, are studies that analyze the internal workings of rebel movements. The main debate in this

literature is between, on the one hand, analyses that highlight the structural organizational aspects of rebel groups and their implications for strategies of violent resistance, recruitment of supporters, and sources of popular support, and on the other hand, analyses that stress the importance of behavior of key individual elites, most notably rebel leaders, as well as their charisma and skills.¹³ Though there is no real consensus about the exact weight of each set of aspects, some of the more recent analyses tend to favor “structure” over “agency” when it comes to explaining the nature of rebellion.¹⁴

In addition, there is a growing body of literature that explicitly focuses on the broader environment in which rebel movements operate, and examines the influence of external factors on rebel group behavior and organization. Scholars focusing particularly on regionalized conflicts, for example in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Mano River Basin area (including Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea), argue that armed rebellions are strongly influenced by the wider socioeconomic, political, and military setting of neighboring countries and the presence of other armed groups. In the view of these scholars, intrastate analyses that isolate rebel groups from the regional context are becoming increasingly difficult to defend.¹⁵ Other studies highlighting the regional and international aspects of rebellion focus on the relationship between rebel groups and international business elites, diasporas, and even media networks from which they draw financial and material support.¹⁶

Some would argue that the literature on armed rebellion has limited relevance for explaining the transformation process after war, when rebel movements supposedly change their mode of operation. However, many of the contributors to this volume believe otherwise, and argue that there is a strong link between the origins of rebel movements, how they operate during war, and how they function as political organizations after war.

Motivation of Rebellion

The presence of rebel movements in very different socioeconomic, political, and cultural settings across the world indicates the wide motivational variation for armed rebellion. Even where the motivation of groups is more or less the same, it is likely that their methods of operation and organizational structures will be very different, reflecting the distinct regional or country setting. Any motivational classification of rebellions across different countries or regions will therefore have to utilize ideal-type categories that unavoidably oversimplify reality. For analytical purposes, however, classification of rebel movements based on their motivations can be useful for better understanding why armed rebellion occurs in certain contexts. Christopher Clapham’s categorization of insurgencies in Africa provides an

instructive starting point for such an analysis.¹⁷ Based on the motivations of rebel groups, he distinguishes four types of insurgencies:

- *Liberation movements* aim to achieve independence from colonial or minority rule and were particularly active between 1950 and 1990. These included, for example, the National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algeria, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), the Kenyan African National Union (KANU), the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) in Namibia, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa, as well as the Viet Minh in Vietnam.

- *Separatist groups* strive for complete secession or some special autonomous status within a certain territory. This category includes organizations such as the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A),¹⁸ the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka, and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland.

- *Reform movements* primarily aim to radically reform or even overthrow the national government of a particular country. These include, for example, the National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) in Uganda, as well as the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). This category also includes the various revolutionary movements in Latin America, such as the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) in Mexico, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the April 19th Movement (M-19) in Colombia, the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG), and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in Nicaragua.

- *Warlord insurgencies* strive for "a change of leadership [that] may involve the creation of a personal territorial fiefdom" and that is often but not necessarily motivated by material gains.¹⁹ An obvious example is Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). But it could also be argued that this category includes the Somalia National Alliance (SNA) of Mohammed Farah Aideed, the Somalia Salvation Alliance (SSA) of Ali Mahdi Mohammed, and the militias of Rashid Dostum (Junbesh-i Milli Islami) and Ismail Khan (Jamiat-i Islami) in Afghanistan.²⁰

The main value of this classification is its narrative power. It provides a useful tool for identifying the key aims behind the armed resistance of certain rebel groups, a tool that to some extent can help us explain why a conflict started in the first place. However, this is where its explanatory power stops. Because it is based on motivation only, this classification does not help us to make sense of why some rebel groups are more successful in

achieving their objectives than others or, as Jeremy Weinstein points out, why some rebellions are much more violent than others.²¹ Moreover, a motivational analysis says little about what will happen to a rebel organization after the war has ended, or how a rebel group's wartime aims will affect its postwar abilities to become a political party.

One obvious hypothesis, for example, would be that reform movements are better able to turn themselves into political parties because they usually have a clear alternative political vision of how to govern the country, which makes it easier for them to gain popular support. A contrasting hypothesis would be that warlord insurgencies—as the name already indicates—only thrive during war and are therefore probably unable to transform themselves into political parties after war. There are various reform rebel groups, such as the NRM/A, the EPRDF, and the FSLN, that have indeed transformed themselves into relatively successful political parties and therefore provide evidence to support the first argument. However, this positive evidence can be counterbalanced by a case like the URNG, a reform movement that has not been able to transform itself into a successful political party. Similarly, the failed political transformations of warlord militias like the SNA and the SSA after Somalian president Siad Barre was driven from power in 1991 seem to support the second argument. However, the apparent political success of some of the Afghan warlord militias discussed in this volume would seem to undermine that argument.

This contradictory evidence indicates that a motivational focus might provide some clue to the postwar political potential of rebel groups, but without giving the full picture. These specific cases are probably largely explained by factors other than initial motivations.²² Perhaps the degree to which a rebel group's key aims have been achieved—instead of what aims it originally had—is a more important influence on that group's willingness to give up its arms and become a political party. This aspect will be addressed in the concluding chapter. For now it suffices to say that for a better understanding of the postwar political success of rebel groups, we should not focus exclusively on the motivations or aims of those groups.

Organization and Leadership of Rebel Movements

A rebellion cannot survive on motivation alone; it also needs an organizational structure that is capable of translating goals into action, and a leadership that is capable of guiding and monitoring the execution of those actions. Most rebel movements are therefore composed of a network of different military units consisting of armed fighters and the commanders who lead them.

Yet rebel movements differ widely in degree of organization and design of their organizational structures. Some movements, like the NRM/A in Uganda and the EPLF in Eritrea, constituted disciplined, centralized organizations that

at some point during the war stage resembled effective “bush bureaucracies.” As such, these movements utilized an impressive administrative apparatus based on clear top-down decisionmaking procedures.²³ Other movements, such as El Salvador’s FMLN, which served as the command structure of five separate guerrilla organizations, and Peru’s Shining Path, which made use of a scattered cell structure, had more limited, decentralized organizational structures.²⁴ Naturally, such characteristics have important implications for a movement’s operations during war—for example, its ability to stay united or maintain troop discipline.²⁵ In addition, it seems logical to expect that such organizational characteristics of rebel movements would also affect their potential postwar transformation into political parties. For instance, a scattered cell structure that is strongly focused on autonomous activities seems less likely to provide a fertile base for developing a broader-based political party organization. A more unified command structure, on the other hand, requires an intricate system of coordination in order to balance the various interests of different organizational units. If some of those units started out as nonmilitary political entities, this can have a positive effect on the organization’s later transformation into a political party.

Closely related to the difference in degree of organization and the existence of certain organizational structures is the type of leadership within a rebel movement. Rebel leaders are said to play a key role not only in guiding the troops, but also in influencing the rebel organization’s strategic direction. Much of the analysis about the influence of rebel leaders on the nature of rebel organizations has focused on aspects such as a leader’s personal background, training and education, skills, leadership style, and charisma.²⁶ To some extent this focus on key actors has proven a useful corrective to overly structural accounts of rebel organization. Actor-oriented analyses of rebellion emphasize how decisions by rebel leaders shape the organizational structures within rebel movements and highlight how charismatic rebel leaders, such as Yoweri Museveni (NRM/A), Paul Kagame (RPF), and Abimael Guzmán (Shining Path), have been able to attract new supporters and gain popular support for their respective rebel organizations.

The implication of such actor-oriented analyses for rebel-to-party transformation—in particular the influence of leadership on a rebel movement’s chances to become a viable political party—is not entirely clear, however. One plausible argument is that the nature of decisionmaking in an armed rebel group, which is strongly related to a leader’s personal management style, has an impact on that group’s potential to develop into a political organization after war. In rebel groups where the decisionmaking process has been highly centralized and personalized, and dominated by a strong authoritarian leader, it will be difficult to decentralize power and open up the decisionmaking process to the wider constituencies it will have to serve as a political party. In cases where decisions on political strategy are made more collectively, and where rebel leaders are more open to internal debate,

the rebel-to-party transformation process is likely to be somewhat easier. However, although not impossible, successful rebel leaders do not often become successful political leaders, mainly because these different positions involve distinct competencies and charisma.

Broader Context of Rebellion

Rebel organizations do not function in a vacuum. Apart from their initial motivations and their organizational structures and leadership, the broader domestic, regional, and international context forms another important element for understanding armed rebellion.

A country's domestic socioeconomic, cultural, and political setting constitutes a significant reference point for an armed rebel group. A skewed income distribution between different groups in society, an uneven level of development between different geographical areas, unequal access to marketable natural resources, or the underrepresentation of certain ethnic groups in parliament and government administration are some examples of domestic conditions that have induced the emergence of armed rebel groups in such places as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nicaragua, and Sri Lanka.²⁷ This domestic domain also includes the much studied relationship between rebel movements and the civilian "host" populations of the areas in which the movements are active. This relationship, which can range from an almost-symbiotic coexistence between the population and the rebels (the Tigray People's Liberation Front [TPLF], the EPLF) to terrorization of the population by the rebels (the RUF, the Lord's Resistance Army [LRA] of Uganda), is said to be linked to a number of aspects, including the existence of certain "lootable resources" and a rebel group's political aims.²⁸

The second contextual dimension that influences the emergence and organization of armed rebellion is the political, economic, and military assistance received by rebel groups from regional supporters in neighboring countries. A clear example of a rebel group that was strongly supported in its armed resistance by a regional actor is the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). Originating in the Rwandan refugee camps in Uganda during the 1970s and 1980s, the RPF comprised many Ugandan NRM/A soldiers and received political, financial, and material support from the Ugandan government when it invaded Rwanda in the early 1990s.²⁹ Other examples of rebel movements that have relied on support from neighboring countries include the SPLM/A (supported by Ethiopia, later Uganda), RENAMO (Rhodesia and South Africa), the RUF (Liberia), and the FMLN (Nicaragua and Cuba).

Finally, rebellions have also been shaped by the influence and assistance of governmental, nongovernmental, and private actors farther afield. The success of Charles Taylor's NPFL, for example, has been linked to arms supplies from Libya, Ukraine, Russia, and Serbia, and the sale of resources such as diamonds, timber, and gold to private companies throughout the world.³⁰

In cases like Sri Lanka, Eritrea, and Palestine, the diaspora has played an important role in supporting and organizing armed rebel groups.³¹

Although the relationships between the emergence of rebel groups and domestic, regional, and international factors have received significant attention in the literature on armed conflict, relatively limited attention has been paid to whether and exactly how these relationships change after war has ended. This makes it difficult to identify any potential implications of the broader wartime context of rebel groups for their transformation into political parties.

* * *

Thus rebel movements vary widely, differing not only in motivation, organizational structure, and leadership, but also in their linkages with the broader environment. The preceding literature review has provided us with some explanations of why rebel groups emerge, how and why they organize themselves in certain ways, and how they relate to actors outside their own organizations. More importantly, this review has given us some idea about how a rebel group's motivation, organization, and leadership, and linkages with the broader environment, may impact its postwar potential to transform itself into a political party. The first hypothesis that follows from the above discussion is that certain types of rebel groups (e.g., reform movements) are probably more likely than other types (e.g., warlord insurgencies) to successfully transform themselves into political parties. Another hypothesis is that rebel groups organized in autonomous cell structures probably have more difficulty turning themselves into political parties after war than groups with more unified and centralized command structures. A final hypothesis is that rebel groups with centralized and personalized decisionmaking methods that are dominated by a strong authoritarian leader are probably less successful in their postwar rebel-to-party transformation than groups with more decentralized, open, and collective decisionmaking procedures.

In the absence of any systematic analysis on postwar rebel-to-party transformation, these hypotheses remain highly tentative. The case studies in this volume provide empirical material that will help us to assess the validity of some of these arguments. However, it is first necessary to introduce a framework that defines what exactly we mean by "rebel-to-party transformation."

■ **A Framework for Analyzing Rebel-to-Party Transformation**

In order to understand the different nature of rebel-to-party transformation in various cases, we need an analytical framework that helps us to understand

what happens, or what is at least supposed to happen, with a rebel organization that wants to become a political party, what some of the key changes are, and what the key factors are that influence these changes.

Defining Transformation: Structural and Attitudinal Change

A rebel-to-party transformation involves, in theory at least, the conversion of an armed rebel movement into a nonarmed political party. As discussed above, analysts have different views about the primacy of certain dimensions (motivation, organization, leadership) in explaining armed rebellion. There exists a similar debate in the party politics literature about what exactly is important for the development of a political party, with some analysts highlighting the importance of a party's origins, structures, and historical background for its organizational development, and others arguing that the decisions of a party's leaders or voters determine its organizational development.³² We take the position that both structure and agency are essential, and argue that two interrelated sets of changes along these dimensions are required in order for postwar rebel-to-party transformations to succeed.³³

First, there is a need for behavioral or attitudinal change within the rebel group, entailing the democratization of decisionmaking as well as the adaptation of organizational strategies. Second, the rebel group will have to undertake a structural-organizational change, which is here defined as the demilitarization of organizational structures as well as the development of a party organization. A rebel-to-party transformation can therefore be defined as the process of structural-organizational and attitudinal change intended to convert an armed rebel group into an unarmed political party. Although these changes can also influence each other, for practical reasons we focus here only on how these changes affect the rebel-to-party transformation process.

Structural change 1: Demilitarization of organizational structures. For a former rebel organization to become a political organization, it will first have to "demilitarize" its organization by breaking up its military command structures and relinquishing its fighting capabilities.³⁴ This is usually achieved by sending former combatants through a process of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR). That process is primarily aimed at formally disbanding or reducing military formations and partially or fully confiscating their weaponry.³⁵ In addition, it includes efforts to reintegrate former combatants into society and help them develop alternative income-generating activities so they can provide for themselves and their families.

However, experiences with DDR processes in Burundi, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, and other postconflict countries indicate that, in particular, the

reintegration part of this process takes a long time and generally receives little attention. This can become an important obstacle for rebel-to-party transformation. A failure to successfully reintegrate former combatants can destabilize the peacebuilding process by creating a new group of disgruntled and experienced fighters, which can undermine attempts by former rebel commanders to reform their organizational structures.

The formal disbanding of military structures has also proven to be a problem in many cases. Formal disbanding does not always mean that command and control structures are discontinued, for example. Such structures are sometimes kept alive on an informal basis as a sort of “security guarantee.” This happens particularly in the early phases of the postconflict transition period, when the relationship between the rank-and-file and their commanders is still strong and the outcome of the reintegration process is unclear. The current situation in Burundi is an example of such an unbroken “umbilical cord” between the old rebel force and the new CNDD-FDD party (see Chapter 5).

In addition, there is strong evidence that the reintegration of former rebel fighters into society or their reinsertion into national security forces is often extremely difficult. In many cases, the real socioeconomic needs of the rank-and-file of former rebel organizations, such as job creation or access to housing, are not addressed. In addition, former rebels who are reinserted into existing or new police and army units are generally poorly paid and often receive limited or insufficient training, such as training on the role of security forces in a democratic political system.³⁶ Nevertheless, despite these problems, the full demilitarization of a rebel movement’s organizational structures is a crucial aspect of its transformation into a political party.

Structural change 2: Development of party organization. The other structural-organizational change required of a rebel organization wanting to become a political party is the development of a party organization that is capable of representing popular interests, fielding electoral candidates, organizing election campaigns, and ultimately, taking on governance responsibilities. In cases where a rebel movement has a prewar history as a political party, it can probably build on some of this experience in the postwar environment. In many cases, however, a postwar rebel-to-party transformation requires the development of a party organization from scratch. This comprises several tasks.

First, a rebel organization will have to be formally recognized as a political party. In cases where a rebel-to-party transformation is part of a ceasefire or peace agreement, the former rebel movement’s existence and its rights as a new political party are often already recognized, at least on paper. As we shall see, this has been the situation with RENAMO in Mozambique and the FMLN in El Salvador. In other cases, the rebel group’s recognition as a new

party and its rights to organize party rallies and take part in election campaigns will have to come from the relevant authorities, including the national government, parliament, and the national electoral commission.

A second task is the formulation of a party constitution and political program, and the installation of party organizational structures suitable to achieve the rebel group's new political objectives. In order to staff the new party organization, the rebel group will also need to recruit party cadre, preferably with the right mix of skilled, experienced, and capable people. This group of party leaders will usually consist of a combination of new party members who were not directly involved in the armed conflict and former senior rebel leaders who have not been integrated into the new post-conflict army or police.

And finally, the transformation toward a political party typically also requires an adaptation in the relationship between rebel elites in the different branches of the changed organization, reflecting their new positions as party leaders, parliamentary representatives, or elected government officials.

Attitudinal change 1: Democratization of decisionmaking. Perhaps the most problematic aspect of the transformation of a rebel movement into a political party is the change required in leadership decisionmaking. As we have seen, rebel movements are generally hierarchically organized with a clear top-down chain of command that has proven to be most effective for military operations. In many cases, executive authority rests with one individual, an authoritarian leader who controls all aspects of the organization and makes decisions by himself or in consultation with a closed, small coterie of advisers. In political parties, by contrast, executive power is normally less concentrated and much more democratically diffused throughout the organization, though there are many variations. Moreover, the nature of decisionmaking within political parties is generally more participatory, bottom-up, and consensual, reflecting their character of popularly representative institutions.³⁷

In order to become a political party, a rebel group will therefore have to “democratize” its decisionmaking by making it more open to consultation and participation from a wider group of people, from both within and outside the organization. Here lies a big problem, however. For most rebel organizations that are organized around a dominant leader, it is not easy to give up the old habit of authoritarian decisionmaking, especially when it has been internalized during an extended period of armed conflict. Even after the conflict is over, this practice tends to persist.³⁸ Moreover, as an internal leadership election is usually not part of a rebel group's organizational practice, the postwar political leadership is almost automatically assumed by the former rebel leader. Although a continuation in leadership

may provide a level of stability that can help to ease the organization's unpredictable war-to-peace transition and stem internal splits or fragmentation, it may also lead to a situation of "fossilization" in which the senior entrenched leaders oppose any changes needed in organizational structure and behavior.

With their authority over other rebel group members, rebel leaders are uniquely positioned to lead by example in the behavioral changes that are needed. Without a shift toward more participatory decisionmaking in the personal behavior and management style of the most senior rebel leaders, behavioral and structural changes in other parts of the organization are unlikely to take place.

Attitudinal change 2: Adaptation of strategies and goals. When a war ends, the domestic, regional, and international context is usually drastically different from the situation that existed before or during the war. An immediate postwar challenge for a rebel group is therefore to reorient its strategies and adapt some of its goals. For a former rebel organization to be able to operate as a credible political organization, it needs to develop new political tactics and strategies in exchange for its old wartime military tactics. These include, for example, designing political campaigns to attract popular support in elections, building relationships with civil society organizations, and perhaps most difficult, communicating with opposition parties in nonviolent ways.³⁹

Depending on the degree to which it has reached its wartime goals, in the postwar period a rebel movement might have to adapt some of those goals to the new situation, or even to adopt new aims to justify its political existence. If a rebel movement wants to become a political party, it will also need to think about how to deal with the wide variety of postwar demands from different sections of the population. In view of the disastrous effects of long-term fighting on the overall economy, people's livelihoods, and the country's infrastructure, the population will call for jobs, schooling, healthcare, and reconstruction of houses, roads, sanitation systems, and other basic services. All political actors responsible for the postwar reconstruction of a particular country, including former rebel leaders, will have to develop a comprehensive recovery plan if they want to maintain or increase their popular support. In addition, they will have to find ways to deliver on their promises, often with extremely limited resources. Achieving this is already difficult for institutionalized and more experienced political parties under better economic conditions. For new political parties in post-conflict societies, however, the challenge will be even more daunting, as many former rebel organizations often have little or no experience with program development or mobilizing supporters in electoral campaigns. Yet the

design of political strategies and the formulation of new goals are crucial for a rebel movement to turn itself into a political party.

* * *

The changes required for a rebel-to-party transformation clearly do not happen overnight. As with most processes that entail substantial behavioral and organizational change, a rebel-to-party transformation is part of a much longer process of postconflict institution building. Time is required, not only to defuse deep-running tensions and build confidence between the various political actors in the postconflict environment, but also to provide the transformed rebel movement with the political experience and skills needed to attract popular support and to survive in the political arena. In addition to the structural and attitudinal changes outlined above, there might be other aspects that play an important role in particular circumstances. A change in the wider sociopolitical context in which rebel organizations operate is an example. However, because this latter aspect tends to be exogenous rather than endogenous to a rebel-to-party transformation, it will be included as one of several factors influencing the structural and attitudinal changes, discussed below.

Overall, the demilitarization of organizational structures, the development of a party organization, the democratization of decisionmaking, and the adaptation of goals/strategies constitute the core of what can be described as a “model” rebel-to-party transformation. In a model transformation, a rebel movement neatly implements the four main changes until it has become a normal—that is, unarmed—political party. However, in practice, such a transformation does not exist. Experiences from most postconflict countries show that rebel movements often do not go through the four changes consecutively, if they go through them at all. The actual process of rebel-to-party transformation is therefore much more diverse and messy than this model would lead us to expect, with the outcome often varying in significant ways.

Nature of Transformation

Based on different combinations of the above-mentioned attitudinal and structural changes, it is possible to distinguish between four different ideal types, or degrees, of rebel-to-party transformation.

In situations where all requirements of the key structural changes (demilitarization of organizational structures and development of party organization) as well as the key attitudinal changes (democratization of decisionmaking and adaptation of goals and strategies) are fulfilled, we can speak of a *full or successful rebel-to-party transformation*. The qualification “successful” does require some extra explanation, however. In the context of a

postwar rebel-to-party transformation, “success” does not refer to a military victory for the rebel group or a political victory in the polls for that matter. The success we are referring to here lies in the fact that a rebel group has successfully completed its transformation from armed group into nonarmed political party.⁴⁰ Related to the four structural and attitudinal changes highlighted above, there are a number of indicators that can be used for assessing whether this is the case. For the rebel-to-party transformation to be considered successful, we may expect that the new organization (1) has completely disarmed and demobilized its fighters and broken ties with any remaining armed militias; (2) has a clear political program and sufficient organizational stability and political capacity to take part in elections, parliament, national government, and other governance tasks; (3) has a civilian leadership that regularly consults its members on major policy decisions; (4) shows a demonstrated commitment to the cease-fire and complies fully with implementation of the peace accord; and (5) has renounced violence as the means to achieve its objectives and recognizes electoral competition as the principal method for selecting executive and legislative leadership. If the structural and attitudinal changes are implemented and these criteria are fulfilled, it is then likely that the outcome will be a successful rebel-to-party transformation.⁴¹ Examples of this sort of transformation include the NRM/A in Uganda, the EPRDF in Ethiopia, the FSLN in Nicaragua, as well as RENAMO in Mozambique and the FMLN in El Salvador, the latter two of which are analyzed in greater detail in later chapters.

A *partial transformation* occurs when there is some attitudinal change, usually in terms of adopting new political-military strategies, but no real structural change, taking place. This is probably the most common type of transformation, particularly in the first few years after a cease-fire has been reached or a conflict has ended. In this early postwar phase, rebel leaders usually recognize that their movement has to change in order to take part in political life, but they consider the structural conditions to be unfavorable for giving up the armed struggle completely. Fearing they can still be militarily defeated or believing that they may lose out if the other political actors team up against them, rebel leaders will argue that they have to retain their armed units as backup in case things go wrong. The outcome is a hybrid political-military rebel organization that combines its military wing with a new political wing. An example of a rebel movement that has used this model for a long time is the IRA. It was only when the situation in Northern Ireland changed, and when keeping the armed units on standby became politically counterproductive, that the organization decided to disarm completely. Other examples of a partial rebel-to-party transformation include Hezbollah in Lebanon, Fatah in Palestine, as well as three cases discussed in greater detail in later chapters: the CNDD-FDD in Burundi, the SPLM/A in Sudan, and Hamas in Palestine.

In case of a *facade transformation*, a rebel group not only fails to implement any major organizational changes (apart, perhaps, from a few cosmetic ones), but also does not want to change the nature of its decisionmaking or the strategies it uses. Groups in this category generally use the rhetoric of rebel-to-party transformation as a pretext for continuing to receive money and support, and erect political structures to serve as “fronts” for their armed militias and other military activities. The main distinction compared to a partial transformation is that a movement employing a facade transformation is usually not interested in becoming an unarmed political party, at least not in the short term. The outcome therefore is a strongly military-oriented rebel movement whose use of political activities and structures only serves a military purpose. An actual transformation therefore does not take place. Examples include Colombia’s National Liberation Army (ELN) and FARC, as well as two cases discussed in greater detail in later chapters: the Afghan militias Jamiat-i Islami and Hizb-i Islami, and the LTTE in Sri Lanka. It should be noted that, in many of these cases, war has not yet ended, which clearly plays a role in these groups’ ongoing military practices. Nevertheless, in some cases there have been clear opportunities—through cease-fires, for example—for initial attempts at rebel-to-party transformation.

Finally, in a *failed transformation*, the rebel group only survives nominally as some kind of political organization. In this situation, a rebel movement might perhaps have undertaken some attitudinal changes, but lacks the organizational structures and resources (and sometimes popular support) to establish itself as a viable political party. This can happen for a variety of reasons, with military defeat and internal collapse through splits and fragmentation probably the most common. Examples of this kind of “failure” include the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, the United Liberation Movement for Democracy (ULIMO) in Liberia, the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) in Tajikistan, as well as the RUF in Sierra Leone, the latter of which is analyzed in greater detail later in this volume.

This overview of the nature of transformation illustrates that there is no such thing as a linear, “model” rebel-to-party transformation. Nevertheless, for analytical purposes the idea of a model rebel-to-party transformation can serve as a yardstick for measuring the direction of, and changes within, rebel movements wanting to become political parties. It can also help international actors assess what type of support is most needed.

The above classification scheme is also useful for the purposes of this volume, which proposes to think of rebel-to-party transformation as a continuum, in which the successful transformation and the failed transformation represent two opposite outcomes. In between these two extremes are a variety of different situations that reflect the degree to which certain structural and attitudinal changes have been implemented (see also Figure 10.1 on p. 231). The implication is that the transformation process itself should

not be seen as a linear series of steps that are irreversible. As with postconflict peacebuilding processes, relapses are always possible. Even the more successful cases discussed in this volume show that setbacks are not uncommon, and that, at any stage, important structural and attitudinal changes can be reversed. In exceptional cases, the transformation process can even be completely overturned, with a former rebel group rearming itself and restarting its violent resistance. A more continuous representation of rebel-to-party transformation also allows us to understand a particular outcome in relation to a specific context. A rebel group's choice for a particular degree of transformation will partly be based on a rational calculation of the various costs and benefits, which highly depend on the position it finds itself in. In addition, the degree of transformation is also a reflection of an organization's internal strengths and weaknesses.

■ **Factors Influencing the Rebel-to-Party Transformation Process**

The extent to which the previously mentioned structural and attitudinal changes are implemented, and the nature of transformation that follows, are influenced by two major factors that are, partly at least, outside the direct control of a rebel movement: the conflict settlement, and the wider domestic and regional context in which a rebel organization finds itself. The latter includes the security situation and political stability in the country, the level of popular support, a country's electoral rules and political system, and the political and security conditions in neighboring countries.

Conflict Settlement

Research findings suggest that the success of a rebel-to-party transformation is to some extent contingent on the manner in which a violent conflict ends and the subsequent nature of the peace agreement.⁴² When the conflict ends through negotiations, the warring parties, including former rebel movements, are usually able to reach some form of power-sharing deal or peace agreement in which the political legitimacy of each party is formally acknowledged. This then creates opportunities for establishing a relatively open political arena in which elections can become the primary tool for selecting and legitimizing the new government and party representatives who, alone or in coalition with other parties, will implement the peace agenda. This happened for the first time in Mozambique and El Salvador in 1994 and more recently in East Timor in 2001 and Liberia in 2005. The recognition in these countries' peace agreements of the former rebel movements as legitimate political organizations that are allowed to take part in elections offered them a strong impetus for change. In each of the first postconflict elections that were held

in these countries, the necessary organization of electoral campaigns and formulation of political programs provided an additional incentive to former rebel leaders to switch to political tactics for drawing popular support, and in some cases stimulated them to build up a political dialogue with other parties or even to seek cooperation through electoral coalitions.

In cases where the conflict ends in a military victory for one of the warring parties, the victorious party usually adopts a winner-takes-all mentality that marginalizes or even totally excludes former adversaries and other “weaker” parties. In this scenario—which has occurred, for example, in Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Uganda—the struggle for power has already been decided on the battlefield and the first postconflict elections often serve merely to legitimize the new, political role of the victorious leaders.

Thus, by enabling political power to be shared between different groups or by allowing one group to dominate power, the nature of the conflict settlement directly influences the room for maneuver in the postwar political space for all political organizations. The way in which a conflict is ended and the sort of conflict settlement that follows can therefore have a significant effect on the political prospects of rebel groups that want to transform themselves into political parties.

Domestic and Regional Context

Rebel-to-party transformation is not an endogenous process that takes place in an institutional and political vacuum. On the contrary, a rebel movement’s ability to become a political party is often a direct function of changes in the domestic and regional context, in which a number of factors are particularly important.

First, the existence of some degree of security and political stability is a key factor for convincing rebel movements that it is safe to disarm and start a political dialogue with their former adversaries. Such an environment can exist only if a credible cease-fire, underpinned by strong enforcement mechanisms and preferably mandating the presence of international peacekeeping forces, is in place. Without the existence of such a cease-fire and the related confidence-building measures, rebel groups are unlikely to give up their weapons, let alone embark on an insecure path toward rebel-to-party transformation. Political stability is highly related to the power configuration of the different political and military groups in a country, and can influence the willingness of a rebel group’s political opponents to allow the group to enter the political arena. If political power is dominated by a single political party that has a large electoral mandate, is firmly in control of government, and has a strong hold over a country’s key institutions, in particular the police and military forces, the rebel group will probably find it easier to obtain concessions from that dominant party in peace negotiations

than when it is confronted by a number of weak political factions vying for power. In the latter case, in which none of the political parties are strong enough to acquire a dominant position because of internal splits and fragmentation, for example, and cannot rely on the full control of the security forces, the emergence of any new political organization—particularly a formerly armed organization—will be seen by the existing parties as a direct challenge to their already limited power position, and will therefore be fiercely resisted. In both scenarios, the power configuration has an important influence on the nature of the rebel-to-party transformation.

A second factor that impacts on the success of a rebel group wanting to become a political party is popular support, both the level that it received during the war and the level that it can expect to receive after the war is ended.⁴³ Those rebel groups whose armed resistance was backed by significant parts of the population can convert that backing into electoral support during the postwar elections. This popular support gives them a considerable advantage over other rebel groups who lacked such support.

A third domestic factor that can have an effect on the rebel-to-party transformation is a country's institutional context, particularly its electoral rules and political system.⁴⁴ Countries with an electoral system based on proportional representation (PR) generally have lower institutional barriers for smaller parties to gain votes and seats in parliament than countries that have single-member district plurality systems, which tend to overrepresent the two largest parties. Under PR systems, it is therefore slightly easier for new political parties such as former rebel groups to enter the political arena, particularly if the PR system is combined with a low vote threshold for obtaining parliamentary seats. In addition, in countries with a presidential system of government in which presidents are directly elected via plurality voting, there is a tendency for a concentration of power, favoring the well-established, large parties and making it more difficult for new parties, such as former rebel groups, to gain electoral support.⁴⁵

In addition to the domestic context, it is also important to mention the potential effect of the regional context, in particular the political and security conditions in neighboring countries. The existence of severe political instability in neighboring countries, for instance, can make rebel leaders reluctant to relinquish control over their armed units, out of fear that, in case violence erupts and spills across the border, there will be no one to defend their organization and its supporters. This situation is often exacerbated by the fact that the state security forces in many conflict zones lack the capacity to patrol and guard their borders and are unable to defend their people against cross-border attacks from armed rebel groups. For example, the ongoing security problems in the African Great Lakes region have hindered the rebel-to-party transformation of several groups in the area.

■ **A Special Context Factor: The Role of the International Community**

Rebel-to-party transformations are not only influenced by domestic and regional factors, but also affected by the actions of the so-called international community. Far from being a monolithic or united bloc, the international community actually consists of a broad range of bilateral, multi-lateral, and nongovernmental actors, which all have different mandates, capacities, and interests. Based on these capacities and interests, international actors can play different roles in the transformation of rebel movements into political parties. The reason why the role of the international community is specifically highlighted here and in the rest of this volume is because we feel that its relevance has been underrepresented in existing explanations of rebel-to-party transformation. It is our contention that international actors have played an important role in the political transformation process of armed groups, by either supporting or impeding this process.

Three reasons can be distinguished for international actors to support rebel-to-party transformations. First, international actors have engaged in this process because they want to contribute to the creation of a sustainable peace after war by building trust between the former belligerent parties and preventing a return to conflict. By supporting the conversion of rebel groups into political parties and giving them an opportunity to represent their interests politically rather than militarily, international actors hope to contribute to conflict management and conflict prevention.

Second, international actors have supported rebel-to-party transformations in order to make a country's postwar party system more pluralistic and democratically competitive. Strongly motivated by their belief in the virtues of a liberal democratic multiparty system, international actors have sought to make the new political setting more inclusive and, if needed, to help level the electoral playing field. In some cases, to achieve that objective, it has been necessary to assist transformed rebel movements that are politically weak.

And third, international actors have sought to ease the transition of former rebel fighters into their new life as civilians in order to prevent them from spoiling the peace or entering into criminal activities. By enabling a new political life for the organization to which these former fighters belonged, international actors hope to help indirectly by providing them with an umbrella organization that can represent their interests and cater to some of their needs.

Yet, while international actors can play a supportive role, they may also seek to impede or even block attempts by rebel movements to transform themselves into "normal" political actors. This happens, for example, in situations where international or regional actors use armed rebel movements as proxies to further their economic, political, or strategic interests in the

wider region. The disarmament and organizational reform of rebel movements in order to make them more electorally accountable is then not in the interests of these international actors and will therefore be resisted. International actors may also block the political transformation of rebel groups that use unfavorable military or terrorist tactics. In this situation, international actors will try to boycott any direct contact with a former rebel group's political and military leaders, block financial assistance or remittances from international supporters, and withhold visas and travel permits from the group's political representatives. Where relevant, authors in this volume bring attention to both the positive and the negative roles that international actors can play in rebel-to-party transformations.

As the case studies in this volume show, international actors have employed a broad range of strategies to achieve these supporting and impeding objectives, ranging from coercive military measures, to "hard" and "soft" political and diplomatic pressure, to different forms of concessionary postconflict and transition assistance. International actors have generally supported five types of assistance to help former rebel leaders and their organizations adjust to their new political role and responsibilities. First, depending on the local political, socioeconomic, and security environment, assistance has usually included *support for DDR programs*. Second, the international community has provided numerous *political training courses* for future party cadre, often through specialized party foundations, such as the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, and the various German party foundations (Stiftungen), particularly the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Another type of international assistance has come in the form of *logistical support*, for the establishment and relocation of party offices of former rebel organizations, for example. Fourth, in exceptional cases the international community has provided *direct financial assistance* to rebel groups to support their political transformation process. And finally, international actors have given *political support* and exercised *political pressure* on former rebel leaders to enter peace negotiations and remain committed to the peace and political transformation process.

With these assistance activities and other forms of diplomatic, political, and military support, international actors have often played an important role in the political transformation of rebel movements, as several chapters in this volume highlight.

■ Research Background and Case Study Selection

The material presented in this edited volume stems from a comparative research project by the Netherlands Institute of International Relations, known

as Clingendael, that took place between November 2005 and September 2006. The main motivation behind this project was to address the gap of information on rebel-to-party transformations in postconflict societies and, in particular, to explore the potential contribution of international actors. In this regard, we asked country experts to analyze the experiences of eight transformations: in El Salvador (FMLN), Mozambique (RENAMO), Sierra Leone (RUF), Burundi (CNDD-FDD), Palestine (Hamas), Sudan (SPLM/A), Afghanistan (various warlord and political-military militias), and Sri Lanka (LTTE). The period of study varied in each case, but generally ranged from the end of war in the country (ranging from the early 1990s to 2005) to the end of our project period, September 2006. Where possible, the material has been updated to early 2007. This book draws heavily from the country reports produced during the project, as well as from the feedback we received from various experts gathered during a seminar at the Clingendael Institute in The Hague in July 2006.

The reasons for focusing on the eight cases represented in this volume were fourfold. First, given our central interest in major rebel movements that can make or break a peace process and that have a realistic opportunity to become political organizations after war, we excluded from our analysis the many smaller, less powerful rebel groups. Second, given our interest in explaining why some transformations succeed while others do not, we looked for clear success stories (RENAMO, FMLN) as well as apparent failed transformations (RUF). For the latter category, we could also have included Liberia's ULIMO or Cambodia's Khmer Rouge, for example, but we felt there was too little systematic information available to draw strong conclusions. Fortunately, this was not the case with the RUF. In between successful and failed transformations are partial and facade transformations, which comprise perhaps the most challenging cases, as these are analytically not as clear-cut. These are also the most problematic cases from the point of view of policymakers who have to deal with these groups as part of a peace process. It is for this reason that most of the case studies in this volume belong to one of the latter two categories. Our categorization of the CNDD-FDD, the SPLM/A, and Hamas as partial transformations reflects these organizations' attempted initial implementation of structural and behavioral changes. Categorizing the current character of their political transformations, however, remains extremely difficult. In this volume, the LTTE is classified as a facade transformation mainly because of its military leader's intransigence and unwillingness to reform. The transformation of Afghanistan's various warlord and political militias has also been categorized as a facade, although it should be emphasized that in this case there are significant variations in willingness to reform among the different political-military groups analyzed. As Antonio Giustozzi explains in Chapter 8, the transformation of a group like Hizb-i Islami can be considered a facade, as it still actively fights

the government with military means. For groups like Junbesh-i Milli Islami and Jamiat-i Islami, the nature of transformation is less clear. As with partial transformations, exact characterizations of facade transformations are rather complicated.

Much of the complexity of cases in these two categories is due to their more recently begun and sometimes still ongoing transformations (SPLM/A, CNDD-FDD, Hamas). In addition, in the cases of the LTTE and the Afghan militias, violent conflict has restarted, at least in some parts of Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. In both of the latter cases, this has had a strongly negative impact on the rebel-to-party transformation process. However, with the eyes of the international community set upon them, we felt we could not exclude these two important cases from our analysis. Nevertheless, and unfortunately, cases of rebel-to-party transformation that began during the period of our project, such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists), had to be excluded from this volume.

Third, we did not look at older examples of so-called colonial independence or liberation movements, such as FRELIMO, SWAPO, and the ANC. The main reason for their exclusion—at least as separate case studies—is that substantial and detailed literature on these movements already exists. The aim of this volume is instead to add to the existing literature, and to see what lessons can be learned from more recent cases. Nonetheless, several of the chapters in this volume draw attention to lessons from the political transformations of these earlier liberation movements, and make reference to this wider literature.

Finally, in order to explore a wide range of experiences, we have included cases from all the main developing regions, including sub-Saharan Africa, Central and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Central America. The strong focus on Africa in this volume reflects its unenviable ranking as the region with the largest number of postconflict countries, many of which are struggling with rebel-to-party transformations.

■ **Structure of the Book**

Corresponding with the original research project outline, each case study chapter tries to answer the following five major questions:

- Has a real transformation from an armed movement into a political party happened?
- What factors explain the success or failure of the transformation process?
- What factors supported the move from an armed movement into a political party?

- What were the main obstacles to the transformation?
- What are the prospects and challenges for consolidating the transformation?

In view of the policy-relevant nature of the research project, the chapters also address three additional questions:

- What role did international actors play in the transformation process?
- What type of international assistance was provided, if any?
- What lessons can be learned from previous international efforts and what recommendations can be provided for future assistance programs?

In answering these questions, the chapters follow a similar structure. First, in order to understand the historical and political background of the case under study, each chapter briefly explains the reasons behind armed insurrection in the particular country, highlights the main organizational characteristics of the particular rebel movement, and describes how the movement developed in response to internal and external factors. Second, each chapter analyzes the nature of the rebel-to-party transformation, specifically in terms of changes in organizational structures as well as organizational and personal behavior. In addition, the authors identify the most salient factors that triggered and stimulated the transformation process, as well as those that impeded it. Third, each chapter assesses the success or failure of the transformation and identifies the exogenous factors that shaped the rebel-to-party transformation process. For the cases categorized as partial or facade transformations, the authors characterize the degree of transformation and also assess the likely future prospects of the transformation process. Finally, all chapters highlight the role played by international actors in the rebel-to-party transformation and, where appropriate, analyze the various forms of support or resistance.

This book is organized based on the nature of the transformation process in the different cases. Chapters 2–4 focus on successful and failed transformations. In both El Salvador and Mozambique, the main former rebel movements (FMLN, RENAMO) slowly developed into electorally successful political parties by democratizing their formerly military chains of command, adapting their strategies and goals, and replacing military organizational structures with party organizational structures. In Chapter 2, Christine Wade analyzes how El Salvador's FMLN became formally recognized as a new political party in the Chapúltepec peace accord and how it slowly transformed itself into a political organization, eventually becoming the largest political party in El Salvador's Legislative Assembly after the 2000 elections. She explains how the FMLN's successful transformation is connected to its leadership's commitment to the peace process, the readiness of the Salvadoran government to implement key reforms, the political experience and

expertise of the organization's leadership, and its popular support over the past five elections. In addition, Wade assesses the effects of the substantial political, material, and monitoring support supplied by the international community, as well as the financial support supplied by the Salvadoran diaspora in the United States, on the FMLN's transformation. Wade concludes that the FMLN's political transformation remains problematic because of the party's internal disputes and fracturing between party leaders.

In Chapter 3, Carrie Manning analyzes the successful conversion of Mozambique's RENAMO from an externally created, highly centralized, and personalized rebel movement with a weak political program, into the second-largest political party in the country. She argues that the political transformation of RENAMO is highly related to, among other factors, the timely and generous financial assistance and strong political pressure by the UN and international donors, as well as to RENAMO's leadership, which succeeded in gaining recognition for the party as a legitimate political actor, both nationally and internationally. However, like Wade in the case of the FMLN, Manning emphasizes that despite its electoral successes, RENAMO continues to have serious problems in terms of its leadership and performance as a political party.

In Chapter 4, Paul Richards and James Vincent explain why Sierra Leone's RUF has failed to transform itself into a political organization since the country's civil war ended in early 2002. Since its poor performance in the May 2002 elections and the death of RUF leader Foday Sankoh in August 2003, it has made no noteworthy progress in its political development and has largely collapsed. Richards and Vincent challenge the conventional explanations of the RUF's failed transformation that ascribe its demise to the absence of a clear political agenda, its use of terror tactics against civilians, and its limited popular support. Their research highlights that, in addition to these factors, the limited success of the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUF) should also be ascribed to the international community's politically motivated efforts to isolate the party, lack of financial and logistic support for party activities, and internal organizational weaknesses.

Chapters 5–9 focus on cases that can be characterized as partial transformations, where structural and attitudinal changes have been implemented, but only to some degree, and cases that can be described as facade transformations. In Chapter 5, Willy Nindorera analyzes the ongoing political transformation of Burundi's CNDD-FDD, which is trying to change itself from a Hutu-dominated, authoritarian-led armed rebel group into a more ethnically heterogeneous, unarmed, and democratic political party. After examining how the CNDD-FDD made peace with the Burundian government after a decade-long civil war, Nindorera explains how the former rebel organization won a landslide victory in the July–August 2005 elections. These elections gave the CNDD-FDD an overwhelming parliamentary majority and enabled

its leader, Pierre Nkurunziza, to become president of Burundi. Nindorera argues that the CNDD-FDD has made some progress in becoming a political party, but that its ideological and organizational weaknesses, internal leadership disputes, unbroken ties with its armed military wing, and its increasingly authoritarian leadership behavior are reasons for continuing concern.

In Chapter 6, Pamela Scholey focuses on the partial transformation of Hamas, the Islamic resistance movement in Palestine. She highlights the historical and structural factors that have prevented Hamas from using the “model” route of rebel-to-party transformation desired and promoted by Western governments. Scholey argues that Hamas has significantly modified its military posture and undergone some significant organizational and attitudinal changes already, particularly since it came into power as the government of the Palestinian Authority after the January 2006 elections. However, she explains why Hamas continues to see itself as a resistance movement that will only slowly grow into nonviolent resistance through political dialogue. Scholey discusses how the international boycott of Hamas after it came into power has hindered potential attempts by the organization to make real progress with its political transformation.

In Chapter 7, John Young focuses on the transformation of Sudan’s militarily oriented SPLA into the more politically oriented SPLM. After describing the complex background of the SPLM/A’s struggle against the Khartoum-based Arab government in northern Sudan and against other opponents in southern Sudan, Young analyzes why the SPLM/A’s transformation can only be characterized as partial, if any sort of transformation at all, discussing factors such as the overrepresentation of the military wing in the SPLM/A’s organizational development, and the autocratic leadership style of the late John Garang. Based on a detailed analysis of the highly unstable political, socioeconomic, and security setting after the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, Young argues that a number of internal structural and attitudinal problems, as well as key contextual factors, continue to hamper the SPLM/A in its progress toward political transformation.

The next two chapters analyze cases that can best be characterized as facade transformations, reflecting rebel groups’ marginal and largely cosmetic structural and attitudinal changes in order to continue their core military objectives. In Chapter 8, Antonio Giustozzi concentrates on the transformation of warlord and political militias into political parties in Afghanistan. After providing a brief historical background of warlordism in Afghanistan, Giustozzi discusses how the 2001 Bonn Agreement provided the foundation for the subsequent war-to-peace and militia-to-party transitions. Focusing on the most recent period that brought several former warlords close to power, after the September 2005 parliamentary elections, Giustozzi analyzes the different transformation models followed by Junbesh-i Milli-i Islami, Jamiat-i Islami, Hizb-i Wahdat-i Islami, and Hizb-i Islami. Based on a critical assessment of

the role of international actors in the transformation process of Afghan militias, as well as the structural obstacles that remain, he explains why the majority of these militias are unlikely to disarm and become “normal” political parties anytime soon.

In Chapter 9, Chris Smith discusses the facade transformation of Sri Lanka’s LTTE during the period of the 2002–2006 cease-fire agreement. He describes how the LTTE has become a significant political force in Sri Lanka over the years, especially in the northern and eastern parts of the island, where it de facto operates a state within a state. Though many aspects of the LTTE’s organization resemble that of a political party, Smith demonstrates that the LTTE’s political activities and ambitions are subordinate to the military wing, and that it remains, in fact, a military organization. He traces the reasons for this lack of a real transformation back to the organizational setup of the LTTE, the authoritarian tendencies of its leadership, and the limited prospects for reaching its key objective—a separate Tamil homeland—through political means.

Concluding the book, Chapter 10 seeks to draw together the different case study findings and present overall conclusions. Luc van de Goor and Jeroen de Zeeuw provide some general conclusions with regard to the structural-organizational and attitudinal changes across the various cases, and highlight some of the key factors explaining the varying nature of transformation. The chapter also draws attention to several challenges and dilemmas that international actors are likely to face when engaging armed rebel movements during and after war. We conclude with a number of recommendations for future international support of rebel-to-party transformations.

■ Notes

1. A major research project by Stanford University and the International Peace Academy concluded that in bringing civil wars to an end, the demilitarization of politics, “that is, the transformation of soldiers into civilians and warring armies into political parties,” is of crucial importance. Stedman, Rothchild, and Cousens, *Ending Civil Wars*, p. 3. See also Lyons, *Demilitarizing Politics*.

2. Antsee, *Orphan of the Cold War*; Ajello, “Mozambique.”

3. Considerable work in this field has been done by Carrie Manning at Georgia State University, Mimmi Söderberg-Kovacs at Uppsala University, and Michael Allison at the University of Scranton, as well as by Conciliation Resources. See Manning, “Armed Opposition Groups Into Political Parties”; Söderberg-Kovacs, “Fractions, Followers, and Friends”; Allison, “The Transition from Armed Opposition to Electoral Opposition in Central America”; Ricigliano, *Choosing to Engage*. Other comparative research on rebel-to-party transformations is currently being conducted at King’s College London in the United Kingdom, the Crisis Management Initiative in Finland, and the Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management in Germany.

4. “International community” here refers to all bilateral and multilateral donor

agencies, international organizations and associations, international nongovernmental organizations, political and private foundations, consultancy firms, and other organized groups engaged in conflict management and peacebuilding.

5. See also Zartman, "Dynamics and Constraints in Negotiations in Internal Conflicts," p. 5. For other definitions, see McCartney, *Engaging Armed Groups in Peace Processes*, pp. 3–4; Wallensteen and Sollenberg, "Armed Conflict, 1989–2000," p. 643; Snow, *Uncivil Wars*, p. 65; and Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, pp. 4–5.

6. Examples include the various *maras* (youth gangs) in Central America—for example, MS-13 in El Salvador—as well as the worldwide "network" of Al-Qaida fighters.

7. Weinberg and Pedahzur, *Political Parties and Terrorist Groups*.

8. Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*, p. 57.

9. See, for example, Pye, *Guerrilla Communism in Malaya*; Young, *Peasant Revolution in Ethiopia*; Wickham-Crowley, *Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America*; Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*; and the two "classics" on guerrilla warfare: Tse Tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*; Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*.

10. Collier, "Doing Well Out of War"; Keen, *The Economic Functions of Violence in Civil Wars*.

11. Cramer, "*Homo Economicus Goes to War*." Paul Collier's later work on civil wars seems to be less monocausalistic, albeit still prioritizing the importance of economic factors. See Collier et al., *Breaking the Conflict Trap*.

12. Berdal, "Beyond Greed and Grievance"; Ballentine and Sherman, *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict*; Bøås and Dunn, *African Guerrillas*.

13. Lichbach, *The Rebel's Dilemma*; Wood, *Forging Democracy from Below*; Weinstein, *The Structure of Rebel Organizations*.

14. One example of this is Jeremy Weinstein's book *Inside Rebellion*, an insightful structural-organizational account of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) in Uganda, RENAMO in Mozambique, and two factions of Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path).

15. See the various contributions in Clark, *The African Stakes of the Congo War*; and Adebajo and Rashid, *West Africa's Security Challenges*.

16. Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*.

17. Clapham, *African Guerrillas*, pp. 6–8.

18. The SPLM/A is difficult to classify. In addition to being described as "separatist," it has also been described as "reformist" or as a "postcolonial liberation movement." See Johnson, "The Sudan People's Liberation Army and the Problem of Factionalism," p. 53.

19. These so-called criminal rebels have recently received much attention in the study of the political economy of civil wars. See Collier, "Rebellion as a Quasi Criminal Activity"; Ballentine and Sherman, *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict*.

20. See, for example, Giustozzi, "Respectable Warlords?" p. 2.

21. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*, p. 5.

22. As Carrie Manning notes elsewhere, part of the reason for the political success of the NRM, the EPRDF, and the NPFL, as well as other groups like the RPF and the FSLN, lies in the fact that these groups came to power through a military victory and subsequently became ruling parties, which gave them a huge advantage over other armed and nonarmed political groups. Manning, "Party-building on the Heels of War," p. 270, n. 1.

23. Pool, "The Eritrean People's Liberation Front," pp. 28–29; Ngoga, "Uganda," pp. 96–100.

24. See, for example, McClintock, *Revolutionary Movements in Latin America*.

25. Related to this point, Christopher Clapham argues that splits “are key indicators of the way in which a movement is organized: personalist movements are liable to split on personal lines, ethnic movements on ethnic lines, ideological movements on ideological lines.” On troop discipline, he makes a distinction between highly disciplined forces (RPF, NRM/A), in which, in extreme cases, “individuals responsible for rape or the murder of civilians were publicly executed,” and less disciplined movements (NPFL, factions in Somalia), in which “murder, rape and looting constituted much of the *raison d’être* of the insurgent forces themselves.” Clapham, *African Guerrillas*, p. 10.

26. See, for example, Clapham, *African Guerrillas*, p. 9. Clapham argues that particularly education does seem to be a “necessary, though not a sufficient, condition for organizational effectiveness.”

27. Ellis, “Liberia, 1989–1994”; Behrend, “War in Northern Uganda”; Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*.

28. Clapham, *African Guerrillas*, pp. 11–15. See also Young, “The Tigray People’s Liberation Front”; Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*.

29. Prunier, “The Rwandan Patriotic Front.”

30. Ellis, “Liberia’s Warlord Insurgency.”

31. The LTTE in Sri Lanka, for instance, has relied on various types of financial support from Tamils living abroad. Political groups affiliated to the LTTE have been successful in raising funds for the rebel movement’s activities by organizing festivals, placing appeals in the media, and even undertaking door-to-door collections. Radtke, *From Gifts to Taxes*, p. 9. See also Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, pp. 49–54.

32. For a structural-organizational analysis of political party development, see Panebianco, *Political Parties*. For an analysis of party organization, highlighting the importance of party leaders, party staff, and voters, see Epstein, *Political Parties in Western Democracies*; Webb and Kolodny, “Professional Staff in Political Parties.”

33. Depending on the particular issue at stake and the time of change, “structure” might prevail over “agency” or vice versa. However, the main point here is that for a full understanding of the workings of a rebel organization and by implication a rebel-to-party transformation, we need to take into account both structural and actor-related factors.

34. Lyons, *Demilitarizing Politics*.

35. Berdal, *Disarmament and Demobilization After Civil Wars*; Spear, “Disarmament and Demobilization,” pp. 141–148.

36. Ball and van de Goor, *Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration*; Humphreys and Weinstein, “Disentangling the Determinants of Successful Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration.”

37. Duverger, *Political Parties*; Panebianco, *Political Parties*.

38. This point is even more salient in the case of rebel movements that have come to power through a military victory, such as the RPF, the NRM/A, and the EPRDF. In these cases, the organizational and leadership structures often remain unchanged after the war or continue to be (strongly) shaped by their wartime experience, mainly due to a lack of internal and external pressure to reform.

39. Söderberg-Kovacs, “Fractions, Followers, and Friends,” p. 6.

40. In addition, there is a difference between a short- and a longer-term transformation success. The short-term definition of success refers to the situation in which a rebel movement, particularly its leadership, has committed itself to a process of political transformation, has adjusted its operations, and has disbanded its military structures. This will have a positive effect on the creation of political stability in the immediate postconflict period. Longer-term success implies that the former rebel

movement eventually becomes a representative and accountable political party that plays a meaningful role in the country's political system. This outcome is dependent not only on the rebel movement-turned-political party, but also on the course of the overall democratization process.

41. Needless to say, we have to be extremely cautious before declaring a transformation a success. As Carrie Manning points out in reference to nationalist parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we should not naively equate changed commitment or increased capacity with changed behavior: "[former rebel leaders] may well become [the electoral game's] most adept practitioners, consolidating and legitimating their power through democratic mechanisms while retaining goals that run counter to the letter and/or spirit of key provisions of the peace accord." Manning, "Armed Opposition Groups Into Political Parties," p. 58.

42. The endings of civil wars have been attributed to a number of factors, including military victory, military stalemate, decline in external support for one or all of the warring parties, fragmentation within one of the warring parties, loss of popular support to the warring parties, and international pressure or intervention. See Walter, *Committing to Peace*; Hampson, *Nurturing Peace*; Licklider, *Stopping the Killing*.

43. Allison, "The Transition from Armed Opposition to Electoral Opposition."

44. Shugart, "Guerrillas and Elections."

45. Allison, "The Transition from Armed Opposition to Electoral Opposition," p. 152.