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## Is less more after civil war?

Examining the impact of rebel group cohesiveness on the post-conflict state-building trajectory defined by order

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# Abstract

Why some civil wars end for good and others start up again is a complex question that inhibits many factors. This thesis argues, that the cohesiveness of rebel groups is one of the important ones in the post-conflict phase. During civil war the rebel groups can build up their political, military, and societal profile. In the aftermath of a civil war, this profile becomes one of the deciding factors that impacts the post-conflict order. Should rebels exhibit no cohesiveness or infighting with other groups, the war will likely continue. However, should they keep their cohesiveness, this could have a positive impact on the state-building trajectory. This thesis finds evidence for a connection between rebel group cohesiveness and the keeping of order in the post-conflict society. The primary cases for these observations are El Salvador and the FMLN, and Uganda and the NRA. The former was able to overcome tensions and able to keep the peace, while the latter lost its cohesiveness and struggled with several civil wars ever since.

*Keywords:* El Salvador, Uganda, rebel governance, post-conflict, cohesiveness, state-building

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# Abbreviations

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
ELF	Eritrean Liberation Front
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
ERP	People's Revolutionary Army
FEDEMO	Federal Democratic Movement
FMLN	Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front
FPL	Popular Liberation Forces
FUNA	Former Uganda National Army
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
PD	Partido Demócrata
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRM	National Resistance Movement
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UFM	Uganda Freedom Movement
UNRF	Uganda National Rescue Front
UPDA	Uganda People's Democratic Army

# 1. Introduction

The civil wars in El Salvador and Uganda deeply influenced the future of the respective states. These impacts go beyond what they had to cope with and the destruction, loss of life and trauma the conflicts left in their wake. While the National Resistance Army (NRA) in Uganda won, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador did not ultimately succeed in their struggle to gain control over the state. However, both wars made an impact going forward. Through their takeover of the national government the NRA was able to form the state, its structures and institutions as they saw fit to meet their ideological agenda (Lyons 2016; Golooba-Muteby & Hickey 2016, Mamdani 1988; Tidemand 2013). However, it could not escape the trappings of the lacking cohesiveness, as they tried to integrate other rebel groups into their forces. A consequence of this was the creation of other insurgencies, that have plagued the country ever since (Mamdani 1988; Lindemann 2010). On the other hand had the FMLN also an significant impact, as the state agreed to demilitarise and implement political reforms, thus laying the foundation for liberal democracy instead of the previous oligarchic military regime (Chávez 2015). The rebel organisation was a coalition of five separate groups and for the most part they were able to put their differences aside, which made them a powerful military and political force that contributed to the keeping of the peace in the post-conflict phase.

These two cases show that the cohesiveness of rebel groups plays an important role when the civil war is over and is a contributing factor to the state-building trajectory. Even if the insurgents that try to gain control of the government or claim a territory as their own do not succeed, they can still influence the future in a way that does not involve the destruction of war. The assumption here would be that the presence of rebel governance makes the group into a political force that has to be considered in the aftermath of a war and therefore has an impact on the state-building trajectory defined by order. This is especially true when the rebel organisation can be considered secessionist and acts

in a state-like manner through the provision of public goods to legitimise their claim of sovereignty to a domestic and international audience (Stewart 2018). Furthermore, my hypothesis is that if rebel organisations are able to unify multiple groups into one, like the FMLN did, it has a greater political and ideological impact and therefore can affect the state-building trajectory in a positive way. However, if there are many groups vying for control and fighting between each other, it will have a negative effect. This is due to their political will, will not be recognised, it can leave divisions in the population, and most importantly in the group itself. Even though, contrary to popular opinion, it is not necessarily a requirement for victory to win the „hearts and minds“ of the people (Kasfir 2015), the ability to do so leaves behind legacies that will have to be recognised especially in the cases where rebels did not succeed and had to be reintegrated. Therefore this leads me to the question on how the outcome of a civil war impacts the state-building trajectory and to my research question, that will lead this thesis.

*How does rebel group cohesiveness combined with rebel governance influence the state-building trajectory defined by post-conflict order?*

To construct the scope conditions for the terms civil war, rebel organisation and rebel governance I will mostly lean on the definitions laid out by Kasfir (2015) with the additions of other scholars which will present the framework that the cases will be situated in. This will help to gain a clear picture of which cases can be included in the theoretical framework and meet the scope conditions to be relevant for this work. First, I will define the necessary terms for this thesis including creating the scope conditions for rebel governance. In the following chapter, I present my theoretical model upon which the cases will be analysed and also the model of predictions that results out of the argument. For the analysis I use the method of process tracing, which is presented in chapter four, along with the observable implications that should be expected if the theoretical model proves to be correct. In addition to that, I operationalise the variables for the following analysis and justify my case selection of El Salvador and Uganda. Chapter five is a short reflection on the limitations of this thesis and possible

future research objectives. In chapter six, I am conducting an in-depth analysis of the cases of El Salvador and Uganda. This represents the main body of the thesis and also includes more cases that are coded into the model with the predictions.

## 2. Definitions

### *2.1. Civil war*

Civil war itself is defined as „armed combat within the boundaries of a recognised sovereign entity between [or among] parties subject to a common authority at the outset of hostilities“ (Kalyvas 2006). This eliminates cases in which at least one of the parties originates from an another country and organises an insurgency against an authority that is not their original state. The duration of civil war is characterised by bargains and deals that are struck, as well as norms that influence the patterns of violence, as a consequence it takes on many different forms and varies deeply from case to case (Staniland 2012). I will use the terms civil war and intra-state war interchangeably in this thesis.

### *2.2. Rebel organisations*

Civilians that may also oppose the government or are sympathetic to the cause of the rebels are not defined as such because rebels violently oppose other groups or the existing government. In this purpose, rebels differ from civilians by engaging in combat in addition to planning and leading the violence. They make use of „protracted violence“ which constitutes the threat of violence and also ongoing attacks after a first act that included fatalities. Therefore civilians do not qualify as rebels even if they provide for the cause through intelligence, food, shelter or assets (Kasfir 2015).

However, as Staniland (2012) notes, the engagement in war is not the means to an end in itself but is furthermore an important tool to drive political goals and

exercise influence. This underlines the importance of not just seeing rebel organisations and civil war as a struggle for power with the sole end goal being military victory, but also including the political implications and shaping of institutions through the struggle.

In the space and situation of a civil war, rebel organisations can form and thrive and are usually part of the warring parties. They are made up out of consciously coordinated groups whose members engage in protracted violence with their ultimate goal being the gain of undisputed political control over parts of the country or topple the existing government altogether (Kasfir 2015). In this thesis I will use the terms rebels, rebel organisation, insurgents and insurgent group interchangeably. This is because I consider them being equal such that they do not signify any difference of the way they go about their business or the strategies they use in war.

In their existence, and even before they are active, rebel organisations face challenges that they have to overcome to work effectively and have the chance to compete with the state they are rebelling against. The first challenge they are facing is the recruitment of members, a task that is especially difficult when the group is starting out because during that time the organisation has a high probability of failing. Therefore, the incentives to join for new recruits are minimal and are likely rooted in strong ideological beliefs (Weinstein 2006).

The second challenge that rebel groups face is the control of its members because as the conflict continues on and the number of rebel fighters grows, it gets more difficult to check the behaviour and discipline of the forces. The set up of an elaborate monitoring system would be costly and also difficult to maintain, but maybe most importantly it would take valuable resources away from the struggle itself. Therefore the group has to be organised in a way that enables and facilitates accountability among the members, in addition to being accountable towards the civilians that live in the territories under their control (Weinstein 2006). Being transparent with the civilian population and demonstrating that the same rules apply for the insurgents (or at least that transgressions do not go unpunished) is important for maintaining integrity and gaining credibility among civilians because once the conflict begins, a competition for the loyalty of the

population starts (Kasfir et al. 2017). Furthermore, rebel groups have to solve the problem of how to keep their troops motivated throughout the course of the war. This ultimately again falls back to staying disciplined as not only can the groups' reputation be damaged through indiscipline, it also wastes valuable resources (Weinstein 2006).

Another challenge is that of setting up rebel governance, which includes choices about the set up of governance structures and on what and how much to extract from civilians (Weinstein 2006). I will elaborate on this topic in detail in another section and determine what constitutes rebel governance, which actors engage in it and how it affects or creates different institutions.

An ongoing issue in the management of occupied territories is the question of how and in what way to use violence. This can be a very effective tool for rebel organisations to facilitate compliance because it sends clear signals to the inhabitants and sets boundaries as to what kind of behaviour is prohibited. However, if violence is used indiscriminately and the civilians are not able to understand why violence was used or if the application is inconsistent, the use of violence can also alienate (Weinstein 2006).

Finally, rebel groups are no static groups where the structures, practices, and convictions that have been set up in the beginning do not change, but rather throughout the course of civil war the group changes and adapts to the circumstances and therefore has to show resilience. In that process it is shaped by the multitude of interactions with the many actors that are involved, including the state, the inhabitants, and members of the organisation. Furthermore the group has to adapt to the changing circumstances throughout the course of the conflict, which include the gaining or losing of members, gains or losses of territory, and changes in funding (Weinstein 2006; Mampilly 2011).

### *2.3. Rebel governance*

A major part in the shaping of institutions during civil war and their potential lasting effects plays rebel governance. It is important to note that the term governance is different from government, which is usually more formal and

refers to a type of organisation that is able to form laws and make sure they are adhered to through means of coercion in a defined territory. The basic understanding of governance on the other hand, refers to the expected obedience of one actor to the given orders by another actor (Mampilly 2011). This means, for the purpose of rebel governance, that the minimum requirement is to organise civilians living in an area occupied by rebels for a public purpose. This purpose being civilian participation, provision of civilian administration, or organisation of civilians for significant material gain (Kasfir 2015). Contrary to the intuitive implication that intra-state war means a complete abandonment of social order, the form of rebel governance is quite common in those situations, albeit with a significant variation in the characteristics and the actions that the groups engage in (Risse & Lehmkuhl 2006; Weinstein 2006; Mampilly 2011; Staniland 2012; Kasfir 2015; Arjona 2016; Kasfir et al. 2017; Justino 2018). For the most part civilians living in those areas are aware of who rules in this time and space and therefore whose orders and rules they have to obey. However, because the control over territories can be fluid and contested and the population might have to answer to multiple actors with the control over the area even changing between night and day (Kasfir et al. 2017).

Because there exists such a broad variety of forms of rebel governance, Kasfir (2015) defines three scope conditions that encompass the range of this occurrence. To start, the rebel organisation has to control one or multiple areas in the state against it is fighting, even though this control can vary over the course of the conflict. In contested areas insurgencies and counterinsurgencies fight for political control (Staniland 2012) and represent the typical back and forth in places that are highly contested. However, the control over a territory is constitutive for the possibility of governance because rebel groups cannot guarantee that rules will be followed in contested spaces (Kasfir 2015). Furthermore there is evidence, that in areas that are under clear territorial control violence is reduced. This appears to be true, even if the conflict may still be in progress (Kalyvas et al. 2008; Justino 2018).

The second condition is tied to the first, in that there has to be civilians residing in the rebel-held area, otherwise the group would just claim control over a territory that was probably not that important to the state in the first place.

The third scope condition relates back to the definition of civil war and of rebels. This is due to there having to be an initial act of violence that signifies the beginning of the conflict and also transforms the group into a rebel organisation. After this beginning there has to be a persistent threat of violence (even if there are no actual acts committed during that time) to uphold the status of rebel governance. The complete disappearance of the violent threat means that the span of rebel governance has ended (Kasfir 2015).

With the forms of rebel governance laid out, the decision to implement rebel governance often times depends on the capability and willingness of the rebel group to organise the aspects of the daily life of the civilians (Kasfir et al. 2017). The different attitudes towards governance in rebel-held areas also explain the wide variety of characteristics in different cases of rebel governance. Some may not have the resources, either financially or in terms of human resources, that are necessary for such a undertaking and others may just be not interested in organising governance because it doesn't fit in with their plans and goals. These own interests are the driving force behind implementing and designing the governance structures, as they are executed in a way that benefits the strategic objectives of the organisation (Justino 2018). In the process of doing that, rebel groups intent to engage the civilians to pursue a common objective but their own interest always reign supreme (Kasfir 2015). It is important to remember that the own interests of the rebel organisation are the guiding principle for their actions and that favours granted to the civilian population usually do not have a purely altruistic background.

The structures that are set up in the process of rebel governance often resemble those that existed in this space before. This gives the advantage of familiarity, both for the civilian population and the rebel organisation. Therefore, new governance is more accessible for the inhabitants and the probability of accepting the implemented structures is higher (Kasfir 2015). Additionally this shows a certain kind of path dependency on the part of the civilians and the rebels,

in addition to the consideration not to overwhelm the population with radically different structures. Connecting to this is the circumstance, where the decision how and what structures to set up is also influenced by the quality of the pre-existing institutions. This brings up the question if the rebel organisation should use the institutions that are already in place or create new ones, a concept which Arjona (2016) calls *aliocracy* and *rebelocracy*, respectively. In the former case the insurgents use the structures that they encounter in the territories they occupy, because the locals would react negatively towards a change of things that they have known to be working. Another factor in this is the time horizon the rebel groups have and therefore how much they believe to be dependent on the cooperation of the local population. If an organisation is under the assumption that their struggle can be resolved quickly or does not have to regard the inhabitants, it will not feel the need to invest the resources to build up governance structures (Arjona 2016). Weinstein (2006) argues that the behaviour of rebel organisations can be traced back to their initial endowments, which affect their strategies and cost-benefit calculations. These flow from diverse sources, regardless of their type and are differentiated between economic endowments and social endowments. The former is made up from financial resources and the latter from identities and beliefs, however rebel groups are not just exclusively using one or the other. The idea behind this concept is that the reliance on social endowments facilitates a closer cooperation with the civilian population through ideological beliefs and also the shortage of rich financial resources, which makes the rebel group more dependent on a reciprocal relationship. Whereas economic endowments give the group a shorter time horizon and more latitude in the need for civilian cooperation (Weinstein 2006).

One of the scope conditions set by Kasfir (2015) for rebel governance is the existence of a threat of violence, but obviously it can also end when the conflict ends in a loss or a tie. Thereafter the rebel governance ceases to exist, as it is the case with a civil war that ends in the success of the insurgents, because the rebels will turn into the government therefore ending their rebellion. Rebel governance in itself lacks sovereignty (Kasfir 2015). However, in a case where the insurgents take over the government, they face an uphill battle to gain legitimacy and

sovereignty on the international spectrum. There is a debate, on whether the achievement of sovereignty after a civil war and with that transformation to a regular political force, is actually attainable for rebel groups (Weinstein 2006; Kasfir et al. 2017; Stewart 2018).

One line of thought treats rebel groups as legitimate contenders for the control of the state because they organisations in itself are seen as states in the making. However this presumes the absence of all official control and a breakdown of order, therefore power vacuum is created which multiple actors aim to fill through the competition for control (Weinstein 2006). This is a rather unusual circumstance that does not realistically align with the situations that have been observed by scholars and is theoretically rooted in the nation-building and state-making of the Western Hemisphere. Stewart (2018) uses the distinction between secessionist and non-secessionist rebel organisations and argues that secessionist behave differently if they want to be recognised as a suitable government for an independent state that has not existed before with the possibility of gaining international legitimacy. They will use the provision of public goods as a sign of their ability to care for the public without discriminating between supporters and non-supporters. This non-discrimination will be necessary if they are able to create a new state. Non-secessionist groups on the other hand, have only the overthrowing of the existing government in mind and therefore do not have to depend on the provision of public goods (Stewart 2018), although this is a practice that is often adopted by rebel organisations of all kinds that perform rebel governance (Justino 2018). Kasfir et al. (2017) note, that international juridical legitimacy is nearly impossible to obtain for a rebel group. However, this factor usually is not a concern for the public. The civilian population does not take international legitimacy and sovereignty questions into account when they are choosing their allegiance but are rather focused on charismatic and legal-rational sources of legitimacy.

As the previous paragraphs indicated, there is a great variety of rebel governance types and this of course means that not every variety is effective or represents an ideal type. Mampilly (2011) argues that in order to demonstrate effective governance a rebel organisation has to demonstrate the ability to fulfil

three capacities. The first one is the force capability that enables the group to control territory, police the population, and provide security. As mentioned before, this territorial control is necessary for the insurgents to provide other functions and practice governance (Mampilly 2011; Kasfir et al. 2015). Furthermore the rebel group has to develop a functioning resolution mechanism in the territories they control, which provides them with the opportunity to keep the peace in the community, solve disputes, and hold people (including their own members) accountable. This can happen through a formal judicial structure or an ad-hoc system (Mampilly 2011). The NRA in Uganda is an example for the establishment of a good resolution mechanism, through their creation of „Resistance Councils“ where inhabitants could argue their grievances and were encouraged to point out misbehaviour by the group itself (Kasfir 2005; Weinstein 2006; Tidemand 2013). In addition to that the NRA held a public court martial where members were sentenced and punished for their violations to show a level of accountability to the public (Bell 2016). Lastly, the rebel organisation has to show that they possess a capacity that extends beyond the provision of security and that they can offer education and health care in the territories they control (Mampilly 2011).

Although the main concern of the civilians living in those areas is the avoidance of premature death and harm (Weinstein 2006; Arjona 2016), they also care about how they are being governed (Arjona 2016) and want to see predictability for their family, self-preservation, and personal profit (Kasfir 2015). As it is the case with the wide range of rebel governance types, there also exists a broad variety of civilian cooperation with the insurgents. There is no direct need for civilian support for rebel governance to happen (Kasfir 2015), however the rebels fate is tied to the civilians (Weinstein 2006), as an effective governance cannot be administered when the local population refuses to cooperate altogether. Therefore is civilian cooperation and their usage of the introduced structures the difference between effective and ineffective governance, because it shows if the rebel organisation can meet the populations needs and if they feel comfortable and safe in using them (Mampilly 2011; Kasfir 2015). Even though the usually unarmed inhabitants are in a significantly disadvantaged situation than the insurgents regarding the distribution of potential violent force, they can still

influence and derail rebel governance efforts as examples from some communities in Colombia show (Arjona 2016). This also demonstrates that just to rely on coercion is not enough and that for the purpose of gaining viability, the rebel group has to gain some kind of degree of consent from the civilians (Mampilly 2011). However, coercion in some form or another is always present even if it is just an underlying tension. For example the NRA claimed that it abstained from coercion tactics, forced recruitment and that the civilians were always free to leave the area, however there are also reports from inhabitants that felt an unspoken coercion, even though it was not formalised out loud (Schubert 2006). Nevertheless, the reactions of the civilians are important for the process of rebel governance, because they will influence and shape the insurgents behaviour (Kasfir 2015), which brings up the topic of civilian participation.

The engagement of civilians outside of the organisation is an important part of the micropolitics surrounding rebel governance (Weinstein 2006). As mentioned earlier, the participation of the inhabitants is a necessary aspect of an effective governance (Arjona 2016), it will help the rebels to understand the populations' needs and it goes to show that the people are feeling comfortable in interacting with the group, which makes this reciprocal relationship a lot easier. In many instances the civilians will often times also voluntarily participate in the rebel governance structures because it gives them the chance to represent their different interests and most importantly establish alliances that help them to use the system to their social, economic, and political advantage and shape the practices in their favour (Staniland 2012; Kasfir 2015; Justino 2018). All these interactions get formulated and flow through the formal and informal channels of the rebel command, but what determines the quality of the civilian participation is the circumstance of how much co-operation is wanted or encouraged from the insurgents (Kasfir 2015). A good example of encouraged civilian participation are the aforementioned Resistance Councils of the NRA in Uganda. Although such an expansive democratic agenda was not initially included in the ideological foundation of the NRA, the group adapted it out of necessity and encouraged the population to attend the councils and voice their opinions and even criticism of the insurgent group (Ngoga 1997; Kasfir 2005; Tidemand 2013). As mentioned

before, however, the always present sense of coercion limits the influence of the civilian population and construes the perceived freedom and real democratic value of these interactions. Nevertheless, the need for participation for effective governance goes to show that the population has an own agency and not just gets ruled over, to the contrary it has an active voice in the design and execution of the governance structures, albeit with a great variation from case to case. Furthermore, it shows the need for rebel organisations to adapt to changing circumstances and specific requests from the population in their territories. If the groups do not adapt, they risk losing the civilian participation and therefore the ability to conduct effective governance, which ultimately makes it harder to reach their goals.

Another part of rebel governance is the commercial production. As mentioned before, rebel organisations rely on the population for various material reasons and they often live off the food and capital the inhabitants are willing to give to them. In a longer time frame and in more elaborate systems of rebel governance, the organisation can also set up more sophisticated ways of creating revenue which include high-value accessible goods that can be defended or moved more easily in the case of an attack. If and how the rebel group runs the production and whether they organise civilians in it, heavily depends on the nature of the good that is being produced and how labour-intensive it is and how much knowledge is required for the production process. Often times the set up of such revenue streams also happens in congruence with the preferences of the civilians, because in that way they can also take advantage of the market and sell goods they create (Kasfir 2015).

The part of the civilian administration can also take on many forms, depending on whether one is created in the first place, if it based on formal rules or if it has an informal basis. Usually it starts with the latter and moves to something more organised and elaborate as the time goes on. The most common characteristic of a civilian administration in rebel governance is taxation, which initially is the easiest way for insurgents to sustain themselves and it helps to build up a foundation for a more complex administration (Kasfir 2015). Because of its usefulness for the rebel group taxation is one of the most popular ways to extract

money from the community (Weinstein 2006; Mampilly 2011; Kasfir 2015; Arjona 2016), and is also identified by Kasfir (2015) as one of the three traits of insurgents actually practicing rebel governance. The complex system it enables to build extracts more than just taxation and provides more than security in exchange. The variations between the administration lie in the usage of those administrative services that are organised by the rebel organisation by the civilians. One of the determining factors for this is the question, if the inhabitants feel comfortable enough using those services and structures, which relates back to the issue of civilian participation.

In the wake of civilian participation, commercial production, and civilian administration there will be institutions created, which lend themselves for the purpose of governing the population in rebel-held areas and over time they grow to become elaborate systems (Mampilly 2011). If they reach a sufficient size and if the rebel organisation is willing to support it, these institutions can provide public goods to the civilians in the form of health care, infrastructure, economic regulation, education, access to water, local resolution mechanisms, and others (Justino 2018). The provision of public goods and the instalment of such institutions, often times ensures obedience of the civilians towards the rebel group and they are necessary for the insurgents to keep the control over the area and ensure a certain level of cooperation (Arjona 2016; Justino 2018). Furthermore, if the rebel organisations are able to institutionalise the civilian compliance they are encountering, they might gain an advantage in the long run when they might end up in the opposition or even government (Kasfir et al. 2017). These are the long-term effects that might affect the state-building trajectory and have the potential to be turned into a political power. Adding to that is the circumstance that the arrangements and institutions that emerged over the course of rebel governance become ingrained into the social, economic, and political dimensions of the communities that are under rebel control. In that case, this gives the rebel groups a strategic advantage and it strengthens their capacities (Justino 2018). This persistence of the institutional structures gives them even more weight in the post-conflict discourse and has to be regarded in a peace process, because if those structures are not acknowledged in the post-conflict process, it can lead to

renewed violence and a fractured society. However, not only must these institutions be acknowledged, they can also prove to be useful in the post-conflict process. The structures that were developed during the conflict, can be helpful afterwards and translate into practices that further the development of the state-building trajectory. Moreover, to understand this interplay, means also to minimise the risk of another conflict and it will help in dealing with the post-conflict governance. Therefore, it is important to understand how the different actors and the conflict shaped the institutions that emerged during the duration of the war, how they are used, and if they are perceived as legitimate by the population (Mampilly 2011; Justino 2018). Coming back to the central research question and hypothesis of this thesis, the potential that these institutions are perceived as more legitimate and become more ingrained into the society is greater when a rebel organisation can unify a movement and does not have to deal with other groups that may build up institutions on their own, and leave a fractured movement that suffers from in-fighting, which may make the post-conflict process more difficult.

## 3. Theoretical model

### *3.1. Argument*

Combining the concept of rebel governance with the concept of cohesion in rebel groups makes the argument less straightforward and adds more layers. However, it is my opinion that the understanding of rebel governance helps to explain the political weight a group can have and which challenges a non-cohesive organisation can bring.

During civil war, insurgents are likely to create some kind of rebel governance to organise the communities they have under their control. If there are multiple groups participating in the war without a clear leadership by one group and they are possibly competing amongst each other, the populations in the different areas will get to know different governance styles. One of the

consequences of a long conflict will be, especially if the civilians are under the same rebel control for a considerable amount of time, that these governance structures become ingrained into the communities and the population gets used to the way the introduced institutions organise their everyday lives. The issue might become even more complex, when the civilians identify themselves with the ideology of the rebel organisations and become willing supporters of their cause. As Kasfir et al. (2017) note, it is possible if not likely that the populations of rebel-held areas are governed by more actors than one, a concept they introduced as multi-layered governance in civil war. At one point the civilians might be governed by multiple actors that include the rebel organisation, auxiliary forces, external actors, and the state. While this concept can illuminate more on the complications of governance during conflict and is a needed addition to the research on civil war, it would go beyond the scope of this work. For this research, I will concentrate on the single layer of governance executed by rebel organisations, which I believe to be the best approach to this research question.

The predictions about the impacts on the state-building trajectory are made in that way, because the assumption is that a civil war, which does not involve a unified rebel group can not contribute to a positive impact in the post-conflict phase. It will be more difficult to follow an armistice because multiple groups can decide to follow their self-interest and try to continue their struggle. Furthermore, it will be more difficult to negotiate a peace treaty that satisfies all of the parties in the first place, because there are simply more actors involved in the process and therefore more interests to acknowledge (Cunningham 2006). It is important to recognise that the occurrence of more than one rebel group is not unusual, even though research often times conceptualises rebels as one (Fjelde & Nilsson 2012). Connecting to the argument of multiple actors, is the fact that a unified rebel organisation, that either binds together multiple groups or is the lone representative of one, has more political weight and therefore power in the negotiations and the post-conflict phase in itself. If the organisation can plausibly make the case, that it represents a major interest group, its concerns will have to be acknowledged, as it is critical for a post-conflict state to not further the

divisions that a civil war can cause. It will rather have to ease the tensions and see towards building a cohesive country moving forward to ensure a peaceful future.

Merging the argument of cohesiveness with the one of rebel governance, the problems that were presented above are transferred to another layer which is the civilian population. While only using the cohesiveness of a rebel group as a determining factor on the impact on the state-building trajectory provides a possible more straightforward and less complex argument, it would ignore the role that the population has in this proceeding. Limiting this research to one layer would certainly explain cases like the ignoring of an armistice from an organisational point of view, but it would leave out the possible influence the population has through demands and being the driving force behind a political sentiment that needs to be addressed.

In the case of ideological or ethnical identification with the rebel organisation and multiple insurgent actors, civilians also may not find themselves represented properly in a possible post-conflict agreement and may harbour resentments towards the government or other groups. However, if there is the one group that acts as a representative, that a significant part of the civilian population can identify with, it gives it the needed political weight to make a cohesive positive impact. This is not to say that the population of inhabitants that lived under rebel control are a monolith and automatically feel represented by the group, but the fact of having one unified organisation makes it easier to channel the interests and achieve a broad consensus. Furthermore, institutions that were created during the civil war are probably known to more people if there was just one rebel organisation present. Therefore, they have the possibility of being more persistent than multiple institutional structures. As mentioned before, these institutions that were created can be helpful in the post-conflict process (Mampilly 2011; Justino 2018), which point towards a possible positive impact that unified rebel groups can have on the state-building trajectory. Adding to that is the assumption of Kasfir et al. (2017) that the institutionalisation of civilian compliance can prove to be useful for the rebel organisation itself in the post-conflict phase. It will help them at gaining more political weight in their role as either the opposition or as the government and therefore will influence the

political process. Again, this influence would be lost if one would just concentrate on a unified rebel group and leave out the influence they had on the population during the time of an intra-state war. The support and co-operation from the civilians can furthermore be an influence on the rebel organisation, as this often times is a reciprocal relationship, as they can gauge whether or not they have the support and resources available to continue their struggle, should they feel that their demands are not being met or even ignored. On the other hand, the addition of rebel governance can also help to explain the cohesiveness of the population that was under rebel control in itself. If there are multiple groups present with either different agendas or they are not agreeing to form one organisation that includes them all, it can leave behind a fragmented field of political or ethnical factions. These can prove to be a hinderance in the process moving forward and in my predictions will have a negative impact on the state-building trajectory because of it. If these groups were unified, they ideally would speak with one voice and therefore have considerable political weight in the national discourse. Moreover, the presence of one cohesive rebel organisation enhances the chances of rallying around one central theme that not just unifies the group, but also parts of the population. It is possible that this theme is a grievance that many people have with the government and as a consequence can be swayed to support the cause of the rebel group.

Moving away from the negative impacts on state-building by a non-unified rebel organisation, I expect a cohesive rebel group to have a positive impact, because as it was mentioned it can carry a considerable amount of political weight. A successful cohesive rebel group can address issues that led them to challenge the existing government in the first place, can implement institutional structures on a national level that proved to be working during the conflict, and be a representation for the civilians that supported them. Of course, there is the danger that the rebel group converts to authoritarian structures and becomes suppressive towards former opponents or people that disagree with them. However, if they can keep their unity after their successful struggle, the former rebels have a good chance of leading the state in a steady manner and help with building a cohesive post-conflict society.

Even if the civil war ends not with the rebel organisation succeeding but rather in a loss, draw, or an agreement to end the conflict, it is possible for them to realise a positive impact on the state-building trajectory. They quite likely will not achieve all of their goals on their agenda, but can impact the future of the state through political compromises and institutional changes that carry over from the time of the conflict. A unified rebel organisation, can aim to become a legitimate political actor in the post-conflict period and through this continue to represent their cause and the civilians that support them. The circumstance of this transformation actually happening, (Stanley 2006; Allison 2010; Chávez 2015) furthermore shows the possible impact a unified rebel organisation can have beyond the conflict. Even if the rebel group should not become a political party in the aftermath, a broad alliance can still signify to the state that there are some grievances held by the public opinion that were either not addressed or actively fostered. Those need to be reconciled if the state wants to avoid another rebellion and if it wants to build a cohesive structure in the population for the future.

Because of the reasons laid out above, it is my assumption that rebel governance and the cohesiveness of a rebel organisation are intertwined and that the merging of the concepts helps it gain more explanatory power. It is the ambition of this research to present the intersections of rebel governance with a cohesive rebel organisation, to demonstrate the complexity but also interplay of these two concepts.

### *3.2. Predictions*

<b>Practiced rebel governance</b>	
<b>Unified/cohesive rebel group</b>	positive impact/order
<b>Non unified/cohesive group/multiple groups</b>	negative impact/no order

*Table 1: Predictions about the impact of the unity of a rebel group on the state-building trajectory defined by order*

## 4. Method

### *4.1. Process-tracing*

I will use the approach of process-tracing for the analysis of the case because it allows for the identification of a causal process between the independent variable (cohesiveness of a rebel group) and the outcome of the dependent variable (order). This method also makes it possible to test theories with multiple interaction effects (George & Bennett, 2005).

The method of process-tracing fits the research that is being conducted in this thesis, because it allows us to follow causal processes between the independent and dependent variables over time. Therefore it is useful to test the hypothesis, that the cohesiveness of a rebel group has an impact on the state-building trajectory in the form of order, because it will give an insight into these relationships before and after the civil war. Even though the theorised link between cohesiveness and order heavily strips away other influences that affect the outcome of order, there are still multiple interaction effects that have to be accounted for. For example this is the case for rebel governance, which in this work is considered a constant but nevertheless is hypothesised to have an impact on the outcome. Process-tracing allows to recognise these multiple interaction effects, even though one still has to be wary of the limitations of the study and more possible independent variables that were left out in this research but may still have an effect on the dependent variable. As George & Bennett (2005) note, most phenomena are characterised by a complex causality that is not just one independent variable with an effect on one dependent variable. Many causal variables interact with each other and are not independent on their own, which also creates the opportunity to discover various interaction effects. To investigate the possible complex interaction effects that are linked to unified rebel organisations and state-building, that were not defined in the theory, goes beyond

the scope of this thesis. However, pointing them out can aid future research into these linkages and can be used as a jumping-off point.

During the analysis it is crucial to always be led by the hypothesis and research question, when one is systematically examining the diagnostic evidence that is produced from the cases. (Collier 2011). This will help to adequately and convincingly argue for the causal links between the variables, because ideally these will be evident in each step. Therefore process-tracing has to be highly specific, offer a detailed narrative of how the event came about and how it unfolded over time (George & Bennett 2005; Collier 2011). The foundation for this narrative lays in the careful description of the theory and the assumed causal links between the variables, which should be the guiding light of the analysis. Especially important is hereby the background knowledge of the topic, because through this it is possible to formulate a careful, analytically informed specification of the hypothesis (Collier 2011). In this case it is the described relationship between the cohesiveness of rebel organisations and the state-building trajectory defined by order. The steps and causal links are described in the chapters above and will serve as the analytical lens through which the evidence from the cases will be examined. This process will convert the historical narrative of the cohesiveness of rebel groups and their impact on order in the post-conflict society into an analytical causal explanation (George & Bennett 2005).

Furthermore, the application of process-tracing for this thesis is suitable because it is used to analyze trajectories of change and causation (Collier 2011), which are part of the scope of this research. The intent is to investigate how the cohesiveness of rebel organisations changes the state-building trajectory that is defined here as order. As mentioned before, order is seen as the existence or absence of conflict. To retrace this trajectory, process-tracing is very well suited as it demands to exactly describe the causal steps and therefore analyse and explain the dynamics of change. Through this detailed knowledge it will be possible to gain insight into the causal mechanisms of this dynamic (Collier 2011) and lay the foundation to understanding the impact rebel governance combined with the cohesiveness of a rebel group has on the state-building trajectory.

Even though quantitative data can also be used with the method of process-tracing (George & Bennett 2005; Collier 2011), during this research I will rely on qualitative data for my analysis. These will include articles and other research on the various conflicts described by the universe of cases and how their post-conflict phases turned out. The reliance on qualitative data enables me to get a detailed insight into the dynamics of the respective conflicts and rebel organisations, and examine the causal linkages. This added insight gives this thesis a inferential leverage that is often times lacking when one only relies on quantitative data (Collier 2011). Furthermore, it will allow me to look into the circumstance if the cohesiveness or non-cohesiveness of rebel organisations caused the impact on the state-building trajectory or if some cases were just coincidence and for example the split of a rebel organisation or the existence of multiple rebel groups had no influence on the continuation of the conflict.

## *4.2. Observable implications*

If the theory that rebel group cohesiveness contributes to state-building in the form of post-conflict order is to be validated, there are a number of parts that have to be observed in the conflict itself and most importantly in the post-conflict phase. The listed expected observations can be present (for a positive impact) or absent (for a negative impact) and therefore there is no additional differentiation between those outcomes in this section.

During the conflict I expect there to be instances that will serve as indicators for the rebel group cohesiveness in the subsequent post-conflict phase, some of the these observations are compatible, while others are mutually exclusive.

### *(i) Unified rebel organisation*

This observation casts a rather wide net, but in the context of an ongoing civil war I define it as the ability of a rebel organisation to act in a centralised and coordinated manner. Various characteristics of this observation are possible. First,

the members of the group have to act in the manner that is outlined by the organisation, this presumes that there exists such an outline, and that no constant and widespread deviations of this conduct occur. Another possibility is that the insurgents are able to centrally organise their combat actions and therefore present themselves in a cohesive way. The uniform execution of the orders given indicate that the structures and the chain of command inside of the group are well defined and accepted by the members. It is an important sign for a rebel organisation, because it constitutes its ability to keep the members in line and the willingness to follow the groups outline is an indicator for future cohesiveness. However, should insurgents consistently disregard the orders or ideology of their organisation, it is a sign for fragmentation inside of the group, which can lead to other problems (splinter groups, indiscipline etc.) further down the line. Therefore, the existence of these characteristics should be observed in the case of a negative impact on state-building.

#### *(ii) Sole representation*

In most cases rebel organisations follow a certain ideology or cause, that they are trying to articulate and enforce against the government they are staging an insurgency against. Sole representation can be observed when one group is the only one connected to the cause and therefore can credibly claim to be the single representative for it. Nevertheless, it is possible that one cause spawns more than one rebel group that is willing to take up arms for it. In this case, cohesiveness can hinge upon the fact whether the respective groups can come together as either one or under the umbrella of one organisation (*observation iii*), or if they are not able to join and fight each other. In the latter case there exists the possibility of one group eliminating all of its contenders and therefore remaining as the sole representation for the cause. Furthermore, being the only agent can also occur in the instance of a rebellion that is based on ethnicity.

Sole representation is expected to be observable in the case of a positive impact on the state-building trajectory defined by order after the conflict. Furthermore, this can be combined with the observation of an unified rebel organisation, as the group that acts as the lone representative should also act in

such a manner. However, when more than one group or umbrella organisation represent the same cause in the peace negotiations or post-conflict phase, a negative impact on state-building should be expected.

*(iii) Joining under an umbrella group*

The scenario described above, where multiple rebel groups adopt a cause they are aiming to represent, can either result in inter-rebel fighting until one remains, forming a coalition with a common cause, or joining under an umbrella group. The latter occurs when multiple organisations unite under one movement to harness their strengths and resources. Following the theory, this should be observable in case of rebel group cohesiveness because through this kind of merger the umbrella organisation will be the sole representation for the cause.

As it is the case for the sole representation observation, this should be expected to occur in the case of a positive impact on post-conflict order. The groups would act as one in peace negotiations and therefore promote cohesiveness.

*(iv) Multiple groups present*

A civil war can involve a plethora of rebel groups that not necessarily have to be connected to the same cause, but are rather responding to different opportunities that represent itself. This can lead to complications in peace agreement negotiations or in the post-conflict phase, since groups that did not achieve victory or feel like they are left out can take up arms again. Furthermore, they may not feel particularly bound to any agreements that were made and just the fact that more actors mean more variables and therefore more possibilities for destabilising the order in the post-conflict phase. In the case of a negative impact, the existence of multiple groups should be a possible observation around the end of the war and after the conflict.

### 4.3. Operationalisation

*Rebel governance.* Rebel governance is a constant in this theory and therefore has to be practiced by the organisation, for a case to qualify. It is constituted by a rebel group organising civilians living in an area occupied by rebels for a public purpose, with the purpose being civilian participation, provision of civilian administration, or organisation of civilians for significant material gain (Kasfir 2015). For this thesis it is sufficient that the insurgents engage in activities that organise the communal life in the areas over which they have territorial control. These can be used to for example extract resources from the inhabitants, distributing public goods, or regulating economic activities.

*Order.* The dependent variable order is operationalised as the absence of a civil war in the post-conflict phase. It is also the measurement for state-building in this thesis, as it shows the ability of the state to move past the conflict and continue on the state-building trajectory in peace. Civil war was defined earlier through Kalyvas (2006) as armed combat within the boundaries of one country, that the opposing parties are also originating from. The armed combat hereby qualifies as war, when there occur 1,000 battle-related combatant deaths per year among the opposing parties. Furthermore, the fighting has to be sustained and carried out by organised actors that are able to conjure up effective resistance (Sarkees & Wayman 2010). Therefore, smaller flare-ups are tolerable to still recognise order, as are smaller, sporadic attacks carried out from groups that may have been reduced down to terrorist organisations.

*Rebel group cohesiveness/unity.* Cohesiveness/Unity is the independent variable and it is operationalised as the rebel group acting as one unit without any major deviations from other significant parts of the organisation. As it was elaborated in the observable implications, this can include multiple rebel groups coming together under an umbrella group or forming a coalition of like-minded groups (see *i*, *ii*). For these kind of characteristics applies the same operationalisation as for the single rebel organisation. A situation does not qualify for cohesiveness/

unity, if there are multiple groups present that do not share the same objective and/or did not form a coalition. Furthermore, if there is an open challenge for the leadership or direction of the group, the situation does not qualify as being cohesiveness.

#### *4.4. Case selection*

El Salvador and Uganda were both ravaged by civil wars that cost the lives of many people, both combatants and civilians, and destroyed large parts of the country and its infrastructure. However, the parties in El Salvador managed to negotiate a peace agreement that all those involved (mostly) respected and the country was able to avoid violence in the form of a civil war ever since. While the rebel organisation NRA won the war in Uganda, it was not able to bring the country to peace, but rather had to fight multiple insurgencies after the war ended in 1986. These are the two cases I analyse in the most detail for this thesis, with shorter analysis being provided for a selection of cases that are mentioned in Figure 2. I will argue, that the rebel group cohesiveness played an important role in determining the prospects of order in the post-conflict phase and that one should expect a positive impact on the state-building if a rebel organisation can demonstrate cohesiveness during that time.

The selected cases demonstrate various degrees of cohesiveness and different outcomes after the civil war has ended. While the majority represent instances in which the rebel group lost or entered in a peace agreement, some do also contain organisations that were able to win the conflict and form the new government. First I will consider the case of El Salvador, which falls in the former category. Five rebel groups joined under the umbrella organisation FMLN and conducted a civil war that ended in a stalemate and consequently in a negotiated agreement. One of the results was the agreed-upon transformation from rebel group to political party of the FMLN, the democratisation of the state structures, and the de-militarisation of the state. Since the peace agreements came into effect, El Salvador did not witness another civil war. Next I will consider the case of Uganda, which I rank in the section of a negative impact on state-building. The

NRA won the war, but could not deliver on its promises of overcoming ethnic cleavages, as it struggled to integrate a large influx of members. Thereafter, the country had to cope with an immediate insurgency by a group consisting of mainly Acholi people and had to struggle with a multitude of rebel organisations ever since.

<b>Practiced rebel governance</b>	
<b>Unified rebel group</b>	Eritrea Ethiopia Liberia Sri Lanka Mozambique Peru El Salvador Indonesia Guatemala Sierra Leone
<b>No unified group/multiple groups</b>	Uganda Somalia Sudan Angola Chad

*Table 2: Universe of cases*

## 5. Limitations

As it was alluded to a few times now, this research does not take into consideration all the different independent variables that are possible when it comes to the relationship between state-building and rebel group cohesiveness. It relies on the dependent variable order to build a more straightforward argument and stay inside the scope of this thesis. The ambition is, that this work can be used as a foundation for future research into this topic because as Arjona (2016) mentioned, the impact of the legacies of civil war on the state-building trajectory are not sufficiently researched. Moreover, the concept of multi-level rebel governance that was introduced by Kasfir et al. (2017) could have been included

into the theoretical framework but was left out because it would go beyond the scope of this thesis. Kasfir et al. mentioned that the single layer approach is easier to handle for analytical purposes because it creates a less crowded and more straightforward analysis. However, including this approach in future research would clear up the different roles and impacts the various actors have on the state-building trajectory and give a more nuanced picture. Furthermore, the thesis does not intend to research the impact the rebel organisations had on the public discourse, even though I consider the political power of the rebel organisations and its supporters, among other things, important for their impact on the state-building trajectory. However, this circumstance would be an intriguing research subject in the future and again, it is one of the aims of this thesis to contribute to it.

Another obvious limitation of this research is the reliance on secondary literature, even though it is not as crucial for this thesis to conduct own data collection. My ambition is to overcome this limitation through the choosing of variables that are not as difficult to observe by studying already conducted research. The extent of rebel governance is something that is harder to gauge when judging from secondary literature, however to fulfil the constant of rebel governance an organisation only had to conduct any kind of governance. This characteristic is easier to identify through the operationalisation and definition of rebel governance earlier.

Although this thesis is limited in its scope and layers, the ambition is to provide quality research that will serve as a jumping-off point for future inquiries and help understanding the relationship between rebel group cohesiveness and order.

## 6. Analysis

### *6.1. Unified rebel groups - a juvenile success?*

#### *6.1.1. El Salvador*

The case of El Salvador is a model type of multiple groups joining together as one to advance their cause through a unified organisation, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). It was an umbrella group under which five leftist guerilla organisations joined forces in 1980: the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL), the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), the National Resistance, the Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers, and the Communist Party of El Salvador (Chávez 2015; Hoover Green 2017). It signified the merger of the Old and the New Left and was a significant moment for the unity of the leftist movements in El Salvador. However, not everything went perfect for the organisation because the merging of the groups brought in many different opinions and socialisations (Chávez 2015; Hoover Green 2017). Chávez (2015) describes this trait as being the biggest strength but also weakness of the movement, because it could draw upon a wealth of human resources and capital, it had the majority of the urban and rural leftist intellectual population on its side, had important national and international connections, a vast intellectual knowledge base, and pragmatism. These strengths notwithstanding, it often times came to disagreements in the FMLN leadership on political and strategical issues (Chávez 2015).

The civil war started officially in 1980 as a response to the longstanding unequal and repressive economic, social, and political system in El Salvador. The land that could be used for agriculture, which consisted mostly of coffee production, was in the hands of a few powerful landowners, who used the labor force of the rural poor population. Inequality between the classes was perpetuated through the relationship of the economic elite with the military, with the former using the military force to repress any protests by the rural population. Any

attempts to inspire change were immediately shut down by this alliance and were not taken seriously, rather the elite was condescending towards the workers and held increasingly dangerous anti-communism beliefs (Wood 2003). The result of this political climate was that, even before the start of the civil war, thousands of people died through violent attacks of the military and security forces (Peceny & Stanley 2010; Snodgrass Godoy 2018). As the violence escalated, more people joined the rebel groups and many more from the rural poor population decided to support the rebels, which created the aforementioned broad support base for the rebel organisation. Most of the supporters and combatants for the FMLN came from the rural poor population, around one third of this group actively supported the organisation, while just little support came from the middle class and obviously the Salvadorian elite actively resisted the efforts of the group (Wood 2003). The state received not just support from the economic elite, but was also sponsored by billions of dollars from the U.S. government, as it tried to repress the rise of communism around the world and especially in Latin America. The United States not only helped the government of El Salvador out with financial resources. In addition to this they deployed military personnel which was supposed to provide intelligence to the Salvadorian military and train their troops. Despite the support of the U.S. government and their intention to perform a transition to a democratic state once the threat of the FMLN was resolved, the Salvadorian state was not interested in „clean counter-insurgency“ efforts and bringing about the democratic change. Even though the state received this massive support from the U.S., their military performance remained sub-par and they made decisive mistakes throughout the course of the civil war. For example often times the military could not make use of the intelligence they received from the U.S., they launched obvious offenses that gave the rebels time to evacuate, and they were not able to anticipate attacks carried out by the rebels (Stanley 2006). This poor performance can also be partially connected to the fact that, many state soldiers did not receive proper training in human rights or civilian relations and even more importantly, many were forcibly recruited through coercion and sometimes even abductions (Hoover Green 2017). This gave the Salvadorian military a corps, which was not well trained, not convinced by the cause they were

fighting for, and with a low morale. Moreover, the state was notorious for their so-called death squads, that carried out assassinations, indiscriminate violence, and terrorised the population. After the conflict ended an implemented Truth Commission determined that over 85% of the human rights violations that happened during the civil war were committed by state forces and just 5% by the rebel group (Wood 2003; Chávez 2015).

### *Rebel governance*

During the time of the conflict the FMLN held large parts of the country and in them regulated access to resources and other public goods. Nearly one third of the El Salvador was occupied by fronts, with the territorial control over the country being nearly split in half between the state and the rebels (Chávez 2011). The rebel group effectively contested the sovereignty of the state and in the areas that were controlled by them the rebel organisation executed sovereignty (Wood 2003; Chávez 2015), as much as one can during a civil war. Military officials disputed that the FMLN ever had territorial control over areas, however the organisation controlled departments in the northern, north-central and north-eastern parts of the country and was the only visible party there (Wood 2003). This put some additional pressure on the state and added to the FMLN's power. Furthermore, the rebels did seize production sites and farms that formerly belonged to the wealthy landowners and civilians founded cooperatives that were then tasked with running these businesses. The rebels did not discriminate as to who could participate in those cooperatives, as long as the civilians did not give out information to the opposition. In some rebel-held areas agrarian property rights, land use, and civil society were transformed through the insurgents and nationally the political, economic, and social landscape changed (Wood 2003). Therefore, it is safe to say that the FMLN engaged in rebel governance in the areas it controlled, with the most notable impact being the founding of cooperatives and the seizing of former property of the landowners.

The supporters of the FMLN were not a homogenic group and had no clear common connection to the struggle, which is why Wood (2003) thinks of the

broad support base as perplexing and tries to find the common link that elicited the popularity of the FMLN. The support for the rebels is puzzling not just because of the heterogeneity of the population, but also because it was tied to a high risk and possible low benefits. The past decades, and arguably the last century, in El Salvador have shown the lower classes time and time again that there is no pay-off in campaigning for changes in the system and that any attempt to reform will be squashed by force. Furthermore, other common reasons like protection from the state forces, selective incentives, or preexisting social networks do not fit for the case of El Salvador. First of all, the FMLN was not able to protect the population in the areas under their control from government attacks. Moreover, the organisation did not offer selective but rather public goods and did not discriminate in their provision between supporters and non-supporters. This created the opportunity for the other two thirds of the population who did not actively support the FMLN to „free ride“ and profit off the provisions without the risk of being punished by the government. Social networks were not strong enough at that time to sustain a collective uprising because they were weakened through previous migration and the concentration of land into the hands of a few wealthy landowners. Nevertheless, the population may have been bound together by their common discontent with the social and economic inequality, which could have served as a „hidden transcript“ (Wood 2003). The FMLN was able to tap into that shared discontent, which was then further fanned by the repressive efforts in the 1970s and helped the rebel organisation at gaining an influx of supporters and combatants.

### *Cohesion and support during war*

Even though the two biggest groups, the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL), the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), under the umbrella of the FMLN had different strategies when it came to the socialisation of their members, it is apparent that they valued political education. At the beginning of the war the ERP and FPL had significant differences in their approach to political education and these were attributed to differences in combatant behaviour. These early contrasts

notwithstanding, the education material was later unified and new recruits received the same training, even if ideological differences still remained between the two groups. (Hoover Green 2017). The political education had the purpose of ensuring that their combatants know the ideological cause they are fighting for and conduct themselves in a manner that is coherent with the rebel organisations beliefs. However, this socialisation may not have shaped the truly-held beliefs of their members but rather their behaviour, so that they would represent the rebel organisation properly in public. Nonetheless, the political education helped the combatants to see themselves as part of a political movement and express their commitments through their work (Hoover Green 2017). It becomes evident that political education was a priority of the FMLN, as for example the fighters of the ERP were given lessons on the history of El Salvador and as a second step were taught Marxist principles. These teachings were conducted through the forms of direct instructions, mandatory meetings, or structured conversations about the meaning and sense of the war. The FPL kept a more lenient approach to the lessons and installed fewer direct instructions, more semi-structured conversations and was less formalised in the grand scheme of things (Hoover Green 2017).

Even though the FMLN invested a lot into the political education of its members, many recruits already had ideological beliefs that matched the ones of the rebel organisation, which was the reason why they joined the group in the first place. As Weinstein (2006) would note, the combatants also were not enticed by a quick pay-off with a short time horizon, because the FMLN did not pay its fighters (Hoover Green 2017). Adding to that, is the fact that especially in the beginning joining the struggle was a high risk endeavour with little chance of succeeding. Some combatants also described their involvement in the struggle as self-defense because of the violence they experienced earlier through the forces of the state (Snodgrass Godoy 2018). All these circumstances show that, despite some differences between the individual groups, the FMLN was a cohesive rebel organisation with a shared set of principles and concentration on their main ideological goal. They merged together through their same experiences of repression and social and economic inequality, and led an uprising against the economic elite of El Salvador. After initial disagreements on the type of conflict

they want to engage in and on their vision for the country in the case they should be successful in their struggle, the five groups formed an organisation that was united and acted as one (Allison & Alvarez 2012; Allison 2016; Sprenkels 2018). While there remained certain differences because the groups still retained their own structures, leaders, recruiting, and finances, the FMLN remained highly cohesive from 1983 through the end of the peace negotiations. It was just when the common enemy subsided, that some of the divisions became more pronounced although there was also an agreement to let these rest until after the 1994 election (Sprenkels 2018).

Furthermore, it becomes clear that the FMLN also saw itself as a political movement and that their actions as combatants served a political purpose. This characterisation was easy to realise as the rebel group could count on a broad base of support, which included a vast intellectual knowledge base and one third of the poor rural population as active supporters. This gave the rebel group not just a wealth of human and material resources but also gave it a significant political weight, that was not to be defeated easily.

This became glaringly obvious in November 1989, when the FMLN launched a massive offensive on the capital San Salvador and was able to occupy parts of the city for a few days, including the wealthy neighbourhoods. Previously the government and the U.S. believed (at least publicly), that the rebels were weakened to the point where they were deemed mostly irrelevant. This attack made it clear, that the FMLN could still draw upon their wealth of resources and manage to launch successful attacks that hurt the state and especially the Salvadorian elite. Moreover, the state reacted by carrying out the killing of six Jesuit priests, which was the reason for the U.S. government to suspend all their military and monetary support, which in turn left the Salvadorian government in an especially weak state (Wood 2003; Chávez 2015; Hoover Green 2017). The rebel organisation had become what Wood (2003) calls an „insurgent counter-elite“, a group that has to be respected and negotiated with, if the conflict is supposed to end. Afterwards both parties approached the UN for mediation talks, which set off the process towards a peace agreement. In these talks the FMLN was able to negotiate from a position of power because of their latest military

achievements and their history of being able to neutralize the state's counter-insurgency efforts (Chávez 2015). Moreover, this massive offensive and its effective resistance against the military showed that the FMLN acted as a cohesive organisation that was able to plan attacks accordingly and was able to execute them in an organised manner. Such a large-scale offensive is not a result of a spontaneous decision, but rather has to be carefully planned in advance. The success of it can be used as evidence that the group was still united and that the members effectively executed the orders they were given.

### *Cohesion during the post-war period*

The resolution of the conflict was possible, because both parties realized that their opponents changed and that a path towards democracy was possible through the negotiation of a peace treaty. The FMLN moved away from its goal of achieving military victory and from its Marxist-Leninist views to a democratic socialist approach. While the government represented by the political party ARENA moved away from its former death squad connections. Furthermore, the Salvadorian economic elite came to the conclusion, that it was not in their best interest to stick to their repressive and coercive practices of the past and allow the FMLN to enter the political sphere as a legitimate party (Peceny & Stanley 2001; Chávez 2015). The rebel organisation made use of their strength as pragmatists as their leaders, which consisted of radicalized Catholics, social democrats, intellectuals, and activists, abandoned the more radical Marxist-Leninist principles of the individual groups and moved toward a democratic socialist ideology. This was a continuation of their strategy throughout the war, as they modified their objectives and politics in the way the war was going. Through their embrace of these democratic principles they probably spared the country a long continued conflict and changed the fortunes of the FMLN from the outside looking into the democratic process to being part of the electoral arena (Chávez 2015). This was one of the signs for the government of El Salvador and the United States, that the FMLN embedded into the democratic system would no longer pose a threat to

convert the state into a communist regime and therefore could be trusted in the negotiations.

Support for seeking a peaceful solution was widespread among the ranks of the FMLN, especially the elite, and there was no refusal to negotiate by any of the individual groups (Allison & Alvarez 2012). Nevertheless, there existed varying opinions on the peace process, since some thought that a negotiated exit was not in the plans of the revolution. Therefore, most of the members were divided between three point of views. One saw the peace process as necessary but the revolution in turn incomplete, another perceived the the peace process to be more or less equal to the attaining of the revolution, and the final one saw the demise of the revolution in the peace process. The leadership and the elite of the FMLN was split between the first to perceptions, while the opinions of middle-ranking and rank-and-file members were divided among all three (Sprenkels 2018). Even though there were varying opinions on the peace process, the FMLN was still cohesive and united throughout. This was also possible due to the ability of the leadership to convince the rank-and-file members that the peace agreement was the best attainable outcome and that it was worth of their sacrifice. Consequently, there were no major losses of members as a response to the peace agreement and most of the leaders and militants stayed on board right after (Allison & Alvarez 2012). Their pragmatic strength to build one cohesive unit, despite some differences, helped the organisation to be recognised as a respectable force throughout the war and the peace negotiations. Although future tensions regarding the direction of the newly founded political party were already on the horizon, the group was able to table discussions about this until after the negotiations and even 1994 elections. This provided the FMLN with a unified voice during the bargaining for a peace deal as it acted as the sole representative for the cause, which provided the internal and external calmness to avoid major dissent.

During the peace process both parties had to make concessions to find common ground. As a result of the 18 months-long negotiations the FMLN agreed to disarm, demobilise, enter the political arena as a party, and accept the private property rights reform that was put in place shortly before the start of the civil war. On the other hand the state agreed to a limited military mandate, the

disbanding of the security forces, founding of a new civilian police, and strengthening the judicial and electoral system, and some land transfers to the demobilised (Peceny & Stanley 2001; Wood 2003; Stanley 2006; Chávez 2015; Allison 2016). The socioeconomic issues that set off the conflict notably were not discussed, as the FMLN realised that, despite their latest impressive military offensives, they had limited leverage in the negotiations and had to make compromises (Wood 2003; Stanley 2006; Chávez 2015). As a result of the peace agreement that was signed on the 16th January of 1992, the oligarchic repressive regime was upended and the military faded into political insignificance. However, since the socioeconomic issues remained untouched, the government with the support of the United States implemented a neoliberal policy agenda, including structural adjustment programmes (Stanley 2006). The peace treaty and ceasefire were generally respected, even though there was a short crisis when a secret weapon stash of the FMLN in Nicaragua exploded and the rebel group had to admit that they did not disarm completely and had hidden some of their remaining weapons. Thereafter the FMLN surrendered all of its weapons, as it did not want to jeopardize its transformation into a political party (Peceny & Stanley 2001; Wood 2003; Chávez 2015). During the disarmament it was apparent that the leadership had a good command over their troops, as there were reports about the combatants giving up their weapons after they were ordered to do so over the radio (CEAM 1992). After the incident with the hidden stash both parties complied with the conditions of the treaty and the demilitarisation wrapped up while the FMLN completed its transformation from a Marxist-Leninist rebel organisation to a democratic socialist political party.

In the lead-up to and especially after the election in 1994, the tensions that were subdued in the FMLN during the conflict and peace negotiations came to light again. Mostly they revolved around the question, what kind of political party the former rebel organisation wants to be. The ERP and RN aimed for a more moderate course, since they believed that the main goal of the revolution was achieved and that the group now has to move away from its revolutionary ways to turn in a good performance at the polls. After the FMLN was founded as a political party by statute in 1993, it was still divided in five sub-groups that

represented the former individual rebel organisations. This was implemented, with the intention that not a single group could dominate the others by itself and that all had the same voting rights internally (Allison & Alvarez 2012). For the presidential election the two groups wanted to nominate a centre-right candidate that they believed would be the best fit to further pursue the reforms, a proposal that did not go over well with the rest of the FMLN fractions. Ultimately, the party chose a different candidate, that neither the ERP or the RN preferred, and lost in the run-off election for president. Nevertheless, with the second best result the former rebel group established itself as the main opposition party. Following the first election as a political party, the ERP and RN split from the FMLN and founded their own party the Partido Demócrata (Democratic Party, PD) together. This was the result of their disagreements concerning the political direction of the former rebel group, as the two continued on their centre course, away from the once far-left revolutionary organisation. Further down the line this strategy did not prove to be successful for the PD as they performed poorly in elections and the FMLN continued on their course of being one of the top two political parties in the country (Allison 2016). Those events in the post-conflict phase show, that the FMLN was not free of internal discontent and divisions, however it was able to overcome those, at least in the period of the peace negotiations and immediate phase thereafter. The party was reasonable enough to put their ideological differences on hold until the peace treaty was agreed upon and the first elections were conducted. Consequently, the former rebels were able to ensure their organisations cohesiveness and therefore keep the country in a stable and peaceful position. It would be fair to point out that the FMLN was not unified or cohesive, as the ERP and RN separated themselves from it shortly after the 1994 elections. However, my argument is that the party was cohesive, since it was able to convince the overwhelming majority of its members of the importance of the peace negotiations, kept them together throughout, and performed reasonably well in the election. The split also just came after the organisation demobilised, the conflict had ended nearly 3 years before, and the divisions never revolved around the question if the FMLN should again engage in armed combat. Therefore, I consider the state of the group as cohesive during the post-conflict phase.

In the years after the conflict ended the FMLN rose to be one of the two dominating political parties in El Salvador, alongside ARENA. They developed a positive reputation for effective municipal governance, internally democratising, and broadening their electoral base (Stanley 2006), and in 2009 even won the presidential elections. A study from Allison (2010) showed that in the 1994 elections, the first after the end of the war, the FMLN fared better municipally in formerly controlled areas and in former conflict zones. These results suggest that in the areas in that the FMLN practiced rebel governance, the population had mostly positive experiences with the insurgents, or at least liked their practices and structures more than those implemented by the state.

It can be summarised that the civil war caused significant and profound changes in the state-building trajectory of El Salvador. It caused political, social, and economic changes that were not believed to be possible in the oligarchic society before the conflict. However, as the socioeconomic issues were not addressed in the peace negotiations, El Salvador still suffers from a high level of social and economic inequality (Stanley 2006; Chávez 2015). Nevertheless, the country is substantially more democratic than in the time before the war and actually has a stable democratic system that successfully and without major incidents executed several elections. Furthermore, the judicial system shed its highly partisan and corrupt past, and the state put the National Counsel for the Defense of Human Rights into place. It is used to investigate human rights violations in El Salvador and after a slow start it began to conduct more active investigations and gain a relatively high public approval rating (Stanley 2006). In the same context was frustration about the inability of the judicial system to pursue charges against military personnel that was known to be involved in human rights violations. Only a few days after the Truth Commission issued its report about the human rights violations, the Salvadorian legislature issued amnesty towards the perpetrators (Snodgrass Godoy 2018). At the very least, over a hundred military officers were deemed to be unfit to serve under democratic rule and were released from the forces. These actions expedited the process of demilitarisation since the personnel that followed did not have the political connections and power that the former officers had (Stanley 2006).

The most important result for the country and the people of El Salvador is the fact that the peace was kept and that no new civil war occurred. The conflict that spanned over 12 years left deep physical, psychological, and material wounds as it was one of the most devastating conflicts during that time, considering the size of El Salvador (Wood 2003). Therefore, the fact that the country and the political landscape could witness several peaceful transitions of power is a major accomplishment and lends itself as a positive development on the trajectory of the state. However, a consistent problem is the crime rate in El Salvador, which is one of the highest in the world (Hoover Green 2017; OSAC 2018) and is perceived as the most dangerous threat to democracy by the population (Call 2003). One of the deciding factors for the persistent peace, and therefore the fulfilment of the dependent variable „order“, was the transformation from the rebel organisation FMLN to a political party. Through their uniform willingness to change from their militant ways to an actor that takes part in the democratic political process, it was possible to sign and respect a peace treaty. The party lost its revolutionary character in the process, but was able and willing to (eventually) demilitarise and encourage their members to comply by the signed agreement. Moreover, the fact that the former rebel group was able to establish itself as one of the main parties in El Salvador seems to support the hypothesis that a cohesive group can wield significant political power and represent the interests of a notable part of the population. Internally, the circumstance that the FMLN had a mostly uniform ideology and prioritised political education for their combatants certainly played a great role in keeping their organisation in compliance and cohesive. The case of El Salvador is surely a poster child of case when it comes to the impact of rebel group cohesiveness on the state-building trajectory defined by order, but it shows the importance of being unified in a cause, adapting ones objectives, and keeping that unity in the post-conflict phase.

## *6.2. Non-unified/multiple rebel groups - calamity's child?*

### *6.2.1. Uganda*

The case of Uganda shows that, even though a group in itself can be unified, if it has to simultaneously contend with other rebel organisations in the country, it has a negative effect on the state-building trajectory defined by order. The National Resistance Army (NRA) started out in 1981 as a fairly small group of people, who carried out guerilla attacks on government targets and over time grew into a major rebel organisation that controlled a large territory and set up democratic structures in it. However, since Uganda gained independence just a couple of decades ago and was ruled by a dictator for the last 8 years, more than one group saw the opportunity for an uprising. The civil war officially ended in 1986 but the pattern of other rebel groups challenging the status quo would continue on. Multiple organisations renewed the fighting for reasons ranging from ethnic, religious to political grievances (Day 2011).

Initially the NRA started out after the end of the brutal dictatorship of Idi Amin, who took over the government after a coup in 1971 and then implemented a repressive state system, eliminated opponents, and suspended all political institutions (Weinstein 2006). During Amin's reign an estimated 50,000 to 300,000 people were killed and the economy also suffered tremendously in those years. His dictatorship ended in 1979 after a military mistake in Tanzania and this plunged Uganda in further political chaos. Elections were held in 1980 after which Milton Obote was declared the winner and therefore President of Uganda, however Yoweri Museveni, who would later found the NRA, believed that the elections were rigged and Obote not the rightful winner (Weinstein 2006). This led Museveni to recruit 26 fighters who at first carried out small guerilla attacks on military posts to collect more arms and show their presence. In the following years the NRA grew rapidly, even though it was a high-risk endeavour in the early stages, and the rebel organisation was able to control the Luwero Triangle.

### *Rebel governance*

In this area north of the capital Kampala, which had a population of roughly 200,000, the rebel organisation implemented rebel governance through various structures and institutions, the most prominent being the Resistance Councils. In those councils the inhabitants could take part in the processes and decisions involving the area, speak about problems they might have with the insurgents, and in general have a setting in which they could voice their opinions on various topics (Kasfir 2005; Weinstein 2006; Tidemand 2013). This wide-ranging democratic participation was not part of the original NRA ideology, but was rather something that was implemented over time according to the changing principles (Kasfir 2005). However, after the rebel organisation made the commitment to the civilian participation it became an integral part in their ideology and was most of the time consequently executed. The instances in which the NRA abandoned their commitment to civilian participation happened when the government forces forced their retreat out of the Luwero triangle and the rebel group had to choose between their military survival or the temporary suspension of the democratic structures. The Resistance Councils also had the effect that the rebels were not directly responsible for some of the decisions made during those meetings and therefore could deflect some of the blame for negative outcomes (Kasfir 2005).

The amount and extent of the civilian participation also depended on the phase of the war, since the NRA built up the structures as it went and, as mentioned, sometimes had to abandon those altogether. At the start of the war the rebels were extremely vulnerable because they had just few resources and were dependent on the support of the civilian population. During this time the insurgents counted on their civilian contacts for food, shelter, and hiding spots and it was also then when they formed clandestine civilian networks. Those were followed by the Resistance Councils, as they were implemented areas that the NRA safely held and had clear control over. The councils replaced the old government structures in these areas, that the insurgents dismantled after they gained control over the territory. Participation in the meetings was voluntary and a

certain degree of free speech was guaranteed as the NRA often times did not attend the councils if the topic did not concern them. However, it is notable that the reign of the rebel organisation was never challenged through the Resistance Councils, which points to the existence of some kind of coercion and expectation as to what kind of statements are tolerated by the insurgents (Kasfir 2005).

This degree of coercion, whether it was explicit or implicit, also played a role in the collection of food. Even though the rebels again claimed that they do not demand or will force the civilians to donate some of their food, some felt an underlying sense that it was expected. However, the rebels did not set a quota when they were given resources and they claim that they always offered to pay for goods they collected. This was done to prevent theft from the civilians under their control and the NRA hoped to gain more support from the population if they saw that the rebels would not steal their resources (Kasfir 2005). The self-proclaimed egalitarian, non-secretarian, and non-coercive approach was one of the hallmarks of the NRA and it shows their commitment to implementing governing structures, while also letting the inhabitants make decisions that concerned them. This clearly shows that the rebel organisation exercised rebel governance in areas where they were able to do so and that were not actively contested by government forces. Kasfir (2005) described their approach as rare but not unique, as they welcomed the opinions of the inhabitants and in addition to that showed impressive restraint when it came to violence against non-combatants (Bell 2016). All this emphasises that the NRA saw the public's opinion and their support as valuable, and that they had more power when they were in the civilians favour.

### *Cohesiveness during war*

While the NRA performed its insurgency, other smaller rebel groups inside of Uganda also took up arms. Consequently, there were at one point five different rebel organisations active, namely the Uganda Freedom Movement (UFM), Federal Democratic Movement (FEDEMO), Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF), and the Former Uganda National Army (FUNA) (Lindemann 2010). Evidently, many people saw the power vacuum that was created as a chance to

advance their causes and stake and claim for power. This can be seen as a first observation that one would expect in the case of future lack of cohesiveness, since there was a fragmented field of rebel organisations.

Through their actions, the NRA presented a counterbalance to the government, as the military forces engaged in a lot of indiscriminate violence and the killings of many non-combatants. This was especially the case when the military conducted counter-insurgency missions and it wanted to erode the civilian support for the rebels through targeting inhabitants, which led to an estimated 50,000 to 300,000 non-combatant deaths (Weinstein 2006; Bell 2016). As the NRA was mostly operating out of the Luwero Triangle, the state forces mostly targeted inhabitants from this region in their counter-insurgency attacks. As it was the case in El Salvador, the massive violence of the military also played a role in the recruitment of new rebel fighters. In some instances, people joined the group as part of an individual survival strategy, because they saw fighting as their last resort in the face of the counter-insurgency missions. Some also lost their families or were separated from them during the war, which left them without a bigger supporting network. Others were influenced by the violence they had witnessed in person, which acted like a trigger for their decision to join the NRA (Schubert 2006). It occurred that these individuals became new members very spontaneously after a government attack on their villages or families, which shows the impact indiscriminate violence from one side can have on the support for the opposition.

However, the NRA did not just draw their recruitments from people who saw fighting as their only chance of surviving the civil war. Especially early on the rebel organisation consisted of political activists and from the politicised urban middle class. They believed that Obote became president illegitimately and supported the NRA's objective of overcoming political and economic underdevelopment and end the ethnic regional practices (Schubert 2006). During this phase the initial recruits had to assume a high risk of failure as they were facing a fighting force that was considerably greater than theirs. However, Schubert (2006) argues that the narrative of the NRA elite considerably differs from the one of the combatants. The rebel group prefers to see their forces as a

group that homogenously fought for a political cause and had no uncertainties, setbacks, or fears. It is a claim that is mostly repeated by the elite and not one that was adopted by the broad population, or even the inhabitants of the Luwero Triangle or former combatants. The story of heroic fighter, who only thought of victory and had feelings of superiority is mostly a myth and not present in the discourse of the population. This creation of a legend by the leadership that is not confirmed by lower level fighters points to the rebel organisation not being as cohesive as they thought of themselves or they intended to be. Casting these internal concerns about unity aside, it is furthermore difficult to create unity in the general population in a country like Uganda, that has been suffering from ethnic and economic cleavages. In sum, one can say that the NRA was not as universally convinced of their political ideology as the leadership would like, and that many members joined out of a multitude of reasons that were not directly connected to the rebels' agenda.

The recruiting phase that drew politically motivated people lasted just for the first two years of the conflict and afterwards changed to recruiting people from the villages and also integrating deserters from the government forces (Weinstein 2006). There were also instances in which the inhabitants felt threatened by the NRA if they would not join the rebel organisation as fighters, although there never was reported forced recruitment. To a degree the rebels made use of child soldiers, however it is unclear what the age limit, the recruitment process, and the consent of the parents was. An underreported part of the history of the organisation is the involvement and battle deployments of women, a fact that is now often downplayed by the NRA elite (Schubert 2006). Since the rebel organisation mostly drew its initial recruits from the Luwero Triangle, which was populated by the ethnic group of the Baganda, its fighting force was mostly made up of this ethnicity. The Baganda were later also declared as the enemy by the government forces (Schubert 2006), which becomes important in the later years when other rebel groups were formed on the basis of ethnicity. Before the civil war began, ethnicity was already a contentious factor in Uganda and especially in the military, as former rulers decimated their forces through ethnic purges (Schubert 2006). These cleavages show that it was difficult for the NRA to unite the ethnic

populations and move past their differences, even if the group had the objective to do so. As it was mentioned earlier, in the later years of the war the organisation had to rely on recruits that were maybe not fully convinced of the political cause and switched their allegiance from the state to the rebels. It became harder for the rebels to integrate their new members into the group through thorough training, just because of the fact that they came in large quantities. However, the NRA still had a reputation for acting with great restraint when it came to violence against civilians and did not lose its disciplined attitude that made them successful throughout the conflict.

In the areas rebel governance was conducted, the insurgents also made an effort to be transparent in their punishments for their fighters, if they should have violated the Code of Conduct. This was used to indicate to the civilians that nobody is above the rules that the organisation set, and that their members can not act rogue without repercussions (Weinstein 2006). Therefore, public court martials were used frequently to punish insurgents who committed infractions of various severity. Capital punishment was an option for transgressions that were deemed to be the most serious, which included murder, rape, betrayal, and the refusal to obey an order (Schubert 2006). The Code of Conduct was based on discipline, need to know basis, open communication, and free criticism, however it was not formalised and as a result of that the members were sometimes unsure what kind of behaviour was acceptable and what was not (Schubert 2006, Weinstein 2006). Only later did Museveni formalise the Code of Conduct through a first draft and cleared up the expected treatment of other members, commanders, and the civilian population. Moreover, it regulated the punishments that should be used for the crimes and it also regulated the structure of the organisation (Weinstein 2006).

The death penalty was widely used, as the NRA executed nearly as much of its members during the civil war, as the U.S. military did in World War II. This is especially impressive since the U.S. military at that time was roughly two hundred times the size of the NRA (Bell 2016). Such harsh and public punishment was used to reinforce the norms of the rebel organisation into the behaviour of its members and ensure that they would not engage in indiscriminate violence against non-combatants. While it was a tool for the socialisation of the troops, it was also

useful to set themselves apart from the cruel and violent conduct of the government forces. Such a clear distinction certainly played a role in conjuring up support in the population for the rebel group.

In addition to being transparent with the public about their enforcement of the Code of Conduct, the NRA also committed itself to protect the civilians living in the Luwero Triangle. While they were not able to guarantee protection at all times, as the non-combatant casualties through the military show, the rebel group organised a refuge for civilians and themselves when they were not able to control the area anymore. This was open for anyone who wanted to flee the Luwero Triangle and the insurgents protected and guided the civilians on their way to the protected zones (Kasfir 2005). Afterwards the NRA commanded the civilians that were still left in the area to leave, because the rebels wanted to launch an offensive against the military and there should not be any non-combatants left, who might get caught in the cross-fire. As the insurgents reclaimed the Luwero Triangle, they reinstated their governance activities they had previously suspended in favour of their military survival (Kasfir 2005).

#### *Cohesion during the post-war period*

As the rebel group closed in on the capital Kampala, the government in charge tried to negotiate a peace agreement with the organisations that were still active up to this point. Shortly before this offer of a peace deal, the administration had changed again due to a coup, with the result being that Tito Okello acted as the Head of State. Every rebel group signed the peace agreement and therefore gained representation on the military council, according to their strength. It was known as the Nairobi peace accord and after four months of negotiations it was signed on the 17th of December 1985. However, the agreement fell apart nearly immediately as the NRA attacked Kampala with the intention of overthrowing the government (Lindemann 2010). It is up for speculation if Museveni and his organisation ever intended to abide by the peace accords or if they wanted to continue with the civil war nonetheless. Even without knowing the true intentions

of the NRA, the signing and eventual failing of the agreement is a good example for the expected outcome in the case of multiple rebel groups being present.

Subsequent to the military win in the Luwero Triangle and the short-lived peace accords, the NRA went on to attack the military on multiple fronts and as a result gained control over Kampala on the 26th of January 1986. This effectively ended the war and the NRA emerged as the new ruling power. However, a new rebel group emerged, the Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA) mainly from the remains of the former government forces and renewed the conflict in the north of the country (Ngoga 1997; Lindemann 2010). Such a development in part was made possible through the fact that the NRA was not able to establish territorial and political control over big parts of the country, which was a consequence of the relatively short conflict duration of five years. It mainly came into power through its capture of Kampala and the subsequent overthrow of the existing government (Mamdani 1988). The creation of the UPDA primarily followed along ethnic cleavages and shows that the NRA was not completely successful in easing the ethnic tensions. Nevertheless, Museveni became President of Uganda as a result of the successful rebellion and instituted a government with the National Resistance Movement (NRM), the political wing of the NRA. They intended to conduct an overhaul of the political system of Uganda and end the unsteadiness that haunted the country since gaining its independence in 1962.

Part of this process was democratisation through the implementation of the so-called no-party democracy or Movement democracy. At the heart of this reform was the extension of the merit-based system that was previously used in the NRA, which emphasised promotions solely on the basis of merit instead of ethnicity or other factors (Carbone 2001; Weinstein 2006). The intention was to overcome ethnic cleavages and other factions through the absence of parties and replace those with individual candidates, who would then get elected based on their merit. Through this transformation the NRM tried to unite the Ugandan population behind their cause and include them in their Movement, even though it was rather loosely organised (Carbone 2001). While this approach may have been brought forward in good faith, it is also criticised for its limiting effect on the democracy in the country and Lyons (2016) argues, that post-conflict elections conducted by

victorious actors are used to transform rebel groups into authoritarian parties. Furthermore, there is little evidence that military victories by rebels improve the prospects for democratisation, which can be seen in the fact that the NRM just allowed parties to exist besides them in 2005 (Lyons 2016). It is indeed problematic, that the former rebel leader Museveni has been in office for over 30 years now and that the presidential term limits have been eliminated, essentially paving the way for a lifelong presidency.

Shortly after their successful rebellion the NRA experienced a significant influx of fighters into their ranks from other rebel groups and also the former government forces. The leadership had to decide how to treat the members of these organisations and whether they should be absorbed into the NRA or commanded to disarm and demobilise. Apparently, the former rebel organisation that turned into the government had no uniform strategy in those cases and rather operated on a trial and error basis. Because of this, the NRA made the mistake of incorporating the UFM and FEDEMO and letting those groups retain their own leadership and organisation. Subsequently, these forces committed indiscriminate violence against civilians in the northern areas of Uganda, which caused obvious discontent among the inhabitants. As the northern communities felt disadvantaged anyway since the defeat of the former government, this violence sowed the seed for the insurgency of the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) (Mamdani 1988). This is a significant divergence of the disciplined conduct of the NRA that many called remarkable and it is evidence for the fact that the organisation lost its cohesiveness in the post-conflict phase. It was not equipped to handle the huge amount of new recruits and had no cohesive strategy to deal with former opponents. Since the fighting force tripled after the rebels took over the government, the group was not able to exercise the same political education and socialisation it conducted previously. Additionally, letting the UFM and FEDEMO merge into the NRA and not changing their structures accordingly, contributed to the lack of cohesion and caused fractions in the streamlined external reputation.

Furthermore, had the NRA to immediately deal with the challenge of the UPDA, which consisted of fighters for the former government that regrouped under new leadership. This rebel group also made use of the ethnical divisions in

the Ugandan society, as they legitimised themselves through the use of status reversal grievances of the Acholi population. The Acholi people's role grew after independence, since they were mainly deployed into the military during the period of colonialisation. Historically the northern part of Uganda was used as peasant labour reserves and human resources for the military, while the southern people did grow cash crops (Mamdani 1988). The involvement of the Acholi people was diminished under Idi Amin, but it rose again during the reign of Obote. Because the Acholi still constituted most of the military force during the civil war with the NRA, the elite viewed their defeat as a humiliation and a repeated loss of political influence (Mamdani 1988; Carbone 2001; Lindemann 2010). The UPDA was able to stage an intense, however short, challenge against the NRA and had to concede in June 1988 through a peace agreement. The NRA intended to absorb the fighters of the insurgents into its ranks to ease the tensions and grievances. Still the issue of status reversal by the Acholi people had become such a contentious topic that it took on a life of its own and splinter groups formed because of it. Before being defeated by the NRA, the UPDA was joined by the remains of the HSM. The HSM was a spiritually influenced rebel group that also identified itself with the Acholi people and the foundation of discontent that made the rebel group possible, was the previously mentioned indiscriminate violence of the forces that joined the NRA after the war. Joseph Kony, one of its former members, went on to found the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The LRA was able to seize control of the status grievances and engage the Museveni government in a conflict that lasted over 20 years, and was defined by significant human rights abuses (Carbone 2001). In addition to the indiscriminate violence in the north, did the Museveni administration fail to provide political leadership for the northern part of the country, which further stoked the feeling of negligence. The NRA did not possess a cohesive strategy for dealing with the different ethnic groups, even though it was their claim to be a multi-ethnic organisation. Apart from the military dimension, is the fact that once the NRA did take over the administration, they did not have a minimum programme that organised the people, which encouraged opportunistic tendencies of people that sought after offices in the new administration (Mamdani 1988). It seems as the NRA had a strict plan when it

was engaged in the battlefield but it lost its cohesiveness once it was tasked with taking over the state.

Compared to the situation of the FMLN in El Salvador, did the NRA start out with worse conditions because of the ethnical cleavages in Uganda. Those additional factors can often times cause more problems and complicate the issue (Lounsberry & Cook 2011). It was one of the objectives of the rebel group, before and after they took over the government, to overcome those divisions but this proved to be a difficult undertaking. It was made especially more challenging through the major influx of members after the NRA took over the government. I argue that this was the point when the group lost its cohesiveness, since it could not handle the sudden increase of fighters and did not have a coherent plan for the handling of other rebel organisations. Through the mismanagement of the inclusion of other groups the NRA made itself vulnerable to factions that did not share or followed its Code of Conduct. The result of this was the atypical indiscriminate violence committed against civilians from the north, which in turn garnered support for the HSM. Ever since the other rebel groups emerged, the country experienced near constant unrest. It had to deal with seven insurgencies since 1986, more than any Ugandan government before (Lindemann 2010).

The presence of other rebel organisations in the immediate post-conflict process kept the country in unrest and engaged in a conflict and therefore, according to my definition, without the existence of order. The conflict with the UPDA resulted in even more rebel organisations that were mostly inspired by the ethnical cleavages that exist in the country. The presence of another rebel organisation and losing of group cohesiveness shows the impact those factors can have. Especially, when as a result one of them still feels disadvantaged or disrespected and has the means, resources and will to engage in a violent conflict. In the Ugandan case it was moreover certainly a problem that one group, the NRA, won outright and therefore did not have to engage in a peace process (besides the short-lived Nairobi accord), that could have laid out a treaty for all the parties to follow. Therefore, were these grievances left mostly unaddressed and they could develop into a violent form.

### 6.3. Other cases

	<b>Order</b>	<b>No order</b>
<b>Unified/cohesive rebel group</b>	Eritrea Liberia Sri Lanka Mozambique Peru El Salvador Indonesia Guatemala Ethiopia	Sierra Leone
<b>Non unified/cohesive group/multiple groups</b>		Uganda Somalia Sudan Angola Chad

Figure 3: Results

In Figure 3 I have allocated the other cases out of the universe of Figure 2 according to their outcomes. In the following, I will shortly elaborate on a couple of cases. Eritrea and Ethiopia can be described together since the Eritrean fight for independence also led to the overthrow of the Ethiopian government. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) became the sole representative of the independence struggle after it defeated the fellow rebel organisation Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF). Thereafter, it joined forces in a coalition with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), that fought for the Tigray people in Ethiopia and likewise defeated other rebel groups to be the sole representative for the cause. Both controlled large parts of the country and the EPLF set up governance structures that provided public goods to the population, whether or not they were a supporter of the cause. Together, the EPLF and TPLF were able to capture the capital of Ethiopia and Eritrea and therefore ensure the success of their respective struggles. The countries did not experience a civil war thereafter, however years later both engaged in a war against each other. (Berhe 2008; Desta 2009; Woldemariam 2014; Stewart 2018).

Sierra Leone is the one outlier in this model, as it falls into the no order category, even though there was an alliance involved at the end of the conflict.

The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) started an insurgency against the government of Sierra Leone in 1991 and was then fought against by multiple administrations. It forged a coalition with the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and launched a massive offensive against the capital Freetown in 1999. However, they faced pressure to enter into negotiations, which they did and subsequently signed a peace agreement. Nevertheless, shortly after the agreement was signed the war started again because of aggressions from the RUF (Humphreys & Weinstein 2008).

## 7. Conclusion

Achieving and keeping peace after civil wars, that are destructive, cost many lives, and may deepen societal, economical, or ethnical cleavages is an ambitious and difficult goal to begin with. However, this thesis has shown that if the rebel groups involved can manage to keep their cohesiveness, the chances of maintaining order in the post-conflict phase increase significantly. The case of Uganda is evidence for the fact that rebel organisations can lose their cohesiveness at any point in time due to varying factors and that it can have devastating effect on the peace process. Even though, the NRA showed good unity throughout the conflict, it was at the end it tripped up, therefore exacerbated existing ethnical cleavages in the population and in turn laid the foundation for the support of future rebel groups. On the other hand, the FMLN in El Salvador was able to be the umbrella organisation for five groups and their leadership stuck together throughout the conflict and the peace negotiations. The insurgents realised that their strength lay in their unity and consequently mainly tabled the discussions about their internal divisions until after the first election. This decision was certainly helpful for agreeing to peace negotiations, ending the war, and keeping the order in the post-conflict phase.

Moreover, the two cases show their differences in the control of the rebel groups over their troops. While the NRA was not able to handle the major influx of new recruits and as a result lost its cohesiveness, the FMLN convinced its

members that the peace treaty was the right action to take, even though their initial plan was the complete revolution of El Salvador. The comparison between those two cases is also interesting, since one of them ended in a negotiated agreement and the other one in outright military victory. Therefore, was the NRA not bound to comply by a treaty. A situation that left them able to create the government as they wished, but also on their own devices when it came to the decisions regarding the handling of the other rebel groups. Obviously, mistakes were made in that regard and the NRA lost its cohesiveness because of it.

Conversely, the FMLN entered a negotiated settlement with clear expectations for either actor, with one of the main points being the transformation from a rebel organisation into the political party. The future as a political power was arguably an important factor for staying unified throughout the process, in addition to the pragmatism that aided the insurgents for the duration of their existence. All these factors led to the FMLN becoming a prime example for rebel-to-party transformation, as they were able to become one of the two dominant parties in El Salvador and even winning presidential elections.

Post-conflict processes and relationships between actors are influenced by a myriad of factors, which is why connecting one variable to an outcome is always difficult. However, I argue that this thesis at least shows the link between rebel group cohesiveness and the state-building trajectory defined by post-conflict order. Of course, there are many other influences playing into this relationship, however this is beyond the scope of this research. The thesis is supposed to be a point of departure for future research into this topic, as it still remains to be examined in what ways the different layers of rebel governance influence the group cohesiveness. Including the concept of rebel governance into the theoretical model added another explanatory dimension, as the governing of civilians can lead to support among the population. In turn, this will lead to a greater political weight of the rebel movement and therefore to a bigger impact if it should lose its cohesiveness.

Nevertheless, this research has its limitations in its scope, since it sacrificed a more layered argument for a more straightforward one and also simply for space reasons. As it was mentioned before, the direct connection between the

independent variable rebel group cohesiveness and the dependent variable post-conflict order simplifies the argument through the exclusion of other variables. However, these can be added in future research to determine their respective influences and to broaden the understanding of post-conflict processes. Moreover, compelling additional research would also be the investigation into the political weight rebel groups wield through their cohesiveness, especially in the public discourse. This is especially interesting, since rebel group unity and subsequent order does not automatically translate into a democratic government. It was not part of the scope of this thesis, but some of cases mentioned here struggled or still struggle with authoritarian rulers and a lack of democracy, even though they achieved post-conflict order.

In sum it can be said that this thesis has found there to be a connection between rebel governance, rebel group cohesiveness and state-building defined by post-conflict order. The evidence seems to follow along the argument that was made, in that a united rebel group is more able to follow and respect guidelines for example set by peace agreements. Through a good command over the members, it is possible to convince the lower ranks to stay in line and not commit acts that might inflame the conflict. The bottom line is, the more rebel group cohesion the better, especially in the immediate post-conflict phase.

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