When Militant Organizations Lose Militarily but Win Politically

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Abstract: The literature on political violence documents two main ways that militant organizations "win," i.e., achieve their political ends or *outcome goals*: (1) eliminate the adversary or (2) coerce the adversary into making concessions. Existing research rarely considers that former militant organizations, including defeated ones, can continue pursuing their outcome goals via politics rather than violence. While it remains uncommon that militant organizations that lose on the battlefield find success through the electoral processes, defeated militants do go on to win across a wide range of regions and contexts. In this study, we run the first large-*n* empirical analysis of this phenomenon, showing that organizational size and war-time lethal capability positively predict the political success of defeated militant organizations. Other plausibly related features of militant organizations, such as their united wartime front or coherent ideology, are not strong predictors of eventual electoral success. Additionally, we investigate two case studies of the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) in El Salvador and present marginal effects analyses—further demonstrating the effects of militant killing capacity and organizational size on electoral prospects.

keywords: post-conflict success; political outcomes; militant organizations; militant transition

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Between 1975 and 1990, a civil war and overlapping regional conflict ensnared Lebanon in a "labyrinth of violence," ultimately killing upward of 150,000 people (Phares 1995, 158). At an early point in the conflict, political parties came to understand that their political standing was only as good as the killing capacity of their affiliated militias (Harris 2006). As the Clausewitzian maxim dictates: "war is [merely a] continuation of [politics by] other means ([1832]1984, 77)."

Though often framed as a conflict between Muslims and Maronite Christians, Palestinians and Lebanese, or Syrians and Lebanese, much of the war involved intra-sectarian violence. In particular, intra-Maronite conflict facilitated political elites and their militant organizations in turning long-held rivalries into fratricidal bloodlettings. Perhaps the most brutal of such conflicts pitted Samir Gaegae's al-Quwwat al-Lubnaniyye or Lebanese Forces (LF) against the renegade army of rogue General Michel Aoun. While quite effective in lethal capacity—it killed thousands of rivals and at least 500 Syrian troops in a final battle before accepting military defeat (Harris 2006, 277)—Aoun's renegade army failed to secure a political standing at the end of the war. In 1991, Aoun fled to France where he would stay in exile for over a decade. Yet, Aoun's renegade army and movement, which adopted the name at-Tayyar al-Watani al-Hurr or Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), maintained two qualities that would enable its continuation and eventual prominence in Lebanese politics: (1) a legacy of violence and (2) a large and loyal following that preserved that legacy.

Following the 2005 Cedar Revolution—the series of popular demonstrations that ended with the expulsion of Syrian occupation forces—Lebanon reinstituted democratic elections. Aoun, a true-blue military man, having once eschewed politics as "unnecessary," learned the hard way that politics could trump even the greatest military feats (Harris 2006). Thus, upon returning to Lebanon from exile, Aoun brought a new appreciation for the political, and for the opportunity that electoral politics could provide his movement. This marks a realization that revolutionaries have learned across time and space. Notably, turning the Clausewitzian maxim on its head, the Leninist retort that "politics is the continuation of war under another guise (Chernov 1924, 366)" illustrates that depending on structural realities, militant organizations can forgo violence in exchange for "paper stones," as Engels once described ballots.[3] The structural shift from military outcomes to electoral outcomes undoes the battlefield advantage captured in

[3] Cited in Przeworski & Sprague (1986).

the notion of "always outnumbered, never outgunned." Elections turn politics into a numbers game. Beginning with the 2005 elections, Aoun harnessed FPM's legacy of violence and translated it into electoral power—providing his party with the most seats in Lebanon's unicameral Chamber of Deputies of any Christian party, including longtime adversaries LF and al-Kata'eb al-Lubnaniyye (Kataeb or the Lebanese Phalanges). By 2009, FPM held the largest role in Lebanon's ruling government and by 2016 FPM firmly led the government, with Aoun ascending to the presidency. Upon election as Lebanon's 13th President, an immortalized picture shows Aoun at a victory podium—both arms stretched out and with both hands making a sign of a gun.[4]

In an electoral setting, even defeated militant organizations can live on and potentially "win," so long as they have the numbers to get out the vote. Further, organizations like Aoun's FPM that thrive off of a history of violence cannot only draw on such legacies to mobilize proud supporters (Crenshaw 1981; Acosta 2014a) but also to discourage rivals and adversaries from attempting to exclude them from electoral and political processes. In this regard, legacies of violence offer organizations a deterrent capacity. In this article, we contend that if a defeated militant organization preserves a large support base and legacy of violence, it can potentially apply its militant legacy to secure participation in electoral politics and once doing so use its large support base to win a political victory.

The literature on political violence and the transition of militant organizations to political parties is devoid of a large-*n* study or major theoretical contribution that addresses the phenomenon of militant organizations losing militarily but coming back to win politically. We aim to fill this gap in the following ways. First, we review the literature on the post-conflict development of militant organizations and elaborate on our theory of how a small subset of defeated militant organizations win politically in post-conflict environments. Second, we detail the research design. Third, we conduct large-*n* empirical tests, demonstrating that both organizational size and wartime organizational lethal capability positively predict the political

[4] Party members claim this common hand gesture by party officials represents an election "checkmark" as seen on the FPM's flag, while acknowledging that it "also might be a gun." Author's field research notes (July 2014). For an *Agence France-Presse* picture of Aoun making the sign, see Areeb Ullah, "Michel Aoun: Political Survivor Finally Returns to Power," *Middle East Eye* (1 November 2016); accessible at *www.middleeasteye.net/news/michel-aoun-pyjamas-president-367339318*.

success of defeated militant organizations. Fourth, we illustrate the case of the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) in El Salvador and present marginal effects analyses that show organizational size and lethal capacity explain more variation in the post-conflict political success of defeated militant organizations than alternative explanatory factors. We conclude with a discussion of the study's implications for post-conflict development.

Explaining the Post-Conflict Political Success of Defeated Militant Organizations

The literature on political violence notes two main ways that militant organizations "win," i.e., achieve their political ends or outcome goals: (1) eliminate the adversary or (2) coerce the adversary into making concessions (Abrahms 2006; 2012; Sullivan 2012). Less frequently, militant organizations win by reaping the benefits of third-party intervention (Acosta 2014b). Still yet, militant organizations can achieve their outcome goals through a fourth route. When militant organizations admit military defeat, if they preserve their organizational fabric and legacy of violence, they are not necessarily "out of the game."

Indeed, former militant organizations can continue pursuing their outcome goals via politics rather than violence (Criado 2011; Acosta 2014a; Rizkallah 2015). While it remains uncommon that militant organizations that lose on the battlefield go on to win through electoral or other political processes, the phenomenon *does* occur across regions and contexts. For example, in 2009, 17 years after its military defeat in El Salvador's civil war, Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) won El Salvador's presidential election—putting the organization on its best footing ever to achieve its long-standing goals of instituting redistributive policies nationwide. But, what explains the FMLN's comparative success to similar organizations, such as Guatemala's Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG), that likewise lost armed campaigns under ostensibly similar circumstances yet have failed to make any revivalist advancements in political and electoral arenas. That is, what explains the variation of post-conflict political success of defeated militant organizations?

The pathway to political, and usually electoral, success of defeated militant organizations in post-conflict political systems requires two elements. First, organizations necessarily established a credible threat during the armed conflict. This is a key step for any coercive campaign (Schelling 1960; 1966; Crenshaw 1990; Kydd & Walter 2006; Abrahms 2013). And, it is essential for gaining eventual entrance into the target political system (if so desired by a

particular organization). Simply, the currency of an intensely violent legacy can work to buy entrance into formal institutions and raising the costs of excluding that organization down the road (Cronin 2009). Second, organizations need to mobilize their support base amid the armed conflict to increase their odds of achieving political success in the event that the organization can transition to a political party and stand for elections (de Zeeuw 2008). As constituents (rather than organizational leaders) are often the last to willingly abandon violent campaigns (Irvin 1999), defeated militant organizations necessarily rely on violent legacies to advance political campaigns.

Killing for Credibility

In the realm of non-state political violence, militant organizations adopt a wide range of violent tactics and strategies, as well as demonstrate varying degrees of violent capability. Research remains divided on the effect of violence on militant outcomes. Some argue that high levels of violence can benefit militant organizations (Kydd & Walter 2006), whereas many acknowledge the downsides of some levels and types of violence in resistance campaigns (Abrahms 2006; 2012; 2013; Cronin 2009; Chenoweth & Stephan 2011; Fortna 2015). Nevertheless, target states have a natural incentive to incorporate highly lethal organizations into the formal political system in efforts to coopt their elites (Magaloni 2008), if not their constituents. Accordingly, militant organizations that develop the capacity to kill at high levels are more likely to establish a credible threat and legacy of violence and therefore eventually gain access into an existing political system.

$H_{1:}$ *Highly lethal militant organizations are more likely to win politically after failing to win militarily*.

Fighting to Mobilize

A number of facets of political violence suggest some organizations employ violence with the primary aim of mobilizing supporters to maximize a political efficacy (Hoffman & McCormick 2004). Nearly a century ago, Bryce observed that "physical force of the citizens coincides…with their voting power (1921, 25-26)." Entrance into an electoral political system is unlikely to help smaller organizations in any politically meaningful way beyond organizational

survival (Foster, Braithwaite & Sobek 2013). Organizations need constituent support to end an armed campaign and transition to a political party considering such support is essential to build a voting bloc that can progress organizational outcome goals through elections (Allison 2006; de Zeeuw 2008). Because of the strict equalization of individual contributions to the outcome, numbers likely matter more in electoral politics than they do in violent politics. Size also provides a cushion for inevitable post-conflict splits of organizers and constituents that allows them to endure past early upheaval in political competition. Accordingly, we expect larger militant organizations to select into electoral competition, for which they have higher likelihood of success. The theoretical framework then suggests that organizations may use armed conflict to mobilize its constituent population, and after losing militarily may employ that support base to attempt to win electorally/politically.

$H_{2:}$ *Larger militant organizations are more likely to win politically after failing to win militarily*.

Research Design

This study analyzes the Revolutionary and Militant Organizations Dataset (REVMOD), which includes over 500 organizations operative sometime between the years 1946 and 2014.[5] Accordingly, *militant organizations* mark the unit of analysis. The dataset draws from a random sample of organizations listed in Stanford's *Mapping Militants Project*,[6] START's *Global Terrorism Database* (GTD),[7] and the Big, Allied and Dangerous (BAAD) database.[8] In coding the variables, the dataset relies on a multitude of sources, including: GTD, the National Counterterrorism Center's *Terrorist Groups* and *Terrorist Profiles*,[9] the Institute for the Study of Violent Groups' *Violent Extremism Knowledge Base*,[10] the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism's *Terrorist Organization Profiles,*[11] Schmid & Jongman (2008), Vice President's Task Force on Combating Terrorism (1988), and Boot (2013), among a variety of others.

[5] The dataset and codebook are available at www.revolutionarymilitant.org. For variables that we added for this study, see our coding rubric in the Appendix.
[6] Accessible at *web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin*.
[7] Accessible at *www.start.umd.edu/gtd*.
[8] Accessible at *www.start.umd.edu/baad/database*.
[9] Accessible at *www.nctc.gov/site/index.html*.
[10] Previously accessible at *www.isvg.org* now cited in REVMOD.
[11] Previously accessible at *www.start.umd.edu/tops* now cited in REVMOD.

The Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is whether a militant organization won politically after losing a militarily campaign. The coding derives from two key components: the notion of military defeat and political success.[12] We define *military defeat* as an organization's inability or unwillingness to continue armed conflict aimed at eliminating or coercing a target and thereby achieving the central outcome goal.[13]

We define POLITICAL SUCCESS as the entrance of a militant organization into a leadership role within a formal governmental executive institution. We focus on executive institutions as the most likely place to propel the organization to achieving its outcome goal. In parliamentary systems, executives tend to dominate policymaking, making it vital that parties be part of the executive to achieve policy goals. In most presidential systems, especially those in developing world contexts that are more likely to experience violent conflict, executives are typically more powerful policymakers than legislatures (Shugart & Carey 1992).[14]

The core coding of the dependent variable is a BROAD (or general) measure of political success under the parameters outlined above. In other words, it codes political success for organizations that attained leadership in the executive of a given political system. For robustness, we apply four additional coding variations that limit the scope of the dependent variable. The first variation accounts for political success only in FULLY ENDED CONFLICTS, where the armed conflict has remained "cold" for at least a decade without any relapses into violence (either directly involving the organization at hand and/or indirectly via allies that pursue the same outcome goal). This coding excludes the political success of organizations such as Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM) in Aceh, Indonesia. The second additional variation of the dependent variable only looks at organizations that achieved political success WITHOUT THIRD-PARTY INTERVENTION,

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[12] In this regard, we necessarily exclude organizations that won militarily from the analysis, as well as strictly nonviolent resistance organizations—leaving the study with *n*=380.
[13] "Outcome goals" refer to the chief political ends organizations pursue (Abrahms 2006; 2012; Cronin 2009; Sullivan 2012; Acosta 2014a; 2014b). They signify an organization's *raison d'être* and purpose for its persistence.
[14] Notably, winning a democratic election is not the only way for a previously militant organization to make post-conflict advancements toward their outcome goal, considering an organization could gain entrance into autocratic institutions. For discussions on the incorporation/cooptation of opposition organizations within autocratic institutions, see Gandhi (2008); Magaloni (2008).

and therefore excludes organizations like Hezb al-Da'awa al-Islamiyya (HDI), which began heading the Iraq government amid U.S.-imposed democratic elections. The third variation codes political success only for organizations DIRECTLY TIED to the given political party. This means the victorious party is not a political wing or political stand-in for a previously violent organization, but rather the identical organization in name and public stature. This measure excludes the political success of parties with indirect connections or ties with a defeated militant organization, such as Movimiento de Participación Popular vis-à-vis Tupamaros in Uruguay and Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (ARENA or the National Republican Alliance) vis-à-vis Ejército Segredo Anti-Comunista in El Salvador.[15]

Core Explanatory Variables

The first core explanatory factor revolves around the ability of organizations to mobilize supporters. To operationalize this concept, we rely on the variable of organization SIZE, which indicates the estimated size of an organization at its peak membership. As a robustness check, we also code the estimated size of the organization's final year of armed conflict. The variable aims to work as a proxy for potential electoral/political mobilization capacity. Due to the difficulty in estimating the population sizes of constituencies related to militant organizations, and especially those with ideologically centered followings (as opposed to ethno-nationalist or sectarian constituencies), organization size works as an indicator of a given organization's ability to mobilize supporters for a particular cause.

The second core explanatory factor refers to an organization's ability to generate a credible threat and legacy of violence to raise the costs of excluding them, or nullifying results should they win politically. Here, we look to three interrelated variables: the number of ATTACKS an organization has carried out, the number of KILLS an organization has inflicted, and an organization's attack LETHALITY or average inflicted-kills per attack. Lethality likely captures this concept best as it illustrates an organization's ability to punish a target state significantly and

[15] See Table A in the Appendix for the number of victors given the various coding rubrics.

quickly in a limited number of events.[16] It also implies a well-managed organization with effective strategy—characteristics that may translate effectively into political competition.

Alternative Explanatory Variables and Controls

In our empirical analysis, we will consider a range of alternative mechanisms that may explain the post-conflict electoral success of defeated military organizations. In particular, two organizational features strike us as plausibly predictive of electoral success—united wartime front and coherent ideology. A united wartime front, with cohesive organizational goals and strategies, should presumably translate into similarly united electoral organizations. Similarly, a coherent ideology could, in theory, translate into a loyal support base of ideological adherents and a clear programmatic platform. Both united wartime front and coherent ideology should limit the strong risk of post-conflict splits and ideological fissures that would ostensibly threaten the survival and success of the post-conflict party. We test for both possibilities, and others, in our models.

Alternative explanatory variables and controls include continuous measures of organization AGE, an organization's number of STATE SPONSORS, the number of NETWORK TIES an organization has made to fellow militant organizations,[17] the number of SAFE HAVENS an organization has utilized. Each of these variables have been linked to military success in existing literature and might presumably also predict electoral success.

We also analyze the following binary variables: whether an organization is the largest organization pursuing a specific outcome goal (HEGEMONIC), whether an organization represents a unified front or an alliance of all groups seeking a particular outcome goal (UNIFIED FRONT), whether an organization engages in a domestic conflict (CIVIL WAR), whether an organization

[16] Notably, many studies emphasize that lethality implies strategy and precision and marks a superior measure of organizational capacity than kills or attacks alone (Asal & Rethemeyer 2008; Piazza 2009).

[17] We define a *network tie* as a declared formal alliance, affiliation, or partnership between two organizations. Co-sponsored attacks also demonstrate a network connection, as well as other documented forms of collaboration like sharing a training camp. Network ties are likewise identified through 'conduits' or individual operatives that link together two or more organizations.

carries out attacks against civilians (TERRORISM),[18] whether an organization maintains a combat alliance with a state (SPONSOR FIGHTS), and whether an organization pursues an ANTI-SYSTEM OUTCOME GOAL that seeks to separate from or eliminate an existing political system (as opposed to an organization pursuing a WITHIN-SYSTEM OUTCOME GOAL). We likewise analyze the organization ideology variables of POLITICAL ISLAM, LEFTIST, and RIGHTIST, and the NATIONALIST goal variable of self-determination.

We also include the POLITY score and GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP) PER CAPITA of an organization's primary adversary. The POLITY score indicates the degree of openness and competition in the electoral arena. This variable could represent the likelihood of fair elections, suggesting defeated militants have a shot to win. On the other hand, the POLITY score could be more indicative of the initial conditions that lead to conflict and encouraged support for militants. In the case of the former, the coefficient should be positive, in the case of the latter, the coefficient should be negative. Additional controls include binary variables measuring democratic and autocratic institutional permissiveness. To analyze the effects of "representative permissiveness" of democratic electoral systems, we include the binary variables PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION and MAJORITARIAN.[19] The size of the militant organization should be more important in majoritarian than proportional systems. To test the effects of autocratic participatory institutions, SINGLE STATE PARTY SYSTEM, which identifies regimes that govern with a sole party that represents the ruling executive's views, and NON-SINGLE STATE PARTY SYSTEM are assessed.[20]

Empirical Results

Table 1 presents a series of logit regression analyses testing the hypotheses.[21] Models 1 through 4 present baseline models, demonstrating the positive and statistically significant relationships between organization size and political success, as well as between organization

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[18] We define *terrorism* as the use of violence by a non-state actor against non-combatants for the purpose of political gain (Ganor 2002).
[19] The data on representative permissiveness derives from the "Democratic Electoral Systems around the World 1946-2011" dataset (Bormann & Golder 2013). For cases outside of the dataset's timeframe and those not included in the dataset, we conducted independent research.
[20] We coded the variables on autocratic institutions by referring to the "Democracy and Dictatorship Revisited" dataset (Cheibub, Gandhi & Vreeland 2010). For cases outside of the dataset's timeframe and those not included in the dataset, we conducted independent research.
[21] To assuage concerns of some kinds of model misspecification, we report robust standard errors.

attack lethality and political success.[22] Model 5 adds a series of alternative explanatory variables and controls and the initial results stand. Model 6 replaces the anti-system outcome goal variable for organization ideology signifiers.[23] Models 7 and 8 replace the adversary Polity score with extreme ends of democratic and autocratic regime types: proportional representation systems—viewed as the more inclusive type of democracies, and single state party systems—seen as the more autocratic of autocracies.[24] Models 1 through 8 offer consistent support for the hypotheses. Inconsistently, the models show a slightly statistically significant and negative relationship between adversary polity and the likelihood post-conflict militant political success, as well as a slightly significant and positive relationship between adversary GDP per capita and militant political success.

[22] In Models 1-5, 7-8, and 10-14, WITHIN-SYSTEM is the excluded category.
[23] In Model 6, RIGHTIST is the excluded category.
[24] In Model 7, NON-PR SYSTEMS is the excluded category. In Model 8, NON-SINGLE STATE PARTY SYSTEMS is the excluded category.

Table 1: Logit Results

DV: Winning Politically after Losing Militarily	Model 1 *Broad Definition*	Model 2 *Broad Definition*	Model 3 *Broad Definition*	Model 4 *Broad Definition*	Model 5 *Broad Definition*	Model 6 *Broad Definition*	Model 7 *Broad Definition*	Model 8 *Broad Definition*
Size (logged)	0.461*** (0.112)	0.448*** (0.107)	0.410*** (0.088)	0.402*** (0.095)	0.412*** (0.134)	0.438*** (0.143)	0.439*** (0.136)	0.449*** (0.135)
Age	0.013 (0.016)	0.007 (0.017)	0.014 (0.013)	0.020 (0.015)	0.025 (0.015)	0.025* (0.015)	0.024* (0.014)	0.024* (0.014)
Unified Front					0.826 (1.290)	0.848 (1.301)	0.395 (1.246)	0.520 (1.235)
Hegemonic vis-à-vis Rivals					0.591 (1.453)	0.362 (1.404)	0.864 (1.486)	0.556 (1.600)
Attacks	-0.0003 (0.001)			-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Kills		0.0002 (0.0002)		0.0004* (0.0002)	-0.0004 (0.0002)	0.0004 (0.0002)	0.0002 (0.0002)	0.0003* (0.0002)
Lethality			0.072*** (0.017)	0.066*** (0.019)	0.076*** (0.027)	0.081*** (0.030)	0.075*** (0.029)	0.071** (0.030)
Civil War					-0.142 (1.306)	0.079 1.239	0.030 (0.998)	-0.089 (0.974)
Terrorism					0.109 (0.811)	-0.022 (0.828)	-0.934 (0.614)	-0.962 (0.651)
Sponsors					0.065 (0.275)	0.088 (0.269)	0.156 (0.227)	0.137 (0.255)
Sponsor Fights					0.537 (0.892)	-0.180 (0.966)	1.170 (0.962)	0.911 (0.995)
Ties					-0.037 (0.049)	-0.026 (0.060)	-0.045 (0.045)	-0.035 (0.053)
Safe Havens					0.157 (1.007)	0.244 (0.980)	-0.064 (0.791)	-0.122 (0.833)
Anti-System	0.653 (1.009)	0.769 (1.010)	0.869 (0.989)	0.759 (1.001)	-0.392 (0.536)		-0.491 (0.731)	-0.432 (0.648)
Islamist						-0.881 (0.639)		
Leftist						-0.253 (0.940)		
Nationalist						-0.892 (1.073)		
Adversary Polity	-0.078* (0.044)	-0.095* (0.048)	-0.079 (0.053)	-0.091 (0.058)	-0.178* (0.103)	-0.199* (0.110)		
Proportional Representation							0.516 (0.906)	
Single State Party								0.391 (1.170)
Adversary GDP Per Capita (logged)					0.449* (0.241)	0.488* (0.266)	0.191 (0.191)	0.203 (0.194)
Constant	-7.402*** (1.517)	-7.225*** (1.540)	-7.658*** (1.483)	-7.652*** (1.479)	-10.054*** (2.611)	-9.771*** (2.520)	-9.709*** (2.621)	-9.619*** (2.701)
Observations	380	380	380	380	380	380	380	379
Pseudo R^2	0.30	0.31	0.36	0.38	0.49	0.50	0.45	0.45
Wald χ^2	(5) 23.95***	(5) 23.77***	(5) 39.26***	(7) 38.52***	(16) 88.52***	(18) 101.13***	(16) 74.46***	(16) 74.09***
Log pseudolikelihood	-34.68	-34.30	-31.65	-30.74	-25.21	-24.71	-27.32	-27.35
Correctly Classified	96.32%	96.58%	97.37%	97.89%	98.42%	98.68%	98.16%	98.15%

Note: coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Alternative Estimation Techniques and Robustness Checks

Next, in Table 2, we present some alternative estimation techniques as sensitivity analyses. In Model 9, we apply a common logit technique of modeling only the independent variables that have a statistically significant bivariate relationship with political success (Hilbe 2009). Model 10 presents a Firth logit analysis, which corrects for potential bias in rare events of

the dependent variable (Firth 1993). Both Models 9 and 10 reveal similar relationships between the two core explanatory variables and the dependent variable. The Firth analysis shows a statistically significant and negative relationship between adversary polity and the likelihood of post-conflict militant political success. This perhaps suggests that the more democratic a polity, the less susceptible it is to the coercive effects of the violent legacies of defeated militant organizations.

Table 2: Logit Results (Robustness Checks)

DV: Winning Politically after Losing Militarily	Model 9 *Bivariate Predictors*	Model 10 *Firth Logit*	Model 11 *Only Fully Ended Conflicts*	Model 12 *Without Third-Party Interventio n*	Model 13 *Only Direct Party Ties*	Model 14 *Broad Definition*
Size (logged)	0.338*** (0.093)	0.292* (0.169)	0.411*** (0.128)	0.438 (0.399)	0.520*** (0.114)	0.400*** (0.112)
Age	0.007 (0.012)	0.019 (0.018)	0.025 (0.017)	0.072* (0.038)	0.043** (0.018)	0.014 (0.013)
Unified Front		0.645 (0.972)	-0.039 (1.270)	0.881 (1.502)	1.939 (1.275)	
Hegemonic vis-à-vis Rivals	1.266 (1.028)	0.515 (1.066)	1.240 (1.782)	1.162 (2.018)	-1.802 (1.121)	0.978 (1.038)
Attacks		-0.0004 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	0.0004 (0.001)	-0.0003 (0.001)	
Kills	0.0002 (0.0002)	0.0003 (0.0002)	0.0004** (0.0002)	0.0004*** (0.0001)	0.001*** (0.0002)	0.0002 (0.0002)
Lethality	0.069*** (0.019)	0.062** (0.031)	0.080*** (0.028)	0.183** (0.078)	0.107*** (0.033)	0.083*** (0.021)
Civil War	-0.007 (0.770)	0.165 (0.855)	1.369 (1.943)	-1.273** (1.132)	-0.985 (1.245)	0.206 (0.905)
Terrorism	-0.867 (0.895)	0.057 (1.010)	0.507 (1.155)	-3.357*** (0.863)	0.038 (1.164)	0.023 (0.852)
Sponsors	0.228 (0.285)	0.039 (0.238)	-0.084 (0.298)	0.754*** (0.214)	0.186 (0.278)	0.201 (0.233)
Sponsor Fights	1.059 (0.858)	0.498 (1.097)	1.151 (1.062)	2.612 (1.998)	1.365 (1.100)	
Ties		-0.013 (0.057)	-0.062 (0.052)	-0.061 (0.064)	-0.066 (0.063)	
Safe Havens		0.384 (0.824)	1.054 (1.386)	-0.706 (1.247)	0.392 (1.102)	
Anti-System		-0.336 (0.980)	-0.503 (0.557)	-2.505** (1.592)	-0.218 (0.158)	-0.294 (0.631)
Adversary Polity	-0.058 (0.071)	-0.142** (0.068)	-0.265 (0.169)	0.356 (0.394)	-0.218 (0.158)	-0.179* (0.096)
Adversary GDP Per Capita (logged)		0.331* (0.181)	0.543** (0.261)	0.470*** (0.169)	0.842** (0.428)	0.412* (0.213)
Constant	-7.047*** (0.968)	-7.512*** (2.326)	-11.498*** (3.077)	-19.572*** (11.094)	-14.069*** (4.305)	-9.673*** (2.189)
Observations	380	380	380	380	380	380
Pseudo R^2	0.43		0.57	0.57	0.60	0.48
Wald χ^2	(10) 50.78***	(16) 28.80***	(16) 50.66***	(16) 73.69***	(16) 53.89***	(11) 60.23***
Log pseudolikelihood	-28.23	11.81	-20.02	-9.49	-15.50	-26.01
Correctly Classified	97.89%		98.95%	99.47%	98.68%	98.16%

Note: coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

To further assess the robustness of the findings, we next test alternative measures of the dependent variable. Model 11 restricts the analysis to only contexts where the armed conflict has remained dormant for at least ten years. The hypotheses remain supported, with the additional statistical significance of the kills variable and the adversary GDP per capita variable—indicating that wealthier states in sustained periods of peace represent prime political systems for defeated militant organizations to succeed politically.[25] Model 12 restricts the analysis to organizations that achieved political success without any support (whether military or diplomatic) from third-party intervention. The results on lethality hold, while the findings on organizational size transfer to organizational age. Further, kills, state sponsors, and adversary GDP per capita gain statistical significance with positive effects on the likelihood of political success without third-party (external) assistance. It may be that in the absence of third-party intervention, domestic voters look to the most established (i.e. oldest) organizations/parties to lead in times of political change. The coercive *legacy-of-violence* mechanism may shift to organizations' state sponsors, which assist from abroad rather than in country.[26] Nevertheless, lethality matters the most in the absence of external assistance, re-invoking the *guns>numbers* conflict framework. Still, the framework is tempered, as the variables capturing insurgent campaigns in civil wars and terrorism campaigns gain statistical significance with negative effects on the likelihood of political success. Model 13 restricts the analysis to political success of only parties synonymously tied to defeated militant organizations. The hypotheses remain supported, with the organizational age, kills, and GDP per capita variables gaining statistical significance and having positive effects on directly violent organizations achieving political success.

Model 14 shifts back to analyzing the broad coding of political success and assesses only the variables with some degree of statistical significance in the prior 13 models. The hypotheses remain supported and adversary polity and GDP per capita have slightly statistically significant effects.

[25] This aligns with other empirical work showing that economic development has the same effects on political development in post-internal conflict states as it does for other states (Fortna & Huang 2012).
[26] Here, our findings align with other recent empirical work (Matanock 2017).

The FMLN: Case Analysis and Marginal Effects

In order to further address alternative hypotheses and set up marginal effects analyses, we now investigate the case of the FMLN. In 2009, 17 years after the end of the Salvadoran civil war, a politician representing the former rebel organization FMLN won the second round of the presidential election with 51.32 percent of the vote. This presidency was transferred to the FMLN's Mauricio Funes by Antonio Saca, the president from ARENA, a government-aligned party formed in direct response to the FMLN's military agitation. Notably, this election marked the first handover to the post-combatant FMLN party, and only the third peaceful transfer of power in El Salvador's history. Two months later the FMLN also gained a legislative majority, facilitating unified control. In the most recent presidential elections in 2014, Funes' vice president and former guerilla commander Salvador Sánchez Cerén retained the presidency for the FMLN with 50.11 percent of the vote in the second electoral round.

The eventual political success of the FMLN in capturing executive office came despite major obstacles. The organization endured severe ideological disputes that led to numerous defections and two spinoff parties (Allison & Martín 2012). The FMLN waited over a decade to gain the largest legislative bloc and nearly two decades to win the presidency. More than any other factor, the size of the FMLN helps to explain the post-conflict party's political endurance and eventual success. Size allowed for endurance, vote share, and credibility.

El Salvador's civil war ended in 1992 after years of negotiation between the FMLN and the Salvadoran government, as brokered by the United Nations (U.N.). By 1993, political violence in El Salvador became nearly nonexistent. Many laud the Salvadoran peace agreement as highly successful (Doyle et al. 1997), particularly given the size and effectiveness of the rebel army. Among the FMLN's military successes included significant territorial control and a military offensive that nearly sieged the capital city, San Salvador (Bracamonte & Spencer 1995). The peace agreement required the FMLN to disarm in exchange for allowing it to compete in democratic politics, and the integration of FMLN combatants into the police and security services.

The FMLN's decision to negotiate the end of the war hinged on two factors. One was a "hurting stalemate," wherein both sides understood that a conclusive end to the war was not forthcoming (Mooradian & Druckman 1999). The FMLN overcame long-standing reluctance within its ranks to negotiate a peace agreement after the loss of military support by the Soviet

Union following its collapse. The presence of U.N. peacekeepers and the Salvador government's concession to reform the police represented crucial pieces to assuring the FMLN could safely disarm. The second factor stemmed from the belief that the FMLN would do well in electoral competition. For some factions of the FMLN, the legal acceptance of the left into electoral competition was the point of taking up arms (Wood 2000; Goodwin 2001). The FMLN also had a large potential support base as the party representing the poor in a highly economically unequal country.

The case of the FMLN, in particular, highlights the importance of organization size for eventual political success. The U.N. peace agreement demobilized 15,009 FMLN members—of these, 8,552 fought as combatants, 2,474 suffered wounds as noncombatants, and 3,893 held positions as political cadres (Luciak 2001). LeMoyne (1989) estimated the FMLN's civilian support at around 50,000 Salvadorans (1% of the population) during the war. In interviews after the peace settlement, Wood (2000) found approximately one-third of those surveyed in FMLN-held municipalities supported the rebels during the conflict. The FMLN remained a very large organization relative to the size of its population, and it counted on far-reaching support in the civilian population. Regarding electoral competition, numbers are the most important measure of potential success (de Zeeuw 2008); accordingly, the FMLN had a reasonable base from which to launch a political campaign.

Size is important for several reasons to a military organization turned political party. The first, as mentioned above, is that elections are a numbers game. Size of the organization and its supporters is a viable proxy for vote share (Foster, Braithwaite & Sobek 2013). Size may also provide an idea of geographic distribution, which is critical in political systems organized by geographic districts. Militaries with support of only one region of a country may win those seats, but will have little success gaining a legislative majority to form a government or winning the presidency. The FMLN not only saw electoral success in former FMLN held territories, but also captured the mayorships in El Salvador's largest cities—San Salvador (1997) and Santa Tecla (2000). Size is also important because it provides a cushion for the inevitable early stumbles of post-combatant political parties (Allison 2006).

Similarly, while many post-conflict political parties consistently win seats in the legislature, few capture enough of the vote share to win politically as we define it. To win the executive requires a plurality or majority vote share in the case of presidential systems (50%+ in

the case of El Salvador). In parliamentary systems, being part of the government coalition typically requires a large vote share, or near a centrist position (Powell & Vanberg 2000). Despite the challenges they bring to coordinating the electoral strategy and ideological platform, having a large size and vast support base greatly enhance the prospects of winning electorally.

The second major reason that size is important is what it suggests about the credibility of the party and whether the other parties can feasibly ignore or reject the post-combatant party's electoral success. From the perspective of voters, the FMLN was a large, coordinated, organization that had enough social support to be a viable electoral vehicle. In fact, the FMLN's support remained strong enough that it lost substantial support in its first post-conflict election based on the widespread concern that, should it win, the government would restart the war (Ellman & Wantchekon 2000). From the government's perspective, the size of the rebel organization (and its previous lethality) forecloses the option to reject its election success, lest it take up arms again. Indeed, there was strong resistance in the opposition ranks to allowing the FMLN to compete. The largest party in the country, ARENA, was a right-wing, military-sponsored, party that arranged death squads against leftist sympathizers during the war (Wood 2000). ARENA tolerated the inclusion of the FMLN in electoral competition because of its potential to resume anti-government militancy.

While the FMLN's success in recent elections is notable, it stumbled in its first decade to gain an electoral footing. The biggest threat to post-conflict political parties seems to be internal divisions and defections (Allison & Martín 2012). The FMLN struggled for ideological coherence and organizational cohesion in its post-conflict period. During the war, failed cooperation among the component factions of the FMLN may have cost the organization ultimate victory in the war (McClintock 1998). As a new electoral party, members of Ejercito Revolucionaria del Pueblo (ERP) and Resistencia Nacional (RN) factions defected in 1994 to form the Democratic Party, which pursued a social democratic ideology. Even after the conflict, party members did not join the FMLN directly, but joined its component factions remaining from the conflict—Fuerzas Populares de Liberación Farabundo Martí (FPL), El Partido Comunista Salvadoreño (PCS), ERP, RN and Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores Centroamericanos (PRTC). Only three years later, in 1995, did the FMLN subsume the factions. A strong rift between the social-democratic Movimiento Renovador (Renewalist Movement) and the socialist Revolutionary Socialist Current prompted numerous defections and harmed its electoral

outcomes for over a decade (Allison & Martín 2012). One cannot easily attribute the FMLN's success cannot to ideological or organizational coherence. It was a factionalized military organization and a factionalized party until the very recent period. Its sheer size and coercive legacy helped it to endure despite its ideological divisions and defections.

Logit Marginal Effects: Predicting the FMLN's Electoral Victory

In the following analysis, we aim to bring the quantitative results to life by deriving marginal effects directly from qualitative case assessments. Table 3 demonstrates that considering the FMLN's wartime lethality and support base, it had a 61 percent likelihood to go on to political success (as it did) after losing militarily. By contrast, the model predicts that the most obvious comparison case, the URNG, had only a four percent likelihood to similarly succeed in post-conflict Guatemala. The URNG's smaller constituency and lower capability to kill accounts for most of the variation in the differences between the two organizations post-military defeat experiences.

Table 3: Marginal Effects (from Model 14)[27]

	Likelihood of FMLN to Win Politically		Likelihood of URNG to Win Politically	
	61%	x	**4%**	x
	dy/dx		dy/dx	
Size (logged)	0.092** (0.037)	14.1186	0.015* (0.009)	9.2103
Age	0.003 (0.004)	29	0.001 (0.001)	31
Hegemonic vis-à-vis Rivals	0.240 (0.248)	1	0.024 (0.028)	1
Kills	0.000 (0.000)	7868	0.000 (0.000)	1150
Lethality	0.020** (0.040)	2.34376	0.003* (0.002)	1.87786
Civil War	0.049 (0.224)	1	0.005 (0.033)	1
Terrorism	0.005 (0.201)	1	0.004 (0.031)	1
Sponsors	0.047 (0.046)	4	0.008 (0.009)	1
Anti-System	-0.066 (0.148)	1	-0.016 (0.037)	1
Adversary Polity	-0.042 (0.026)	14	-0.007 (0.006)	13
Adversary GDP Per Capita (logged)	0.096* (0.058)	8.15966	0.016 (0.011)	7.95962

Note: coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

[27] We use Model 14 for marginal effects as it all of the variables with some degree of statistical significance in all other estimations.

Concluding Remarks

This paper reaffirms the Clausewitzian and Leninist notions that war is an extension of politics and politics is often a continuation of war (Clausewitz ([1832]1984; Chernov 1924). It shows that infamous militant organizations defeated on the battlefield can transition to political parties and win in post-conflict political systems. In this regard, military defeat is less a *loss* than it is a ticket to political inclusion and ultimately political dominance. However, defeated militant organizations seldom complete the long route to political victory. Only a small subset of defeated organizations that hold two core attributes tend to successfully make the journey.

Central to the political success of defeated militant organizations stands a vast constituency and prominent legacy of violence. Constituent size speaks to the necessary of inclusion in post-conflict political systems and organizational killing capacity works as a deterrent against continued exclusion. Organizational lethality suggests that the organization could come back and easily kill people if prevented from participating in the political arena and would have a large portion of the population's support in doing so. The findings illustrate the violent origins of political participation and align with works that empirically reiterate political exclusion as the source of much political violence (Cederman, Wimmer & Min 2010; Wucherpfennig et al. 2012). In that, this study counters a recent trend in resistance studies that downplays legacies of violence in ensuring political inclusion and participation (Chenoweth & Stephan 2011; Chenoweth & Schock 2015). As such, future work should continue the investigation of the lasting political effects of legacies of violence—something of perhaps obvious importance to political life, yet an area that remains greatly unstudied from an empirical perspective.

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Appendix for "When Militant Organizations Lose Militarily but Win Politically"

Table A: Winners Depending on Coding

Definition of Political Success	**Number of Victors**
Broad Definition	11
Only Fully Ended Conflicts	10
Without Any Third-Party Intervention	4
Only Direct Party Ties	8

Coding Rubric

WINNING POLITICALLY AFTER LOSING MILITARILY

wp

Description: This binary variables documents whether a militant organization won politically after losing a militarily campaign. The coding derives from two key components: the notion of military defeat and political success. We define *military defeat* as an organization's inability or unwillingness to continue armed conflict aimed at eliminating or coercing a target and thereby achieving the central outcome goal. We define POLITICAL SUCCESS as the entrance of a militant organization into a leadership role within a formal governmental executive institution. We focus on executive institutions as the most likely place to propel the organization to achieving its outcome goal. For nuanced variations of the coding, see the main text.

Sources for Variable Construction: Acosta (2014); The National Counterterrorism Center's (NCTC) (2013a) *Terrorist Groups*; NCTC's (2013b) *Terrorist Profiles*; The Institute for the Study of Violent Groups' (ISVG) (2013) *Violent Extremism Knowledge Base*; UCDP & PRIO (2013); Boot (2013); Gunaratna & Acharya (2013); Dutt & Bansal (2012); Chenoweth & Stephan (2011); Salehyan, Gleditsch & Cunningham (2011); Cronin (2009); De Zeeuw (2008); Jones & Libicki (2008); Schmid & Jongman (2008); Deonandan, Close & Prevost (2007); Harris

(2006); Hoffman (2006); Byman (2005); Karmon (2005); Atkins (2004); Kushner (2003); O'Ballance (1998); Radu & Tismaneanu (1990); Vice President's Task Force on Combating Terrorism (1988).

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