I would be interested to see Durán-Martínez's theory and framework tested in other cases in order to replicate her results in different contexts. For example, is this only a Latin American story? If so, other studies might explore coca-producing states like Peru and Bolivia, or gang-controlled areas of El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, where drug trafficking occurs. And if this is not only a Latin American story, would this theory travel to Asia, the world's largest market for stimulants (e.g., methamphetamine pills, crystal meth)? A study of drug violence in Myanmar (the largest meth producer in the world) or Afghanistan (the largest opium producer in the world) would be of great interest to all who study political violence. Therefore, I look forward to more work on this important and insightful topic by Durán-Martínez and others who take up her valuable framework.

Everett A. Vieira III
California State University, Fresno

---

Ralph Sprenkels, *After Insurgency: Revolution and Electoral Politics in El Salvador*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2018. Maps, photographs, tables, notes, bibliography, index, 484 pp.; hardcover $50, ebook 49.99.

Whatever happened to the rank-and-file revolutionaries of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN)? Were it not for U.S. military aid, they might well have fought their way to power in El Salvador in the early 1980s. For scholars of Central America and its civil wars, El Salvador and the FMLN are an obvious comparative case for Guatemala and the National Guatemalan Revolutionary Union (URNG). But no one seems to ask the obvious questions, let alone try to answer them. Why was the FMLN more successful militarily than its Guatemalan counterpart? How did the postwar FMLN become an effective political party and win two national elections, unlike the URNG, which has all but vanished? When the FMLN controlled the Salvadoran presidency from 2009 to 2019, how much difference did it make in how El Salvador is governed? If the URNG had been as successful as the FMLN, how different would Guatemala be today?

So I ask while reading Ralph Sprenkels's book. Sprenkels, who died suddenly in October 2019 as this review was going to press, was from the Netherlands and came to Central America as a solidarity activist. In 1992, shortly after the Salvadoran war ended in a peace agreement, one of the FMLN's largest constituent bodies, the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL), assigned Sprenkels and his girlfriend to a liberated zone in the Department of Chalatenango. What they found was far more convoluted than they had expected. But Sprenkels stuck around, cofounded an association to reunite lost relatives, married an ex-militant, studied anthropology and history, and returned to do fieldwork in the 2000s. This gave him three decades of experience with the Salvadoran peace process.

One fruitful move was to ask old friends to identify all the individuals in group photos of combatants from the late 1980s and early 1990s. Then he and his friends tried to find everyone. This widened his networks and gave him access to more points of view. Of 191 discernible faces, the old hands identified 19 percent who

© 2020 University of Miami
DOI 10.1017/lap.2019.37

did not survive the war, plus another 5 percent who were now impossible to locate. Of the 145 who definitely did survive the war, only 20 percent returned to farming. Moving to the United States or other high-wage countries were another 18 percent (a lower figure than some previous estimates), while the largest percentage (41 percent) went to work for the Salvadoran state or statelike structures—the civil service, the postwar FMLN, or nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Particularly instructive were the "narrative battles" that Sprenkels found between different interest groups in the revolutionary movement, especially between rank and file and elites. The conflicting narratives reveal that the FMLN was always subsidiary to the five different political military organizations (PMOs) that came together to create it in 1980. The FMLN claimed to be a unitary body representing the Salvadoran people, but the five different chains of command always remained completely independent. They ran five separate and sometimes competing insurgencies, each with its own military units and popular organizations.

From this central fact about the PMOs, Sprenkels shows how differently they were experienced by insiders and outsiders, leaders and rank and file. Secrecy and intrigue were among their most ingrained characteristics. Why? Because only hardshell conspiratorialism enabled them to survive repression by state security forces, in contrast to labor unions and other grassroots organizations, whose transparency and accountability made them easier to kill off.

Because of the total loyalty demanded by the PMOs, Sprenkels points out, they bore a strong resemblance to religious sects. They erected the highest possible boundaries against outsiders (including members of rival PMOs), and they were prone to punish dissenters as traitors and spies. Some of the *commandantes* saw themselves as prophets leading the Salvadoran people to a promised land. Victims of state repression became martyrs, whose death justified the retaliatory killing that the PMOs themselves committed.

Mutual sacrifice was the emotional engine driving the PMOs. Militants were expected to give their lives for each other. As a survivor told Sprenkels, "we owe our lives to a whole lot of people who are dead and buried" (231). What they accomplished in terms of standing up to the Salvadoran army and its U.S. backers was breathtaking. But the toll on militants was profound. When the armed struggle ended in 1992, so did the blood sacrifices that were their wellspring of certainty and trust.

Until this point, the PMOs had been funded by war taxes and international donations. Now they were forced suddenly to downsize their bare-bones but egalitarian payrolls at the same time that peace funding provided seductive new income opportunities for PMO leaders. As a result, many of the rank and file had to make their own path back to caring for their families, finding a job, and establishing a home. Paradoxically, the return of peace required that each *compañero* suddenly embark on his or her own personal "life project" (135). Their differing fortunes led to what Sprenkels calls "the implosion of the PMO's moral universe" (306).

And so the collective-sacrifice ideal was undermined by accusations of favoritism. One issue was exactly who was admitted to demobilization camps in order to receive resettlement benefits (92). PMO commanders prevented longtime fighters, who had been allowed to retire because of combat fatigue or disenchantment, from enrolling. But if commanders had inflated the number of their combatants, they could fill their demobilization quotas only by enrolling men and women who had not actually fought. These turned out to be rural supporters, kinfolk, and other loyalists of the commanders. By the time Sprenkels asked for a careful look at demobilization lists, the organization entrusted with their care had burned them.

Actually, privilege in the PMOs predated the peace process. From the first years of the war (53), militants could survive in government-controlled cities only if they had enough money and connections to maintain a good cover. When the reform counterinsurgency regime of the early 1980s shut down the PMOs in El Salvador's capital, this forced fighters to fall back on rural bases, from which many political cadres escaped to the safety of Sandinista Nicaragua. The difference between the two destinations deepened a bifurcation between a mainly young, rural, and uneducated fighting force inside the country and a mainly educated, middle- and upper-class political structure outside the country. When peace finally came, Sprenkels reports, PMO leaders were able to rejoin the middle and upper classes, while their fighters, mainly young peasants, had to learn about civilian life through resettlement packages, if they were lucky, and through the unprotected rigors of lower-class life if they were not.

Social class also reimposed itself on PMO fighters and supporters returning to life as farmers. In the heavily organized Chalatenango Department, PMOs were able to fulfill some of their promises to peasant supporters by obtaining international financing to distribute agricultural land. But even under the best of circumstances, distributing land to a land-starved population produces debates over equity. In the case of Chalatenango, our researcher found, the most advantageously situated *compañeros* were able to hustle their successes in the peace process into new positions as rural capitalists. Meanwhile, other *compañeros* who had sacrificed for the cause, who had been led to believe that they would overthrow the rich and usher in a new society of equality, had to get used to a new kind of poverty—less severe than before the war, but still near the bottom of the class system.

Thinking back to the Guatemalan revolutionary movement, I am struck by the parallels between what Sprenkels learned about the PMOs and what eventually came out about the URNG. Usually long after the fact, URNG watchers such as I learned about the militants who switched sides with devastating results, about deadly purges of other presumed traitors, about inflating the actual number of combatants and internal refugees, and about taxing aid flows to fund combatants. I always assumed that the URNG had disintegrated after the 1996 Peace Accords because its presumed representation of a large fraction of the Guatemalan population had long been a fiction. The URNG remained alive as long as small groups of incountry fighters could shore up the credibility of leaders living in Mexican safe havens. When the peace process replaced the URNG's secretive vertical structures with NGO funding, these dissolved into a competitive scramble. Yet while the Guatemalan PMOs failed to survive the donor gamesmanship of the peace process, some of the FMLN's constituent PMOs did.

Other scholars (Bourgois 2001; McElhinny 2004; Moodie 2010; Silber 2011) have documented the disillusions and privations of the FMLN rank and file. Sprenkels contributes an explanatory framework that might seem harsh but ends up being profoundly sympathetic: the centrality of patronage networks, even in egalitarian movements that seek to transcend them. Just because a revolutionary movement seeks to invert a social order does not mean it can abolish the clientelism that defines so many social relationships. For example, how could the postwar electoral FMLN compete with the powerful Salvadoran right without allocating scarce jobs to the former militants who had sacrificed so much? It was electoral success, from 1994 on, that enabled more FMLN cadres to become politicians and administrators. This multiplied the resources that FMLN leaders could allocate to their supporters and thus to their electoral base.

By focusing on clientelism, Sprenkels has provided a very useful framework for what postinsurgencies can and cannot accomplish for the people they represent. Accepting the durability of patronage, especially in the politics of a low-income country, gets us past accusations of favoritism and corruption to the particular ways the PMOs generated new kinds of hierarchical exchange. Accepting this also makes it possible to follow Sprenkels's example and look at claim making from the lower ranks of a political movement; that is, rank-and-file struggles to keep leaders accountable. Thus his chapter on the fierce competition between different organizations of FMLN veterans, most of whom were excluded from demobilization benefits but whose misfortune gave them a new basis for solidarity. Such are the opportunities provided by a competitive electoral system. Patronage politics enabled the FMLN's leaders to maintain a relatively loyal (albeit somewhat disillusioned) base of support and to compete electorally with the Salvadoran right. Once in power, patronage politics made democratic and socioeconomic reform difficult.

David Stoll
Middlebury College

## REFERENCES

Bourgois, Philippe. 2001. The Power of Violence in War and Peace: Post–Cold War Lessons from El Salvador. *Ethnography* 2, 1: 5–34.

McElhinny, Vincent J. 2004. Between Clientelism and Radical Democracy: The Case of Ciudad Segundo Montes. In *Landscapes of Struggle: Politics, Society, and Community in El Salvador*, ed. Aldo Lauria-Santiago and Leigh Binford. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press. 147–65.

Moodie, Ellen. 2010. *El Salvador in the Aftermath of Peace: Crime, Uncertainty, and the Transition to Democracy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Silber, Irina Carlota. 2011. *Everyday Revolutionaries: Gender, Violence, and Disillusionment in Postwar El Salvador*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.