Reintegration processes of former gang members and former combatants

Bachelor thesis in peace and development studies

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Date: 2018-02-01
Abstract
In a world where conflict is common, effective programs for reintegration of the combatants must exist for the post conflict societies. There is also a growing presence not only of gangs, but also of reintegration programs for those that chose to leave said gangs. To find what parts of those processes are alike and what parts are different is the objective of this thesis. For the former combatants, the thesis focuses on those of the former rebel group, meaning the illegally armed group. The reasons for comparing the two processes are that they outwardly look quite similar in the sense that the both deal with reintegration of formerly armed groups. Both groups have also been involved in some sort of violent action, and they are both being reintegrated into a society that they are not actively full members of. The research is carried out through a desk study using the method of a qualitative research through and abductive approach. The theoretical framework that is used is the inclusion-exclusion framework from the security-development nexus. This is also combined with the use of an analytical framework which was created using three different parts of full reintegration, namely social, political and economical reintegration. Through the usage of the case study of El Salvador, the thesis found that there were both similarities and differences between the two types of reintegration, however, the differences far outweighed the similarities. The thesis also found that while the two processes may be alike from an outside perspective, they are dealing with people of quite different needs. However, some potential can be seen for changes in both processes in order to improve their efficiency, though more research is needed.

Keywords: El Salvador, Reintegration, Ex-gang member, Ex-combatants, Inclusion-exclusion framework
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Abbreviations
CNSP - the National Council on Public Security
CRS - Congressional Research Service
DDR - Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DPI - Democratic Progress Institute
EU - European Union
FAES - Armed Forces of El Salvador
FMLN - Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front
NGC - National Gang Center
NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation
NJI - National Justice Institute
PRN - National Reconstruction Plan
PTT - Land Transfer Program
SSR - Security Sector Reform
UN - United Nations
UNDDR - United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Resource Center
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
U.S. - United States of America
USAID - United States Agency for International Development
1.0 Introduction

Reintegration of formerly armed groups back into the society is important both for peacebuilding itself, but also for sustainable peace seen to the longer term. Reintegration can be viewed as a way to increase equality within a society, but also as a way to lessen the security risks. On the topic of sustainable peace, the prevention of conflict should be viewed as more beneficial to the society than conflict resolution (Isham; Kelly; Ramaswamy, 2002). Conflict prevention includes, but is not limited to, decreasing gaps between groups, both economically, politically and socially. Such gaps can lead to misunderstandings, but through interaction between the different groups, more understanding, inclusion and common ground can be found (Isham; Kelly; Ramaswamy, 2002). By reintegrating formerly excluded groups, the society has a better chance at forming social ties between its inhabitants, lessening the risk for conflict related to lack of understanding, stigma and segregation (Isham; Kelly; Ramaswamy, 2002), all of which can be related to decreases in structural violence.

Armed groups that are not fully integrated into societies present a threat to the sustainable peace, however through reintegation, often in combination with disarmament and demobilization, one can create a foundation for development and peace (Julius, 2015). Connecting this to the reintegration of the specific group of former gang members, one can see a rise in the numbers of existing projects in the last 15 to 20 years (Yule, 2008). However, while such projects have now begun to exist, the reintegration projects of former combatants have existed for longer periods of time. And while one may argue that there is a significant difference to reintegrating combatants and criminals, which is often a common background of those who have been part of a gang, there might be characteristics that are alike. Due to this, this thesis will look into if the projects are comparable, and how similar, or different, the processes seem to be.

Reintegration of ex-combatants is challenging and often time consuming. Nilsson (2005) emphasizes the need to view ex-combatants as a heterogenous group, with different areas which must be prioritised. Reintegration is, according to Nilsson (2005), the part of DDR which is most often overlooked and where there is the least amount of general knowledge. It is clear to understand that the number of ex-combatants which have existed in the last century is high, creating a deep need for reintegration. The civil war which raged in El Salvador
officially ended in 1992, where the DDR process begun (Segovia, 2009). Central already in the peace negotiations, was the need for the guerrilla group in the conflict to become a political party (Segovia, 2009), which may be viewed as a political side to reintegration. By focusing mainly on the group of illegally armed combatants from the war, one can also see another common standpoint for the comparison between the two groups.

1.1 Research problem, gap and relevance and literature review

There is not overly much literature on comparing the two processes of reintegration, namely that of ex-combatants and that of former gang members, something that might be problematic as there might be ways to further the processes through comparing them and understanding what factors seem to be similar and the other way around. This is a research problem due to fact that those processes might benefit from looking at each other and therefore adapt to strategies that are known to work, rather than both of them individually having to try out all the different ways to go about such reintegration processes. There are several countries which have experienced, or are experiencing both processes, meaning that perhaps some of the resources could be shared in order to maximise the outcome of both projects. For example, if one element is identical, and a country is going through the process of DDR as well as implementing projects for increased reintegration of gang members, it could be more cost-efficient to collaborate on said element. Also, if a country has gone through one of the processes in the past, and then later on is starting the second process, there is a chance that the basis is already existent and only needs a few minor changes, rather than to start over from scratch. In the case study chosen in this thesis, the DDR process started in 1992 (Segovia, 2009), meaning long enough ago that it has been analysed and evaluated, but recent enough to still be considered somewhat relevant, if the findings of this thesis do suggest that the processes are somewhat alike.

However, if the findings show that the processes are different enough to not be overly relatable, than this research will most likely have a basic understanding of how they are different, and therefore also suggest what factors and elements should not be considered to be included in future processes with similar preconditions. The reason for why it is important to know if one process can be used to further the other is because both processes have the possibility to affect the societies in which they take place. DDR for example, is used to create
a more secure basis which can then be used to further the development and peacebuilding of a post-conflict society (UNDDR, 2005), something which may suggest that failures in that process may lead to rockier foundations for peace, or development, which is not sustainable in the long run.

Also, seen to the other process of reintegration, that if former gang members, one may begin to understand the need for reintegrating the gang members that has chosen to step down, by looking at the case study of El Salvador. In 2015, in the month of March, over 480 homicides were registered by the National Civil Police of El Salvador. The majority of the homicides are believed to be related to the gangs of El Salvador (Gagne, 2015).

The literature that exists on gangs is mainly focused on these specific areas; gang violence, deep case studies of specific gangs, gangs in the United States and the workings of different types of gangs. The first area, meaning gang violence, is mostly described in articles featured in newspapers, but there are also a number of more academic articles on the subject. Seen to the actual academic research on the topic, the United Nations is one of the main researchers, with a main focus on how the violence related to gangs has forced people to flee their homes (Dyer, 2016; UNHCR, 2017; Fredrick, 2017; Boulton, 2011), but they are not alone in looking into the effects of gang violence. Boulton (2011) also argues that the gang violence has increased in the Central American region, something which has lead to an increased interest of the international community (Boulton, 2011).

Others focus on the international aspect of gangs and organised crime (Glenny, 2008) or the overall life when being part of a gang, and belonging in the community that it creates (Curry et al, 2014). Also, while it does exist, the literature on reintegration of gang members is somewhat limited, however Mark S. Fleisher and Scott H. Decker (2001), focus on how the prison system of the United States may not be set up in ways which assists gang members in the reintegration process into the community once they have served their sentences. However, there is not enough research done on the subject to be sure that it has been studied from all perspectives, especially not in relation to other, perhaps similar, processes. There is also literature on reintegration which focus on youth gangs (Van Damme, 2014; Viano, 2017).
The literature on DDR on the other hand is quite extensive, however not overly often related to other processes such as that of gang member reintegration. There is plenty of literature that is related to different situations where DDR is viewed as one of the keys to the peacebuilding processes in post conflict societies, and it is often related to the work of the peacekeepers (UN, 2017; UN, 2012). There is also literature on the subject which is geographically divided, such as for example the literature which explores the role of DDR in Africa (Hansson, 2007) or more specifically to countries such as Colombia (Jaramillo, Giha, Torres, 2009). The geographical literature on the subject is often focused on describing the process in the geographical area, as well as evaluating the success of said process. There is also quite a lot of literature on DDR which aims to create a basis for understanding the process (UNDDR, 2005) or that critically view it (Muggah, 2007). Others yet present it as something highly valuable, but in need of some changes in order to keep up with the changes in what types of conflict situations there are (Munive, Stepputat, 2015). There is also literature on the relation between DDR and how the UN approach the process (UN, 2006a).

Some literature does relate the process of DDR to other processes, such as the relation between transitional justice and DDR, as well as to specific countries (Jaramillo, Giha, Torres, 2009; Segovia, 2009), and there is also literature which links it to SSR (McFate, 2010). The literature on DDR which is connected to the case study of this thesis, El Salvador, is quite broad, existing both in the forms of it being part of larger projects, such as Chávez in Buchanan (2008) where the main focus is on how weapons control and DDR affects peace processes. There is also literature which evaluates not the success or failures of the process itself, but that of one or more actors that were involved in the process, such as the United States Government Planners (U.S. Department of State, 2006). Finally, there is also literature which focus more on only some aspects of the DDR, such as the inclusion of females (DPI, 2016).

1.2 Research objective
The objective of this research is to further the understanding of the similarities and differences of the reintegration processes of former combatants and former gang members. The thesis aims to create a basis for understanding the processes, and also to compare them.
1.3 Research question

- What differences and similarities can be seen in the processes of the reintegration of ex-combatants in DDR and the reintegration of former gang members?

1.4 Limitations and delimitations

The limitations which will affect this thesis are mainly those related to language. As the case study that the research will focus on is not an English-speaking country, nor does it have any other language which the author speaks as an official language, it will somewhat limit the availability of sources. However, there is still enough material from research done that is presented in English that it should provide sufficient information despite this limitation, especially in combination with the use of electrical translation alternatives for overviews of documents in Spanish. Another limitation is the accessibility of certain documents, as is often problematic with all research into topics which in some way deals with criminal activity. However, the material which is publicly accessible should provide enough findings for the analysis to be performed, and a basis for understanding of the topic should be reached.

A delimitation that has been made is that the thesis will have its main focus on the overall processes, rather than the actions of certain individuals. If data or facts are brought in from individual testimonies those will be used to amplify the findings of the overall picture rather than as material to analyse the actions of the individual. Another delimitation is the decision to limit the research to only one case study, choosing to look deeper into that case only rather than comparing several different cases to create a model for the phenomena as a whole. This decision was made to make the research more manageable and more focused on creating a detailed understanding of the specific case study chosen.

1.5 Ethical considerations

All kinds of research into topics which touch upon criminal activity should be considered sensitive. However, due to the method of this thesis, see in detail point 3.0, as well as the exact focus of the topic, no specific ethical considerations has been made in this research. As this research will be conducted through a desk study which mainly focuses on specific case studies, rather than a field study focused on individual cases, it removes the need for special ethical considerations.
1.6 Method and framework considerations
The method used in this thesis is that of an abductive desk study, through a comparative approach in a qualitative research. The thesis uses secondary sources. This method was chosen due to the focus on the processes rather than the outcomes, as is done in quantitative research. The abductive approach is fitting as it is about deepening the understanding of a phenomenon or a process through the application of a theory or general rule. In relation to that, the frameworks considered for the thesis are both theoretical and analytical. The theoretical framework which will be applied is that of the inclusion-exclusion framework, a framework which is part of the security-development nexus, something which is presented by Buur, Jensen and Stepputat (2007). For the analytical framework, the thesis will create one, focusing on factors related to the reintegration in the social, political and economical areas.

1.7 Structure of the thesis
This thesis will be structured as follows: The first chapter, of which this point is the last one, is the introductory chapter. This is followed by chapter two which is the chapter that outlines the frameworks used for this thesis, both the theoretical framework and the analytical framework. The analytical framework was created based on factors identified as central for the processes, and will be used to analyse the data that is presented in the findings chapter. Chapter three consists of the methodological considerations of the thesis, outlining the chosen method as well as an explanation as to why it was chosen. It also contains a subchapter on the chosen case study, and the background on said case. Chapter four contains the definition of the terms gang, ex-combatant and DDR, both seen to the definitions of several others, as well as the definitions used in this thesis. Chapter five is the findings chapter, where the chosen case study will be presented as well as the information found on the relevant processes. Chapter six is the analysis chapter, meaning where the findings will be compared and analysed. Chapter seven is the last chapter, and will therefore present the conclusion of the thesis. This is then followed by a bibliography.

2.0 Framework considerations
This chapter will give the reader an outline of the frameworks that will be used to analyse the
findings. The thesis will make use of both a theoretical framework and an analytical framework, both of which will be explained below.

2.1 Theoretical framework
There are several theories which could be used to analyse the findings of this thesis. This type of research is, as is all research which involves the understanding of human processes, complex. Therefore few theories can fit completely, however they can still have the potential to fit to a large extent. In doing so, they may provide a simplification of, or rather, a specification of which parts are more important of, the findings, which can then be used to further the understanding. This thesis will mainly work with the inclusion-exclusion framework which is part of the security-development nexus as presented by Buur, Jensen and Stepputat (2007).

The inclusion-exclusion framework is centered around the effect that inclusion and exclusion of certain members of a society has on said society, as well as its security situation, which also affects the development (Buur, Jensen, Stepputat, 2007). The basis for this theoretical framework is built on the ground of the sovereignty of the state, and their ability to choose which members of the society should be included, or excluded. The people being excluded from the society are those which does not get to enjoy the benefits which the included members get. By excluding an individual or a group, the state has the power to exclude them not only from the political power, but also from being protected by the laws and rights of the state (Buur, Jensen, Stepputat, 2007). This type of behaviour is argued by Buur, Jensen and Stepputat (2007) to be executed through the creation and usage of, among other things, disciplinary institutions. They also argue that it is a play of power for the state to be able to pick what traits people should have in order to be included, as it creates the possibility for them to mold their citizens into what the state wish for them to be. They also have the power to decide what type of people should be labeled as dangerous, and therefore excluded (Buur, Jensen, Stepputat, 2007), something which may also create an underlying message where those that are included are supposed to further the exclusion of the others also socially if they wish to remain included.
Some believe that this type of actions are no longer part of the societies in the world, but it does still exist in several different ways, also in western societies. There are three ways the states exclude people, and they are also done to different extents. The first one, and the hardest, is the extermination, meaning total removal from the society due to the decision made by the sovereign power that those individuals are not in any way capable of handling freedom (Buur, Jensen, Stepputat, 2007). The second way is the authoritarian response, meaning the middle layer where the individuals or groups are judged to be able to handle freedom to a certain extent, and only under strict disciplinary rules and regulations from the state. This layer is often the one that is applicable to the exclusion of unemployed people, or criminals (Buur, Jensen, Stepputat, 2007). The third and last way is the welfare response, and this is applicable to the people which have experienced certain setbacks, but only need some help in order to resettle back into the freedom of the society (Buur, Jensen, Stepputat, 2007).

The exclusion can be carried out in different ways, but one example is through forceful movement of the loss of livelihoods. Forced displacement is a common way for states to enforce the exclusion of certain people, sometimes followed by the relocation to camps, camps where they have no rights and are not protected by the law (Buur, Jensen, Stepputat, 2007).

Last but not least, they theory is highly applicable to the research of this thesis due to the special standpoint of excluded ex-combatants. Ex-combatants that used to fight for the side that won in the end have a special label as heroes of the state, but they are also able to play into their special need for help in terms of economical, psychological and social reintegration and rehabilitation (Buur, Jensen, Stepputat, 2007). This gives them a unique starting point where they are partly viewed as a security risk, in the sense that through not aiding them and addressing their grievances, they could play on the fears of the people in the society, but also through the implication that they were willing to die for the society, so maybe the society owes them the help (Buur, Jensen, Stepputat, 2007). While this thesis focuses on the illegally armed group of ex-combatants rather than those of the state, it may still be used as a way to look into the findings. This is not the same starting point that the ex-gang members have, as they would rather fall into the category of exclusion through the authoritarian response, where strict discipline and monitoring is more likely to be offered them.
2.2 Analytical framework

The analytical framework which will be used to analyse the findings of this thesis is centered around three main areas, all which contains one or a few specific factors which can be looked into. These areas, in combination with the theoretical framework above, will provide the reader with an analysis of the findings in relation to said points. The main areas are social, political and economic reintegration. For the first category, namely social reintegration, the factors which will be examined is those of community acceptance and involvement as well as psychological assistance. This can be evaluated through the existence of stigma surrounding the individuals, as well as the inclusion in community activities. This also includes levels of fear, both from the person being reintegrated, and the society they are being reintegrated into. For the psychological assistance, one can look into if such assistance is offered to the person being reintegrated if such a need exists.

Secondly, the political reintegration can be analysed through political participation. Is the individual allowed to participate in political processes, and implementations of politically agreed upon decisions? The political aspect of the reintegration can also be linked to the theoretical framework presented above. The theoretical framework is centered around inclusion and exclusion as driven by the state, and political participation and reintegration is also linked to the same topic.

The third, and last part of the analytical framework is that of economic reintegration. The economic reintegration includes education, employment, and livelihood. The first one, education, can be evaluated through accessibility to education once the individual is being reintegrated, as well as through options for financial help to reach said education. The second one, employment, means both the possibility to apply for jobs, but also their changes of getting them. Somewhat related to the point of community acceptance, this also includes a focus on if the individuals seem to be considered less desirable than other people with the same or similar credentials. Last, but not least, is the focal point of livelihood, which is also related to the before mentioned point of employment. Are the people given the chance to provide for themselves and their family? Together with the theoretical framework, these points aim to understand the processes that are being researched in this thesis, in order to see and understand if there are any differences or similarities between them, but also to limit the perspectives used when analysing the findings.
3.0 Method, methodology and chosen case study

3.1 Method and methodology

The research for this thesis will be carried out through a social-constructivist research view, through an explanatory, comparative desk study as a qualitative research with the aim to further the understanding on the similarities and differences for the two processes of reintegration. Qualitative research was chosen as it, unlike quantitative research, aims to create understanding for the how and why, rather than the statistical facts of how much or to what extent. In other words, qualitative studies is more aimed at understanding processes, as is the goal of this thesis, rather than focusing on outcomes, which is more quantitative (Bryman, 2016). It will use an abductive approach, which, according to Danermark et al (2002), uses re-contextualizing as a way to deepen the understanding. This means that the first step is the observation of an empirical phenomenon, something which is then related to some sort of rule or theory, which creates a new, or deeper, understanding of the originally observed phenomenon (Danermark et al, 2002).

By using the method of a desk study, the thesis can focus on the broader perspective of a national level, rather than the more individualised view of a field study. A field study is often limited to one or a few geographical locations, and also often focuses on a few selected individuals, for example through interviews. A desk study creates the opportunity to look at several different projects, as well as processes of the past rather than only current events. As the process for the reintegration of the former combatants in the case study selected was mainly carried out in the 1990s, it would no longer be possible to study the process itself as a field study, but only the effects it has had, seen to a long term perspective.

The study will be carried out using secondary sources which will be used through a text analysis. The sources are mostly academic articles and reports, but may also include a smaller number of articles published for organisations such as InSight Crime, but also from more academic organisations like the United Nations. It also focuses mainly on two core sources, one for the reintegration process of former combatants, and one for the former gang members, but has additional sources included as to support the findings shown. It can be argued that such focus on a limited number of sources decreases the credibility, but
considering the academic level of them, combined with the support of other sources, it should provide at the very least one perspective of a basis of understanding.

3.2 Chosen case study

This thesis will focus on the case study of El Salvador, a country located in Central America. El Salvador went through a civil war which lasted over 12 years and ended in 1992, with the existence of DDR as part of the peace process afterwards (Segovia, 2009). This means that there is a process that can be looked into that has occurred within the last 30 years, without it still being ongoing. The reason for not choosing a case study with an ongoing process is because it would limit the research to current status, rather than to be able to look at the process as a whole, from start to finish. It was also chosen due to the fact that in March 2014, a new president was elected, called Sanchez Ceren, and he came from the party formed from the previous rebel group that become a political party as part of the reintegration process (BBC, 2017), making the reintegration of the former combatants a highly current topic in El Salvador, despite the years passed.

El Salvador also have a high gang presence, the second criteria for choosing a relevant case study. In 2015, El Salvador had the highest rates of killings of all countries not part of any active conflicts (Buncombe, 2016). There are estimations that there are around 70 000 people in El Salvador that are active gang members, and out of those, most are part of one of the two largest gangs: Mara Salvatrucha, also called MS-13, and Calle 18. (Buncombe, 2016). Buncombe (2016) states that, in 2016, a survey of El Salvadoran migrants showed that about 42 percent of those that chose to migrate from El Salvador did so due to the gang violence. What this shows is an overall picture of a society where the gang presence has turned into a problem.

Also, another reason for why El Salvador has been chosen as the case study of this thesis is due to their unique approach to solving the problem of the gang violence: by proposing the first ever gang rehabilitation law. The law would mainly be directed as those members of the gangs that are willing to voluntarily leave, and work hard to be reintegrated into the society (Martinez, 2015). It is also aimed towards those individuals that have been sentenced to time in prison due to crimes related to gangs, as well as those that have recently left said prisons,
and finally to families who are considered to be at risk for having members becoming involved in gang activities (Martinez, 2015). Due to this being a state initiative, it offers a standpoint where a comparative study can be conducted, where both parts that are being compared have been conducted, at least partially, by the state. As the government is involved, to some extent, in both processes, it creates a basis for comparison where the government itself can learn from their successes and failures of one of the processes in order to further the other one.

3.2.1 Background

3.2.1.1 The conflict

The DDR process in El Salvador was initiated in relation to the end of the conflict in 1992. The conflict was a 12 year long civil war, which is estimated to have take the lives of around 80 000 people (Segovia, 2009). The conflict had its roots in structural violence and inequality, combined with unequal power divisions (Center for Justice and Accountability, 2016). Going all the way back to the conquest of the Spanish in the 1500s, one can see that land was used as a proof of status, and therefore those few selected families that had the most of it, all with European roots, could rule the country. This meant that approximately 95 percent of the population had no say in the decision making processes, allowing the families in power to rule through military dictatorship. Many smaller conflicts has been seen throughout the centuries between those two groups, the elite and the common people, going all the way into modern time (Center for Justice and Accountability, 2016).

Focusing on the time right before the outbreak of the conflict, one can link it back to a revolt referred to as ‘the slaughter’ in 1932, where a labour leader led a revolt against the ruling families that are mentioned above, which led to the deaths of approximately 30 000 civilians, and several decades of military leadership (Center for Justice and Accountability, 2016). Some may argue that the conflict never ended, referring to political violence that was ongoing until the actual civil war broke out. The trigger for the civil war was the murder of Archbishop Romero, and the following attack on the several hundred thousand people gathered for his funeral. Hundreds were injured, 42 people died and the civil war was a fact (Center for Justice and Accountability, 2016).
3.2.1.2 The gangs

Some refer to the current situation in Central America as peace without security, something which can definitely be applied to El Salvador (Milett; Shannon Stiles, 2008). The growth of the gangs in the area can to some extent be linked to the before mentioned conflict, as organised, violent crime, both national and international, rose a lot in the aftermath of the conflict. One can especially see a cause for the rise of the criminal activities in the parts of the process of peacebuilding and DDR that was not entirely successful after the conflict. What it created was a society where many of the former combatants were not fully reintegrated, but rather left with a history of a violent lifestyle, a surplus of weapons, and no jobs or land to earn a living (Milett; Shannon Stiles, 2008).

There was also an overall growth in criminality after the end of the cold war, a growth which affected the Latin American countries especially hard. The democratisation processes in the region were often accompanied with rising crime rates, and law enforcement was not efficient, sometimes due to incompetence, sometimes because of corruption, and sometimes due to a mix. This lead to a point where less than ten percent of the cases that were brought to trial led to convictions, making it a highly desirable place for criminals to grow, further developing both the transnational criminal organisations, and the more locally based gangs among other groups (Milett; Shannon Stiles, 2008).

In El Salvador, the numbers are estimated in regards to active gang members rather than the gangs themselves. In 2017, journalist Luke Grover, for the Independent, wrote that the Minister of Defense, Mr. Munguía Payés, had estimated that there were approximately 60,000 active gang members in El Salvador (Grover, 2017). In 2016, journalist Andrew Buncombe said that some estimations have put that number to approximately 70,000 (Buncombe, 2016).

4.0 Definitions of terms

The term gang may have different meanings depending on who you ask and what region you are in. Due to this, the term will be deeply defined in the context of this thesis. Below different definitions will be presented, before a clarification will be made in regards to what definition will be used in this thesis. It is important to note that this thesis focus on those
gangs that are related to criminal activity. The chapter also defines the term ex-combatant, both according to others, as well as in the context of this thesis. Finally, a definition for DDR i also provided.

4.1.1 Merriam-Webster definition of gang
Merriam-Webster is a dictionary, and this thesis will look into their learners dictionary. In this dictionary, the term is defined in three ways, the third of which is irrelevant to this thesis. The first one is simply “a group of criminals” (Merriam-Webster, 2017). Secondly, it refers to youth groups which are involved in illegal activities and often also are involved in fights against other similar groups. (Merriam-Webster, 2017).

4.1.2 National Justice Institute definition of gang
The NJI of the United States defines it in five articles, one of which has an additional 5 sub articles. The first article outlines the need for the group to consist of a minimum of three members. The second article continues by adding the need for those members to share a common group identity, used to intimidate or instill fear in those around them (NJI, 2011), often through the use of one or several of the following attributes: “…a common name, slogan, identifying sign, symbol, tattoo or other physical marking, style or color of clothing, hairstyle, hand sign or graffiti” (NJI, 2011).

The third article add that the purpose of the group, at least to some extent, should be related to engagement in criminal activity, as well as a utilization of violence or intimidating behaviour in order to advance their criminal objectives. The fourth article outlines that the members of the groups also engage in either criminal activities, or activities which would have been considered criminal had the person committing them been considered an adult, that are done in order to maintain or further the reputation, power or economic resources of the group. The fifth article, which has five sub articles, mention those sub articles as characteristics which may also exist in the group, meaning that the group can be defined as a gang also without those. The sub articles are as follows: “

1. The members may employ rules for joining and operating within the association.
2. The members may meet on a recurring basis.
3. The association may provide physical protection of its members from others.
4. The association may seek to exercise control over a particular geographic location or region, or it may simply defend its perceived interests against rivals.

5. The association may have an identifiable structure.” (NJI, 2011)

Also, the NJI emphasizes that the federal definition excludes groups that are active in drug trafficking, classified as terrorist organisation, considered a traditional organized crime group, as well as all groups which are included by the definition of transnational organised crime group as defined by the United States Department of Justice. Finally, they also define a type of gang known as criminal street gang, which in large part is a simplified version of the definition above (NJI, 2011).

4.1.3 National Gang Center definition of gang

The NGC summarise the most important identifying parts of a group being defined as a gang as a shared group identity, also through the use of a group name, the involvement in illegal activities and shared symbols and signs which are used to identify members, and which also represent the group to others, in accordance with the National Youth Gang Survey. Finally, they also provide five points which are commonly used to define certain groups as gangs (NGC, n.d.). The first criteria is the need for the group to consist of a minimum of 3 members, for which they also note that said members are generally between the ages of 12 to 24. The second criteria is the shared identity within the group, often linked to shared identifying symbols and a common group name (NGC, n.d.). The third point however differs from previous definitions as it is about the view of the group from within the group, meaning that the members of the group, as well a people outside of the group, view them as a gang. The fourth point is about the group having some kind of permanence as well as being organised, so that a group formed to, for example, commit a crime as a one time thing, will not be recognised as a gang. The last point outlines the involvement of the group in illegal activities (NGC, n.d.).

4.1.4 Clare Ribando Seelke’s definition of gang

Clare Ribando Seelke (2016) is a specialist in Latin American affairs. She lists the characteristics that most experts tend to agree on, and they are; the common name and identity of the group, including identifying symbols and signs which are unique to the group
they represent (Seelke, 2016). It is also the likelihood of the members in the group being between the ages of 12 to 24, however, Seelke (2016) also notes that while most members are within that span, there are also members who are either older or younger and still parts of groups that are classified as gangs. She also outlines the connection between illegal activities to the groups defined as gangs, and notes that those activities can be of the less serious type such as vandalism or assault, or the more serious type such as homicides or drug trafficking (Seelke, 2016).

Furthermore, she notes that criminality and the display of gang symbols are the two most important parts of the definition seen the the perspective of those in the United States, while Central American studies have some differences. For example, the terms Maras and Pandillas are sometimes used interchangeably in studies done in Central America, while others differentiate between those two terms. In general, the term Mara is more common in the so-called Northern Triangle of Central America, meaning the area that El Salvador is located in. For the sake of clarity, Seelke notes that those which do make a difference between the terms tend to use pandillas as local groups which have long regional presence, while maras are more related to the newer transnational phenomenon (Seelke, 2016).

4.1.5 Definition of gang used in the thesis
This thesis will, in line with previously presented definitions, use the term gang in the sense that seems to be, to a large part, generally agreed on. First of all, the groups must have a minimum of three members to be defined as a gang, with a side note that this thesis will most likely focus on the larger gangs. Also, the members in the gang must share a common identity which includes, but may not be limited to, a group name and the use of identifying signs or symbols. The definition of this thesis also includes engagement of the group members in illegal activities, and excludes groups that are commonly defined as rebel groups or terrorist groups. It is also important to note that the thesis may focus more on youth gangs, but does not limit the definition to exclude members of gangs that are not under the age 24 years old.

4.2.1 Nilsson’s definition of ex-combatant
Due to the problematic fact that the definitions of ex-combatants are often only applicable to interstate conflicts, Nilsson (2005) defines the term as “An ex-combatant can be seen as an
individual who has taken direct part in the hostilities on behalf of one of the warring parties. The individual must also either have been discharged from or have voluntarily left the military group he or she was serving in.” (Nilsson, 2005, p.16).

4.2.2 Definition of ex-combatant and combatant as presented by the UN

The UN has a different view than Nilsson on the term ex-combatant, but in order to define it, one must first understand their definition for the term combatant. Due to this, the term combatant will be defined first. The UN (2006b) defines the term combatant in relation to the Third Geneva Convention of 1949, stating that a combatant is an individual who fits one of the six descriptions they provide. Those descriptions are as follows: Firstly, a combatant can be a person who

“is a member of a national army or an irregular military organization; or
is actively participating in military activities and hostilities; or
is involved in recruiting or training military personnel; or
holds a command or decision-making position within a national army or an armed organization; or
arrived in a host country carrying arms or in military uniform or as part of a military structure; or
having arrived in a host country as an ordinary civilian, thereafter assumes, or shows determination to assume, any of the above attributes.” (UN, 2006b, p.4)

Using this, one can look into the definition of what an ex-combatant is, as they define that as an individual who has at one point of the conflict fitted the description of a combatant, but has since then put down, or surrendered, their weapons and intend to enter into the DDR process (UN, 2006b). They also point out that the status of being a former combatant can be reached through taking part in processes of demobilisation as carried out by recognised authorities. Finally, they also note that deserters and similar auto-mobilised persons can reach the status, if one can prove over a certain period of time that they no longer should have combatant status (UN, 2006b).
4.2.3 Definition of ex-combatant used in this thesis

In relation to the above outlined definitions, this thesis will use the definitions of ex-combatant as a person who has been directly involved in the conflict on the behalf of one, or more, of the involved parties, but has since then gone from active involvement to former involvement. This is in line with Nilsson’s (2005) requirement in the definition that the person must have seized to be involved, as well as that of the UN (2006b) which require the person to have left the combatant status behind. Also in line with the definition of the UN (2006b), this thesis will define a combatant as someone who has either been directly involved in the hostilities, or through decision making behind the hostilities. Also, for the sake of the comparison, this thesis will focus on those combatants that were part of the illegally armed group, rather than those of the national forces.

4.3 United Nations definition of DDR

DDR is a process done in three stages: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. It is done in post conflict environments as a way to aid the processes of development and recovery, in order to help in building a more sustainable peace (UNDDR, 2005). DDR is a complex process which ex-combatants go through, and which consists of several dimensions, such as for example political, humanitarian and military ones. It is done to tackle the problems which may arise after conflicts when former combatants are suddenly left without livelihoods or support networks apart from that of their former comrades in the period where the country is going through a transition from conflict towards sustainable peace and development (UNDDR, 2005).

In short, DDR is carried out through the removal of weapons, meaning the disarmament of the former combatants, the removal of the former combatants from the military structures as part of the demobilization and also aiding them to become not only socially, but also economically, reintegrated into the society (UNDDR, 2005). This process is meant to support both male and female ex-combatants, but also men, women and children that have been associated with the armed groups, without necessarily having been active combatants as a way to ensure that they have the possibility to be active in the peace process (UNDDR, 2005). It is however important to note that DDR is not in itself enough to build sustainable peace in post conflict societies, but rather should be viewed as a tool to help to establish the
more secure environment that is needed in order for other recovery elements as well as strategies for peacebuilding to proceed (UNDDR, 2005). This thesis will use the definition provided by the UN for what DDR is, as it cannot be argued to be a process that can be defined separately based on different cases.

5.0 Findings

In this chapter, the findings of the research will be presented. First, the findings in regards to the reintegration process of former gang members will be outlined, followed by a subchapter which outline the reintegration process of ex-combatants as parts of DDR. Both points will be presented in regards to the chosen case study of El Salvador.

5.1 The reintegration process of former gang members

The reintegration process of former gang members in El Salvador is often also referred to as rehabilitation of former gang members. This is due to the fact that the rehabilitation programs are seen as a way to achieve the end goal of full reintegration into the society (Yule, 2008). Most programs in El Salvador that are related to the reintegration and rehabilitation of gang members have two things in common: They are mainly focused on urban areas, and they are mostly focused on the rehabilitation and reintegration of youth gang members (Yule, 2008). There are many things which must be part of the consideration when looking into rehabilitation of gang members, such as all the external factors, including, but not limited to, age, financial background, health, accessibility etc (Yule, 2008). Yule (2008) argues that that the external factors are highly important to be considered if one wish to create a sustainable, local project. Yule (2008), also points out that while there are differences between different programs in what objectives or underlying motives exists, the main objective of the programs does seem to be same: Making active gang members move onto become ex-gang members who are integrated into the society and therefore also able to contribute to the society in nonviolent ways (Yule, 2008).

5.1.1 Leaving the gangs

However, going from having the status of being an active member to an ex-gang member is neither an easy nor a safe task in all situations. Many gangs have mottos which refers to the involvement of their members being for life (Cruz, Rosen, Amaya, Vorobyeva, n.d.). This
dedication was looked into in a study conducted by Cruz, Rosen, Amaya and Vorobyeva (n.d.), and it seems as though this is still the case in regards to gang involvement. However, in their study they also found an agreement between both gang experts and former gang members in the existence of a possibility to leave the gangs, also for those that have been more heavily involved. They argue that there are two main things which must be considered when looking into the process of becoming a former member, rather than an active member, of a gang, and those are: The way one choose to leave, if it is through gradually distancing themselves, or by cutting all ties immediately as one act. The second thing that must be considered is who is in charge is the decision to allow members to leave, something which is different in different gangs, and in different parts of the same one (Cruz, Rosen, Amaya, Vorobyeva, n.d.).

The first part of the first section of the consideration, namely those members which leave by calming down and gradually decreasing their involvement, is one that often can also lead to confusion. While the leaders view this as a less active member, who will respond if called in to take a larger part at a later date, the individuals themselves consider all of their ties to the gang to have been cut off, stating that they do not wish to be considered members who have calmed down, but rather as former members which have left (Cruz, Rosen, Amaya, Vorobyeva, n.d.).

Last but not least, there are members who ask outright for permission to leave the gang behind, and while it does work for certain individuals, it may not be the easiest, or wisest, move for all. The experts interviewed for the study of Cruz, Rosen, Amaya and Vorobyeva (n.d.) seem to agree that gangs often utilise violence as a means to control both their members and the people outside of the gang, and fear is a natural part of their systems. During a situation such as that in El Salvador, which can sometimes be referred to as an outright war between the gangs, but also between them and the state, allowing members to leave could be counterproductive for the gangs, meaning that outright requests for it may not be granted (Cruz, Rosen, Amaya, Vorobyeva, n.d.).

One may find it interesting that the study conducted by Cruz, Rosen, Amaya and Vorobyeva (n.d.) in El Salvador found quite high numbers of how many of the member were interested
in leaving the gangs completely, or at the very least calm down their involvement a bit. They also found that these inclinations could often be linked to the age and status of the members. The members that did not play the role of ordinary members, but were rather active as leaders within the gangs were more inclined to leave. This is something which Cruz, Rosen, Amaya and Vorobyeva (n.d.) links to them being older and more mature than the younger members, but more importantly they argue that those that have more experiences within the gang are more willing to leave, as they have seen the hardships of their membership through adult eyes.

Without differentiating between different gangs, the overall numbers state that only 16.7 percent of those that were interviewed for the study has never thought about calming down or leaving the gang that they are in. 14.7 percent stated that they have considered calming down their involvement and 68.6 percent have thought about leaving their gangs completely. For the overall numbers, one can also see that out of all the gang leaders which were interviewed, 87.7 percent have thought about leaving, a number that change quite a lot when instead looking at the regular members. Out of the regular members that were interviewed, only 65.3 percent had thought about that as an option (Cruz, Rosen, Amaya, Vorobyeva, n.d.).

Leaving a gang is not impossible, and that in combination with the large number of individuals who have such desires, reintegration and rehabilitation programs are a necessity. Different individuals face different challenges in their reintegration processes, however, all of them go through processes that are multi-faceted. Depending on their individual needs, they go through different parts of the process as part of their programs (Yule, 2008). One of the more common needs for those that are part of the process is rehabilitation programs for dependency on drugs and alcohol, something which is often a primary part of the rehabilitation process. Another part which is almost guaranteed to be necessary is that of psychological support and counselling, something which is done in order to find oneself and their identity outside of their gang identity (Yule, 2008). Something else which Yule (2008) considers to be detrimental to the reintegration process is the rehabilitation where the ex-gang members are aided in relearning how to function nonviolently into their society, as well as how to socialise with other members of the society that are not part of their former gang. She also states that this is one of the most challenging parts of the process, especially in El
Salvador. This is due to the fact that the average age to join a gang there is 11 (Yule, 2008), meaning that when the adults wish to leave, they have no social connection outside of the gang, nor do they have any experience of living in any other way than that of the gang members. They have been taught to be aggressive and unapproachable, feared rather than liked (Yule, 2008).

Similar problems, but perhaps to an even larger extent, exist for those that not only joined the gangs when they were young, both were born into them, parts of families that were, or got, involved. Yule (2008) explains the importance of putting distance between the member that is part of the rehabilitation process and those that used to be part of their lives during their time in the gang (Yule, 2008). The setting of goals which are realistic, activities that are in one way or another social, as well as training their practical skills and learning about the importance of health and wellbeing, for example through nutritious food, fitness and exclusion of dangerous substances is also central to the projects (Yule, 2008).

5.1.2 Actors involved in the process

There are different types of actors involved in these programs, and due to the need for different types of programs based on things such as in which sectors they take place, they often have different approaches (Yule, 2008). There are three main sectors involved in the reintegration process in El Salvador, and those are the church, the government and the private sector through the use of NGOs. The churches are responsible for large quantities of the projects (Yule, 2008). The two types of churches that are mostly involved in the projects are the Catholic Church and Evangelist Church, and they have quite similar processes for the integration of the ex-gang members. Often there are two elements that are more central, namely making the humans whole, and spiritual morality (Yule, 2008).

The churches often focus on smaller projects, which together make a whole reintegration process, in areas such as rehabilitation in order to stop using drugs and alcohol, education, spiritual and human development as well as increased work capacity (Yule, 2008). They also include psychological help in areas such as anger management, reduction of the use of violence, as well as convert them to become more religious as a way to make them feel part
of a larger group, where they can get a sense of belonging, something which in turn lessen the risk for relapses into the gangs (Yule, 2008).

Quite often in the case of El Salvador, the projects that are based on the work of the church have an upper hand, for several reasons. First of all, unlike organisations or governmental entities which has normal workers, the churches operate both with paid personnel and volunteers (Yule, 2008). Secondly, they also have a better starting point due to their community based work, as those that take part in their programmes can get a better feeling of belonging and being welcomed, despite their past actions. This may also be related to why the integration projects conducted by the church have a higher success rate, seen to the lack of relapse for the participants in said projects (Yule, 2008).

Pastor Julio Pena is one of the people interviewed on the subject, and he explain the process of the reintegration done by the churches as focused on unconditional acceptance and forgiveness for past actions. They also focus on the inclusion of not only educational development and vocational formation, but also on spiritual and psychological attention, in combination with social integration through for example sports, all monitored closely until trust is earned (Yule, 2008). He states that inclusion of the former gang members is the first step which must be taken, followed then by psychological work. They not only work in programs that are taking place at all hours of every day, but also have programs that work from a more indirect approach (Yule, 2008). They ensure that their programs are open to all that all willing to partake, not discriminating based on scars, tattoos or mutilations, but rather celebrate the acceptance of diversity (Yule, 2008).

Last but not least, pastor Pena points out that the the fear between the gangs and the society does not only go one way. The people in the society are afraid of the gang members, also those that are former ones, but they are also afraid of the society. They are afraid that they will never find acceptance, never feel like a natural part of the societies they live in. They are afraid to be viewed as worthless (Yule, 2008).

The second involved actor is that of NGOs, often working in areas related to youth violence, or gang activity are having troubles with funding, meaning that rather than preventive
measures they are more resigned to treating symptoms of the violence (Yule, 2008). As of
2008, only a handful of NGOs were actively working on rehabilitation of gang members in El
Salvador, among them one called Homies Unidos and one called Moje (Yule, 2008).

Homies Unidos was originally developed locally, as a way to face returning gang members
that had been deported from the U.S. in order for there to be an alternative to those returning,
rather than only being able to rejoin their previous gangs (Yule, 2008). It is an organisation
that is run by ex-gang members themselves, making them knowledgeable, but also
vulnerable. The reason for this is because the society still view them as dangerous, not giving
them the support they need, neither from the civil society, nor from other organisations (Yule,
2008). They provide services for participants of their reintegration programs in areas such as
recreation, a change to obtain education, inclusion in culture and sports as well as support to
further their human development (Yule, 2008). They also have a medical focus in their
rehabilitation, both physical and psychological. Such services include for example access to
health clinics, pregnancy testing, tattoo removal and counselling. Additionally they offer
vocational training, programs to get ones high school or professional diplomas, services to
assist in the job search, as well as microenterprises, and both legal aid as well as human rights
aid (Homies Unidos, 2017).

Despite all this, not all parts of the process is enough to reach full reintegration. Yule (2008)
uses an example of a female ex-gang member that went through nursing school with the aid
of an NGO, getting good grades at the same time as she removed her tattoos that marked her
as part of a gang. Despite this she was unable to get a job due to her background, the society
refusing to accept that she had a wish to be reintegrated, and had fought hard to be
rehabilitated (Yule, 2008).

Another example is the work of the NGO called MOJE, originally founded by a priest. With
aid from the church they originally created a social work group, as a way to rehabilitate
young gang members, as well as to get them removed from their lives on the streets (Yule,
2008). However, due to the stigma surrounding the groups that were involved in the project,
it was shut down by authorities, the groups were viewed as too dangerous to work with. In
the end, with some help from the international community, the project could be restarted
some time later, this time operating as an official NGO, rather than an unofficial group (Yule, 2008).

However, one of the projects that they have had the largest success is in the area of first of all teaching their participants the handicraft skills needed to produce those kinds of products that are popular in the area where they operate. Secondly, they have also helped to create more than 12 small businesses that are run by past participants, finding a way around the exclusion from the job market of the society (Yule, 2008). Finally, they also offer financial support for the individuals taking part in their program to be able to start building their own foundations to stand on (Yule, 2008).

The last actor that will be looked into when it comes to the process of reintegration for former gang members is the government. There are several projects run by the government, both to prevent relapse for youth back to violence, but also in the areas of reintegration for those that have been active in gangs, but wish to leave. A lot of the work done by the government is solely based on those under the age of 30 (Yule, 2008). The government have, through CNSP, some areas which they incorporate into their rehabilitation and reintegration of former gang members: “... vocational formation, integral health attention, education, sports, arts and culture.” (Yule, 2008, p.30).

Another government project, in collaboration with the EU is the project called Pro-Youth. It is a project with the aim to reduce youth violence, and it is divided into six areas: “Community organization, leadership in action, sports as prevention, opportunity/self-employment, rehabilitation and reinsertion and art and culture.” (Yule, 2008, p.30). As the are of rehabilitation and reinsertion is the area most closely related to the subject of reintegration, that area will be discussed in this thesis. For that area, the project have several subprojects which are approached in a multi-disciplinary way and a collaboration between several institutions (Yule, 2008). The program also train personnel in methods that can be used for the reintegration process in their local communities, ensuring a continuation of the process also after the end of the project itself (Yule, 2008).
The government of El Salvador also run a project called the Gang Farm, a project which work 24 hours a day, five day a week, but with the weekends of. This is done so that when the members fall back into negative habits during the weekends, forcing them to start over each new week, they can come to the realisation themselves that certain people can not stay in their lives if they wish to be successfully reintegrated (Yule, 2008). The main goal of the project is to create a basis for the participants to realise their own strength, and by making them see for themselves the negativity that comes from certain connections and actions, giving them a higher chance to be successfully reintegrated. The basic needs of the participants are also provided for during the program, meaning that they only have to focus on their rehabilitation, rather than survival and livelihood (Yule, 2008).

To summarize what areas the government work in for their contribution of the reintegration process, they provide smaller business trainings, training in proper etiquette that is to be exhibited by employees, the termination of drug or alcohol usage, discipline and the importance of distancing oneself from the gang communities that they have left, among other things (Yule, 2008). One main difference for this project to many of the other mentioned ones, is that this one does not require the individual utilizing it to have gotten permission to leave their gangs, as the project is carried out on farms which are geographically located far away from everything, providing them an isolated place to start their processes (Yule, 2008).

5.2 The reintegration process of ex-combatants as part of DDR

Overall, the disarmament and the demobilisation parts of the DDR is considered to be successful in the case of El Salvador, however the reintegration part is a bit more complex than that (Segovia, 2009). The peace accords from the conflict held specific plans in regards to timelines to be followed for the reintegration process, something which was not achieved due to the problems of the implementation, as well as the design of, the process plan for the reintegration. This is turn negatively affected other areas of the peacemaking process, as well as the, in that case, closely related democratisation process (Segovia, 2009).

5.2.1 The political reintegration

While looking at the political reintegration one can clearly see levels of success. In the case of the FMLN, the political reintegration was time effective and highly successful (Segovia,
Segovia (2009) also points out that the societal reintegration of the ex-combatants was unsuccessful. This is also highlighted in the special report to the United States Institute of Peace as presented by Sean McFate (2010), where the victimization and community exclusion of the former combatants is discussed, emphasizing that the social reintegration was not at all successful. This may also be related to the fact that no consideration for the special needs of certain combatants, namely females and children, was put in place, despite the high numbers of female combatants (McFate, 2010).

5.2.2 The successes and failures of the reintegration process
Most of the plan for the reintegration was focused on areas which had been negatively affected by the war, such as to reconstruct the infrastructure that had been damaged in the war (Segovia, 2009). One demand that had been brought forward by the FMLN and the FAES was the need for international cooperation as well as cooperation with national NGOs in the reintegration and reinsertion process, however this was originally ignored. With some intervention from USAID and UNDP, this was later on amended, and the FMLN was successful in organising their members to become part of the NGOs and through that to be included in the implementation of the PRN (Segovia, 2009).

The plans which were created in order to facilitate the reintegration of the former combatants into the society through becoming productive members of the community were done in several steps, such as land transfer, farm loans, technical assistance and special services to those wounded in the war (Segovia, 2009). Central to the reintegration process was the focus on the reintegration into the economical sector, mainly through participation in the agricultural sector. Other programs focused on reintegration through education as achieved through scholarships and the reinsertion of leaders among other things (Segovia, 2009).

One can also divide the level of success based on if one focus on the long term or the short term. The short term program for peace and national recovery was considered to be quite successful. For example, USAID took part in the Peace and National Recovery program, a program which in the short term helped create over 2,000 smaller projects for infrastructure, but also included counselling, scholarships and other help to more than 20,000 former combatants (U.S. Department of State, 2006). Overall, the short term solutions, which
included things such as improved infrastructure, reintegration through employment, and the fulfillment of basic needs was met, however the only long term part of the plan was that of the land reforms, and they were not fully successful (U.S. Department of State, 2006).

5.2.3 The focal areas of the reintegration process
The PTT, meaning the land reform, had special rules in place in regards to what type of land was to be transferred into the hand of the participants of the program. The main benefactors of this reform was former combatants with a background in the agricultural sector who did not own any land at that time. This was one of the main parts where a lot of the resources went in terms of the reintegration and a total of 5,365 people from the FMLN did benefit from the program, and received land (Segovia, 2009). However, while the idea might have been to create a long term sustainable reintegration process, its implementation was delayed due to administrative problems, in combination with limited aid from donors, but also in terms of political will from the government (U.S. Department of State, 2006).

The former combatants were also offered so-called agricultural loans, enabling them to be able to build an agricultural base for themselves in their community, something which benefitted 6,242 people from the FMLN, which again seemed to be successful in the short term, but did not lead to the long term reintegration that it was supposed to (Segovia, 2009).

In the program that was focused on reintegration through reinsertion in services and industries, there were three main parts, namely training in business administration and technical training, help to start up their own microenterprise and last but not least they also offered technical help for those that had already started up their microenterprises (Segovia, 2009). The scholarship programs that were offered in order for former combatants to further their education, covered three types of additional education: Secondary school, vocational training as well as university education. The scholarships were designed in a way that allowed the participants to not only be able to choose their school, but also to cover their expenses at the same level as a minimum wage would, as well as school supplies (Segovia, 2009). By 1997, 1140 former combatants had gone through this program, from the FMLN among other groups (Segovia, 2009).
The part of the program that was created in order to reintegrate those that were wounded, or became disabled, in the war was outlined in a way that it covered expenses for medical treatment, as well as rehabilitation and other things directly related to their medical conditions from the war (Segovia, 2009). While it may have had its limitations, this part of the program also contained psychological assistance to the former combatants, something which mostly failed, partly due to lack of resources (Segovia, 2009).

5.2.4 Special considerations
Overall, one of the bigger failures of the reintegration programs was failing to include consideration for special needs which may exist for women and children (Segovia, 2009). There was a large number of female combatants during the conflict and while they were originally included in the considerations for the DDR programs, they were later on discriminated against through for example the exclusion when it came to their rights to gain land among other things (Segovia, 2009). The same thing could be seen for those that were underaged, and while amendments were done later on to partly include those between the ages of 15 to 18, no consideration at all was shown to those even younger (Segovia, 2009). McFate (2010) also discuss the lack of consideration for children, among other groups of people in need of special consideration, one of the reasons for why the long term reintegration was unsuccessful.

Segovia (2009) argues that the case of El Salvador can be used to see that inclusion of consideration for the ex-combatants must be present already from the start, but also to remain included throughout the process. He also states that the failure of the reintegration was responsible for large parts of the disturbances to the peace process, as such disturbances often were led by the former combatants, making the former combatants into threats to the peace process (Segovia, 2009). Finally, when designing reintegration programs, individual needs must be included, and that reinsertion in the economical factor alone does not guarantee a successful reintegration, especially not when said economic reintegration is only done in sectors which are not overly profitable, economically speaking (Segovia, 2009). This is strengthened by McFate (2010), as he discusses the need to consider the individuals that one wish to reintegrate, rather than only viewing them all as part of the one group of former
combatants, something which is supported by the fact that different armed groups in the aftermath of the conflict were reintegrated to different degrees (Segovia, 2009).

6.0 Analysis and Comparison
This chapter will compare the two types of reintegration that are described above, as well as an analysis of said comparison. Starting of, one can quite clearly see parts of the processes that are quite alike, but also some parts that are widely different.

6.1 Social reintegration
Regarding the first factor, that of community acceptance as seen through stigmatization, inclusion and fear, one can clearly see those points when looking into the reintegration of former gang members. As was mentioned previously, ex-gang members often find themselves stigmatized, viewed as people to be feared independently of whether or not they have left their gangs behind. It is also clear to see that the inclusion of them into the society, something which can also be argued to be part of the solution to decrease the stigma surrounding them, is central to most of the reintegration projects. For example, several of the projects lists socialisation with people who are not involved in their gangs as one of their focal points, and several of them also include activities related to sports or culture, both of which indicate that the former gang members are expected to mix with the other people in the society, allowing them to bond over shared interests.

Looking into the aspect of psychological assistance, it is yet again something which was central to the programs offered to the ex-gang members. Counselling seem to be a recurring activity for those in the programs. However, when instead looking into the same thing for the ex-combatants, it does not appear to be as central. It was mentioned as part of the program that was aiming to help those that were wounded or became disabled in the war, indicating that wounded also could have referred to psychological wounds. However, as this was something that was clearly not prioritised when the resources were low, it is clear to see how it was not considered the main part of the process. Counselling was also part of the short term solution that was partly driven by USAID, showing that psychological assistance was considered important, though not the most central part of the process. One can clearly see a difference here between the two types of processes. Perhaps it would have been beneficial to
the process for the former combatants to be allowed to continue their counselling, but that can also be argued against as the failure of the process in the long term seems to be more related to it solely focusing on one part of economic reintegration, a part that was delayed and riddled with problems in the support of it, as described by U.S. Department of State (2006).

When comparing the first part of the social reintegration, the community acceptance, to the reintegration of the DDR process, it is hard to find concrete evidence of similar activities. However, it is mentioned that the former combatants came to be viewed as a security threat once their reintegration process had proven to not be successful, suggesting that at the very least, they were not included in the communities, and most likely feared to a certain extent. This view is also strengthened by the argument of McFate (2010), that the former combatants were victimized and excluded from the communities that they were trying to be reintegrated into. This shows similarities between how the two groups, namely the former gang members and the former combatants, were perceived by the society around them. However the findings on the the DDR does not list actions to change this in as much detail as the ones for the ex-gang reintegration process do.

From a social reintegration standpoint, the former combatants of El Salvador must be viewed as a non-reintegrated group, as the reintegration in the DDR had such a heavy focus on the economic reintegration mainly. This shows quite a lot of difference between the two projects, as one have the social aspect as a main objective, while the other one completely dismissed its importance, at the very least during the process. Segovia (2009) mentioned however that this economics only focus is one of the reasons for why it was not a successful process, suggesting that perhaps the DDR process would have benefitted from being a bit more alike the ex-gang reintegration process, as it could have provided a deeper reintegration due to it being done in several layers. Through the eradication of the feeling of us and them, something which they aim to do with the gangs, but did not seem to focus on for the combatants, one can make it harder to go against the norms and values of the society, something which some of the combatants did when they purposely disturbed the peace process.
6.2 Political reintegration

The second part to be compared is the political reintegration, and starting with the group of ex-combatants one can see that this was done and focused on to a certain extent. One can see that the illegally armed former combatants, became highly reintegrated politically speaking, ensuring that they held political power and were actively participating in political decisions. They were also part of the group which worked on the implementation of the PRN. If one compare that to the political reintegration of the ex-gang members, one see a lot less focus on that aspect of the reintegration. While the former combatants that were part of the guerilla groups were required to transform into political parties in order to be involved, such requirements or factors are not mentioned for the reintegration of the former gang members. In describing the objective for them to become fully functioning members of the society, a society which is democratic, suggests that at the very least political participation is included, but it is not in any way a strong focal point.

When analysing this, there are several different things to consider. For example, the former gang members might not be focusing on politics as a way to distance themselves from power, as misuse of power is common in gang structures. Former combatants on the other hand use political reintegration as a way to get closer to their communities, meaning that it can be used as a tool to reach social reintegration. Former combatants have often also been part of the conflict for reasons that are at the very least partially politically grounded, meaning that they became combatants for political reasons among others. Due to the lack of findings presented on this subject, such speculations are not to be considered facts, but the may offer alternative explanations as to why a difference is seen between the projects there, and it may also imply that it could be one of the points where it is positive that the processes are different. This shows that in accordance with the findings of one of the main points, the processes are highly different, and for future research it might be beneficial to remove the political reintegration aspect, as the preconditions for the two groups are highly different in the subject.

6.3 Economic reintegration

The last part to be compared through the analytical framework is the economic reintegration. This does seem to be the part of the process that is the most alike. Starting with the reintegration of the former gang members, education and employment, as well as livelihood,
does appear to be central. However, the same thing can be said for the reintegration process of the former combatants, with both processes showing similarities in the existence of scholarships in order to finish, or continue one's schooling. The reintegration of the ex-gang members focus more heavily on vocational training that that of the former combatants, but that may also be related to the heavier stigma surrounding them, making it harder for them to find work, even with the right credentials. It can also be related to the aspect of urban and rural backgrounds, as the focus on agricultural solutions for the former combatants can be linked to their rural background, while the vocational training is more needed for the ex-gang members with their urban background.

The economic reintegration of the former combatants seem to be more hands on, with focus on a special field, this time agriculture, as well as not only providing the knowledge needed to do it, but also the land. This is not seen in the process for the former gang members. Analytically, this shows another grand difference between the two groups, showing that despite their outwardly similar backgrounds, there are things which heavily sets them apart. While a more hands-on focus could be beneficial for the former combatants, they would not benefit from gaining land or agricultural training, unlike the former combatants who had good chances of creating livelihoods from it. The one program for ex-gang members which mentioned this type of hands-on approach showed that it was a great success, showing that the other programs could do well in including parts of the approach used by the process for reintegrating ex-combatants economically.

6.4 Theoretical understanding

Last but not least, when looking at the two processes from the theoretical standpoint of the inclusion-exclusion framework, one can see that it is in part applicable to the case study of this thesis. While the two groups may have been excluded in different ways due to different labels, it is clear to see that neither group was fully included. The exclusion of the former gang members can be said to be that of the authoritarian response, meaning the exclusion of groups viewed as deviant, where freedom and inclusion can only be reached while being strictly regulated. This can be seen in the way that the society tend to avoid employing them, and through the fight that was put up for certain programs. One example is the work group that was shut down due to the perspective of the society, where they saw a danger in
including that type of people freely, and later had to come back as an official NGO program in order to continue their work.

This is not the same type of exclusion that the former combatants seemed to face, but they can still be included in this theory due to its standpoint on ex-combatants. The theory explained that the exclusion of this group gives them a degree of power due to the fact that they are considered heroes of the state and therefore has a right to demand help from the society in their reintegration process. Because the theory mentions combatants as heroes, implying that it is applicable to those former combatants that came from the winning side, it makes it less applicable to this thesis, as it focuses on the illegally armed former combatants. That group is also the one that became the most reintegrated in the process after the conflict. While neither group of combatants were fully reintegrated, it still goes against the theory that such success was seen for the rebel group. This is not something which can be related to the reintegration of the former gang members, as all of them are on the side which is not the government, at the very least officially. While they should not be labeled as guerilla groups, one may argue that they are closer to such a definition than that of a national army.

One can partially connect it to the areas of reintegration, in the sense that certain actions can be seen as including and others as excluding. For example, in the economic reintegration, the refusal to hire former gang members, despite good grades, is related to the loss of livelihood that is one of the actions used to exclude members in the authoritarian response. It can also be used to see the positive reintegration in the political area for the former combatants, as they were given the opportunity to become more heavily involved, be part of the decision making processes, and in the longer term also have their leader be elected president. Finally, one can loosely connect it to the social reintegration, in the sense that those in the society that are connected aids the exclusion of both groups through stigmatization and segregation, something which can be argued to be a way for those included to remain in the favoured, included, group.

As a general analysis of the two processes, one can see that there are point where similarities can be found, but also many points where the focus was completely different. One should however keep in mind that several parts were major differences could be seen, they were seen
for a reason. For example, the impact of geographical background, meaning urban or rural areas, heavily affected the comparability of the processes for economic reintegration. On the other hand, the similarities which could be created for future process, most likely lay in the area of social reintegration, where the former combatants most likely could benefit from the broader approach of the ex-gang member reintegration.

7.0 Conclusion

To conclude this thesis, one can see that there appears to be more differences than similarities between the two processes. The similarities which does exist is mainly related to the focus on education as part of the economic reintegration, but also the economic reintegration through employment, as well as the inclusion of psychological assistance, though done to different degrees. Both projects aim to secure employment for the participants, though they use different methods to reach that goal, and that for a good reason. When looking at the differences, they are mainly seen in how broad of a perspective was used. As has been argued, the narrower focus of the process for the former combatants might have been one of the reasons for why the project was not successful, something which is further implied when seeing that the more broad perspective used for the process of the ex-gang members seems to ensure more success in the social reintegration. There are also some areas where different approaches was used, and that might be something that is positive. Mainly looking at the political reintegration, where the former gang members do not focus on it, while the ex-combatants seem to have it almost as one of the main focal points. This might be positive, as it is unlikely that the communities would trust former gang members with political power in the same way as former combatants, and neither would they be as interested in it.

Some of the successes in the reintegration of the former gang members should have been able to create a better basis for the reintegration of the former combatants, especially their multidimensional approach. Overall, one can conclude that there are similarities, and there are differences, and while some parts might be better of learning from the other process, many of the differences are there for a reason. What the research showed however, is that there are areas that are different, where the processes can learn from each other by knowing what not to do, such as for example, the heavy focus on only one area for the former combatants is something the projects for the former gang members can take with them in
order to remember the important of their multidimensional approach. The process of reintegrating former combatants can use the perspective of involving different actors as something partially positive, a way to increase the likelihood of promises being carried out. In the case of the land reforms, including more actors from the beginning could have led to more pressure on the government to follow through with what was promised, in the agreed on timeplan.

Finally, for future research on the topic, it would be recommended to use the different perspectives, such as focusing on the difference between urban and rural areas, and the effect such geographical differences may have the processes. It could also be beneficial to focus on the impact of the earlier stages, such as disarmament and the effect it has on the process, as well as the differences that arise based on the different actors involved. If looking at the reintegration processes is the focus, it could also be beneficial to compare other types of armed groups, such as for example paramilitary. Lastly, by researching other case studies, one could create a better overview of the subject as a whole, and by doing so one could draw more conclusions on whether or not the processes can benefit from each other or not, especially if looking in to cases where both processes are carried out at the same time. Finally, it would be beneficial to analyse the subject from the perspective of a different theoretical framework, as the inclusion-exclusion framework seemed more fitting at first than it actually was when applied to the findings.
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