

Preliminary Results of a Survey of Demobilized Combatants in Colombia

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***Draft. Findings are preliminary and subject to revision.**

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Micro-level analyses of war-related phenomena such as recruitment, armed groups' behavior, and demobilization often face a dearth of systematic data. Given the problems of security and the lack of working institutions common in countries experiencing war, data gathering is typically difficult, if not impossible. As a result, most studies on the microdynamics of civil conflict rely exclusively on anecdotal or ethnographic data. Hence, the Demobilization and Reintegration Program (DRP) launched by the Colombian government in 2002 presented a unique opportunity to collect systematic data on a variety of aspects of civil war. Colombia is a country where, in spite of nearly four decades of conflict, working institutions exist and it is possible to collect systematic data on sensitive topics related to the conflict.

The Colombian case provides an added advantage: in addition to the DRP, peace negotiations conducted between the government and the main paramilitary factions led to the "collective demobilization" of about 26,000 combatants of these groups. Unlike those participating in the DRP, who deserted their units on an individual basis, the paramilitaries who collectively demobilized did not make an individual choice. We exploit this difference between the two processes of demobilization to assess whether there is a systematic bias in the responses of individually demobilized combatants (IDEs); we do so by comparing collectively demobilized paramilitaries with individually demobilized paramilitaries.

After gaining the approval of the Colombian government, we conducted a large-scale survey of ex-combatants in the summer of 2005, following a pilot survey in the summer of 2004. The survey includes both guerilla and paramilitary deserters and collectively demobilized paramilitaries. We completed 829 interviews with ex-combatants and we will implement a control survey with civilians in 2006. The data provide detailed and systematic evidence on a wide array of behaviors and dynamics occurring during the war, as well as on the demobilization and reintegration processes.

The summary of results presented in this report provides a preliminary yet general overview of responses to our survey. We begin with a short description of the Colombian conflict and the DRP, followed by a description of the project and our methods. Section 2 covers the prewar profile of the ex-combatants: who they were, where they came from, and what their experiences were prior to joining. We hope to get a sense of their motivations for joining armed groups. Section 3 provides a description of the

¹ We would like to thank the Colombian Ministry of Interior and Justice and the Ministry of Defense for allowing us to carry out this survey. We are particularly grateful to the staff of the Program of Reintegration in Bogotá and of the Opportunity and Reference Centers of Montería and Cúcuta for their invaluable support. Pierre Landry's comments on the survey instrument and the sampling procedures were crucial. For additional helpful comments on the survey instrument we would also like to thank Elizabeth Wood, John Lapinsky, Juan Linz, Francisco Gutierrez, Mauricio Rubio, Laia Balcells, María Victoria Llorente, and Macartan Humphreys. Abbey Steele's help extended beyond the survey instrument to the implementation of the pilot survey. Finally, we would like to thank the students who worked as enumerators. Our special thanks go to Mauricio Solano for unconditional support and his outstanding work as team leader and interviewer.

characteristics of the three main armed groups: the insurgent FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and ELN (National Liberation Army), and the counterinsurgent paramilitaries.² In this section, we cover aspects such as the internal organization of these groups and their relation to the civilian population. Section 4 covers issues related to the uses of violence, the practices of denunciation and the dynamics of control during the war. We conclude with Section 5, which covers problems related to the process of demobilization and reintegration.

In general, our data point to the following patterns:

- **Prewar characteristics and recruitment:** Recruitment does not take place uniformly across the country, but is endogenous to the local dynamics of the conflict, especially the presence of armed groups. These groups recruit (primarily young) people in places where they already have a presence, rather than waiting for people to come and join them from elsewhere, as is widely argued especially in the social movement literature. Recruitment is also not related to the political conflict between the main parties. In the areas they control, armed groups recruit among a young population that has been repeatedly victimized in the past or has participated in one way or another in the conflict. The attitudes of civilians are reported as mixed—no sense of widespread support for any particular group emerges. However, we find no evidence in favor of the popular metaphor that joining an armed group is akin to finding a job (“greed”); yet, neither do we find strong evidence of a “grievance” story, whereby people join because the armed groups articulate a justice message. Lastly, we find no clear evidence of different recruitment dynamics at work for different groups, even though groups are different from each other in several respects.
- **Group characteristics and internal organization:** We find support for the conjecture that insurgent groups emphasize ideology more than the paramilitaries; however, we do not find support for the claim that the less ideological paramilitaries are also less disciplined; indeed, both groups appear to be highly disciplined, willing to punish immediately and in an exemplary fashion those members who exhibit improper behavior (however defined by the group). Our evidence suggests that armed groups in Colombia behave like quasi-armies, definitively closer to the soldier model than that of the bandit. Last, we find that, despite differences, all groups are concerned in some way about the relations they develop with the civilian population and implement strategies of rule and state-building.
- **Violence and control:** We find considerable evidence that a substantial amount of the violence that groups use against civilians is related to the management of information and, more specifically, to the elimination of information leaks (and,

² Referring to the ‘paramilitaries’ as if they were a unified group is not accurate because most of these groups emerged separately from each other and had a different structure. Yet, given the number of groups our respondents referred to we present all responses about paramilitary organizations together. We decided to follow this approach because several paramilitary factions formed a federal structure, the AUC, or United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia. However, we are aware of the differences that exist across paramilitary groups on a variety of characteristics.

presumably, the deterrence of this practice). Many ex-combatants point to the practice of personal denunciation, whereby individuals take advantage of the war and the demand for information to denounce personal enemies. They also point to a complex relation between violence and control, whereby more control produces less violence – though violence may have contradictory effects on both subsequent control and civilian collaboration.

- **Demobilization and reintegration:** One finding is that desertion is a “repeat” behavior, which may point to demoralization among fighters. The main reported motivation behind desertion is the desire to retrieve one’s family and reduce the hardship of military life. Most of the collectively demobilized respondents told us that they agreed with their leaders’ decision to demobilize their groups. In terms of their experience as demobilized combatants, most complained about unfulfilled promises of the program and also about personal security problems.
- **Methodology:** Although we have found some areas where significant (and puzzling) differences exist between collectively and individually demobilized combatants, we are struck by the similarity in answers across the two groups (as we are about the similarities that cut across the three factions). This would suggest that the bias from interviewing deserters may not be as significant as previously thought.

1. The Project

1.1 The Colombian Conflict and the Demobilization and Reintegration Program

The Colombian conflict entails a complex set of phenomena that have been studied in different literatures dealing with civil war, including: guerrilla war, natural resources (cocaine and heroin), emergence of paramilitary groups, violence against civilians, displacement of civilians, emergence of peaceful civilian resistance groups, different organizational structures of various guerrilla and paramilitary groups, failed peace processes, ongoing demobilization programs, and complex relations between armed groups and local public officials.

The conflict can be traced to a civil war called ‘*La Violencia*’ (‘The Violence’), which occurred between 1949 and 1957. During that period, fighting between members of the two traditional parties (Liberal and Conservative) caused the death of an estimated 200,000 people. Even though violence decreased following an agreement between the two parties, different guerrilla groups emerged in the following decade, including the FARC, the ELN, and the Popular Liberation Army (EPL). The causal relation between *La Violencia* and the formation of these guerrilla groups is, however, still debated in the literature.

Early on, these groups were only active in a few peripheral areas of the country, and their military capacity was low. As a result, successive Colombian governments did not consider them a serious threat to stability. In the mid-1970s, however, these groups started to grow both in their recruiting success. The illicit drug industry, ‘war taxes’ and, later on, kidnapping seem to have provided a way to finance their operations, which led

them to improve their military capacity and expand into new territories, especially in areas where Colombia's state capacity was very low. The use of techniques such as kidnapping and extortion affected regional elites across the country. As a reaction, paramilitary armies began to develop. These were initially supported by voluntary and forced contributions by landlords and firms, as well as by drug trafficking profits³. While few groups were genuinely self-defense groups formed by peasants, most of them were formed by powerful local and regional elites. The national army, although not directly involved in the emergence of these groups, has been repeatedly accused of tolerating and abetting them.

Beginning in the late 1980s, the intensity of the armed conflict and levels of violence increased dramatically, with growing encounters between guerrillas, paramilitaries, and the army. The total number of attacks by armed groups (including homicides, massacres, kidnappings, attacks to infrastructure, sabotage of political events, and hijacking) increased steadily. The FARC emerged as the most powerful insurgent group with roughly 20-30,000 combatants, followed by the ELN, with around 6000 fighters (Gutiérrez 2003). Smaller groups, such as the EPL and the M-19, negotiated their demobilization with the government in the early 1990s. Paramilitary groups also experienced a tremendous expansion during the same period: by the end of the 1990s, they had recruited about 10,000 combatants (Sánchez et al. 2003), and by 2003 roughly 20,000 fighters formed their ranks.

Colombian governments have signed various peace agreements since 1990.⁴ Approximately 4,790 people demobilized within these agreements (Franco, 2000). President Álvaro Uribe (2002-2006) launched a voluntary demobilization program in 2002, which has so far attracted around 8,700 combatants who were members of either guerrilla or paramilitary groups. By December 2005, voluntary demobilized combatants included 4,292 from the FARC, 3,040 from paramilitary groups, and 1,176 from the ELN.⁵ The government also entered peace negotiations with paramilitary leaders that led to the demobilization of 30,150 combatants from different groups united under the umbrella of the AUC (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia).⁶

Within the voluntary demobilization program, combatants who leave their groups go first through a process directed by the Ministry of Defense. They then join the "Civil Life Reinsertion Program" directed by the Ministry of the Interior and Justice, which provides two years of housing, food, clothing, education or training, as well as subsidizes for selected small business projects. During the first three years of the program, demobilized combatants were living in groups of about 40 individuals "safe houses" (*albergues*), which were located in residential neighborhoods of big cities. In the summer of 2005,

³ See Romero, Mauricio (2003). "*Paramilitares y Autodefensas 1982-2003*". Bogotá: IEPRI.

⁴ Eight groups have demobilized completely or in part within these agreements: M-19, EPL, PRT, Quintin Lame, CRS, Medellín Militias, Metropolitan Militias, Militias of Valle de Aburra, Francisco Garnica Front, and Ernesto Rojas Front.

⁵ Colombian Ministry of Defense (<http://www.mindefensa.gov.co/>).

⁶ According to the announcement made by the office of the Peace Commissioner in April 2006 (*El Tiempo*, 4 April 2006).

however, following a bomb attack at one of the safe houses in Bogotá, the system was abolished and most ex-combatants were relocated to rural areas.

The collective demobilizations are run by the Peace Commissioner's Office, an independent governmental agency that sets the conditions under which combatants of each group demobilize. The Ministry of Interior and Justice has the responsibility of putting into practice the conditions set in these negotiations. Instead of providing housing for each ex-combatant, the government supplies them with monthly allowances for two years, and they also have access to education or training. Although these ex-combatants can choose the city where they want to live, most stay in the areas where they were living as combatants.

1.2 The Survey

The survey was conducted in two stages. We first tested the viability of the project and the questionnaire by conducting a pilot survey in the summer of 2004. We interviewed 50 ex-combatants of both guerrilla and paramilitary groups who voluntarily demobilized between 2001 and 2003. In order to improve our questionnaire we left most questions open-ended and then redesigned the list of possible responses based on our interviewees' answers. Given the positive results of the pilot survey, we designed a large-scale survey for 2005.

In the summer of 2005, we conducted the survey with 829 ex-combatants. We decided against working with professional enumerators given the type of questions we were dealing with; instead, we wanted to have a team of enumerators who understood the way in which survey responses were to be used to test hypotheses. We hired 50 undergraduate students of political science, economics, and psychology at Colombian universities (from a list of about 160 students who responded to our call for applications), and trained them accordingly. We conducted 439 interviews in Bogotá with voluntarily demobilized ex-combatants of the FARC (henceforth referred to as "IFARC"), ELN ("IELN"), and paramilitary groups ("IPARAS"); furthermore, we conducted 390 interviews in Cúcuta and Montería, two medium-size cities in the north-west and the north-east of the country with collectively demobilized ex-paramilitaries ("CPARAS"). Finally, we will conduct a control survey with civilians in 2006.

The survey instrument was designed to gather evidence on three main topics: joining, group organization and practices, and demobilization; it includes 255 questions of which the majority are close-ended and a few are open-ended. This allowed us to collect both quantitative and qualitative evidence.

Ex-combatants' participation in the survey was voluntary. Both in the interviews we conducted with IDEs in Bogotá and the ones with CPARAS in Cúcuta and Montería, we first told interviewees about the project and its goals, and described the contents of the questionnaire. We also told them that, as a token of gratitude, we were going to give small gifts to share among everyone we told about the project, regardless of each individual's decision to participate in the survey. Respondents were also explicitly informed that their decision to participate did not imply they need to answer all questions.

Even more, they were reminded throughout the survey of their freedom to choose not to answer any question and to stop the interview at any moment. Interviews lasted on average 1.5 hours.

1.3 Sampling Strategy and Limitations

Due to a series of constraints, it was not possible to produce a truly random sample of the individually demobilized and collectively demobilized ex-combatant populations. In the case of the IDEs, they were living in safe houses in several cities, some of which were unsafe to visit with our student enumerators. However, given that the majority of these ex-combatants were living in Bogotá, we decided to conduct all our interviews in this city. Since many ex-combatants who demobilized all around the country chose to live in Bogotá for safety reasons, the population of ex-combatants living in this city was highly varied in terms of place of origin and demobilization. In fact, the 439 ex-combatants in our sample came from around 160 different municipalities located in 30 of the 33 departments of the country.

In Bogotá we faced additional constraints. The Ministry of Interior and Justice granted us access to a number of safe houses we could choose among the list of all safe houses. Our plan was to complete 430 questionnaires by visiting a random sample of safe houses, and then to interview each resident (it was extremely difficult to visit all safe houses in Bogotá). Given that newly demobilized fighters are assigned to safe houses according to availability of spots, and that there are no other criteria for assigning them to a specific safe house, the distribution of ex-combatants across safe houses can be considered to be random. Thus, the individuals living in a randomly selected safe house constituted a quasi-random sample.

The first run of interviews were conducted in 17 safe houses randomly selected out of 32; additionally, for logistical and safety reasons, we interviewed a number of ex-combatants not in their safe houses but in a location of our choosing where they were invited to come. We initially gave a short presentation of the project to all ex-combatants and we then asked for their voluntary participation, which was over 95%. We completed 315 interviews during these visits.

Due to security issues, we were forced to stop the visits to safe houses,⁷ and instead completed 124 additional interviews at the office of the Ministry of Interior and Justice that handles all requests and paperwork of the IDEs. All beneficiaries of the Reintegration Program have to visit these offices in order to solve a variety of issues related to their training, families, and job placement. We conducted sporadic visits during two months. We don't believe that those who visited these offices in the days and time when we conducted our interviews share a particular characteristic that could lead to a bias in their survey responses. We randomly selected a few beneficiaries every day, told them about the project and asked them to participate in our survey in a private location. Again, participation was over 95%. In short, our sample was not random, but we made every effort to minimize bias.

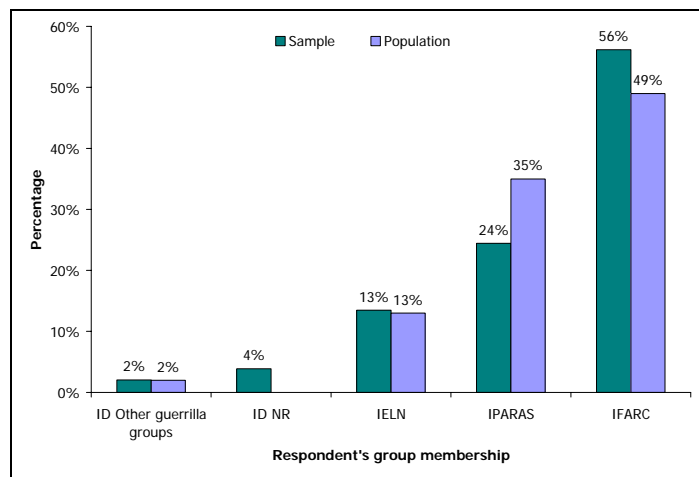
⁷ On July 15 2005, a bomb exploded in front of one of the safe houses. The government then decided to close all the safe houses within a few weeks and relocate all ex-combatants in rural areas.

Turning to the CPARAS, the universe of this population consisted of 4,433 individuals at the time of the survey (today they number about 30,000). They were distributed in seven towns. We faced, again, constraints for designing a truly representative sample: we could not take our enumerators to all of the towns due to security issues. We decided to conduct surveys in two towns where (i) a higher percentage of ex-combatants were living, and (ii) the population varied more in terms of group membership and place of origin. We selected the cities of Montería and Cúcuta, where 32% and 13% of all CPARAS lived, respectively. Cities like Medellín and Cali had a higher number of CPARAS, but the percentage who were combatants in urban militias was quite large, which would have made comparisons with other paramilitary organizations problematic.

Given that CPARAS do not live in safe houses, but among the population, and because their contact information is highly protected, we had to use a different strategy to reach our interviewees. With the cooperation of the local offices of the Ministry of Interior and Justice we asked about 500 ex-combatants to attend a meeting at a secure place in the cities of Montería and Cúcuta. To our surprise around 400 of the 500 came, and 99% agreed to participate in the survey. Even though we cannot control for the possible bias derived from the fact that respondents had to select themselves to attend, the fact that only less than 20% refused to come makes us confident about the sample. We completed 390 interviews in these two cities.

Data provided by the Ministry of Defense in December 2005 suggest that our sample is representative of the IDE population in terms of group membership. Figure 1.1 presents the group distribution of the IDEs and our sample of IDEs by group membership:

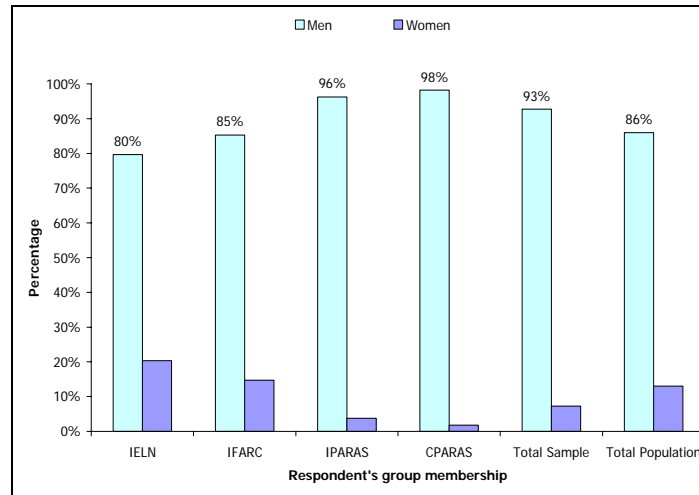
Figure 1.1: Group Membership



The sample mirrors group membership of the population of IDEs in the case of the ELN and 'Other Guerrillas.' FARC ex-combatants are slightly overrepresented and paramilitaries are slightly underrepresented. However, this gap was intentional given that we interviewed 390 collectively demobilized paramilitaries. According to the data of the

Ministry of Defense, 86% of all IDEs are men and 13% are women. For reasons that remain unclear, women are thus underrepresented in our survey, at 7% (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: Respondents by Sex



Beyond this, the project faces two sets of limitations: the first is related to the topic of study and the restrictions that conducting research within a context of armed conflict impose, and the second relates to limitations inherent in any survey.

First, our sample is not representative of the universe of combatants in Colombia, as respondents were selected from the population of combatants who voluntarily joined a demobilization program. It is not even a representative sample of combatants who were willing to demobilize, since demobilization programs have been implemented by different governments, and the ex-combatants of our sample chose to join this program now, under the current government, rather than earlier. These facts imply that our generalizations about the FARC and the ELN have limitations. Obviously, it is difficult (if not impossible) to conduct a survey of actual combatants and even if we were able to, it is not clear that the responses would be unbiased given their situation when responding. At the same time, since our survey is mostly about 'observed behavior' and 'facts' rather than 'mental states' and 'attitudes,' the ex-combatants' responses can still be useful for understanding the different dynamics of the conflict in a more systematic way. Furthermore, some of our findings can be cross-checked with existing aggregated data at the municipality level as well as qualitative and ethnographic data. In addition, by comparing collectively and individually demobilized paramilitaries we are able to measure the existing bias in specific responses given by ex-paramilitary fighters. An additional way in which the data will allow us to assess biases is by comparing interviewees' responses about groups they didn't join: we asked many questions about all armed groups the respondents interacted with as civilians, i.e., before they enlisted, and these responses give us a sense of the bias in the responses of those talking about the group to which they belonged.

An additional concern about the sample is the difficulty of controlling for those who decided to participate in the survey versus those who did not. We do not think this poses a big problem for two reasons. First, given that the questionnaire does not ask respondents about what they themselves *did* we expect that responses of those who did not want to answer the survey would have not differed in a systematic way from those provided by ex-combatants who agreed to answer the survey. Second, the percentage of participation was very high, both among IDEs (over 95%) and CPARAS (98%). We cannot account for those 100 CPARAS who declined to come to the meeting we invited them to attend, but since they did not know what the meeting was about, we cannot assume they decided not to attend for any systematic reason that would have biased their responses.

The second set of this project's limitations consists of limitations that any survey faces—mainly in terms of validity, i.e., the degree to which the questions provide the information that the researcher desires. According to Sudman and Bradburn (1982) the following problems could be present in a survey like ours:

- (i) *Memory*. The respondent may forget about particular events.
- (ii) *Telescoping*. Incorrect placement of events in a particular time period. Usually forward telescoping is more common than backward telescoping; this is translated into over-reporting of the telescoped material in the survey.
- (iii) *Motivation*. Deliberate or motivated non-reporting, or over- or under-reporting.
- (iv) *Communication*. Respondent's failure to understand the question in the way intended by the researcher.
- (v) *Knowledge*. The respondent ignores a specific fact.

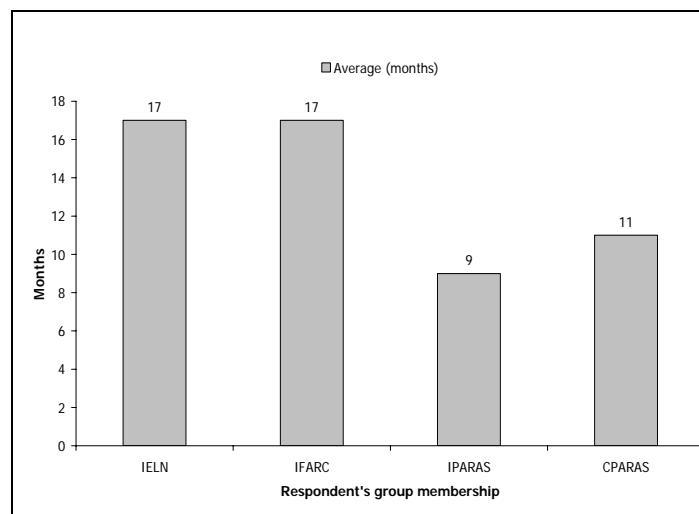
Some of these possible sources of bias are more pertinent to this survey than others. We believe that most problems of *communication* and *knowledge* were prevented by the presence of an enumerator who knew the questionnaire very well and the type of evidence we wanted to gather. In addition, the pilot survey allowed us to test the questionnaire and re-design questions that were problematic.

Problems of *memory*, *telescoping*, and *motivation* are more challenging. We expect to measure some of these problems by comparing the answers of combatants who spent less time in armed groups with those who spent many years as combatants to assess if there are systematic differences in their responses. Of course these differences could also be due to *real* changes through time (i.e., more intense attacks could have happened in one period of time than in other); however, since respondents were located in many different geographical areas, and given that many aspects of the conflict vary across both time and location, we should be able to identify systematic differences between the responses of those who fought for very few years and those who fought for several years. We tried to decrease problems of *telescoping* by asking mostly about descriptions of particular events instead of their frequency of occurrence. For example, instead of asking how usual it was that combatants did X or Y, the questionnaire asks whether this happened at all or not, or asks for a description of *one occasion* in which it happened. We also expect that biases

derived from respondents' *motivation* to under- or over-report were decreased by the fact that we asked them about what they *saw* instead of what they *did*, which reduces—although does not eliminate—incentives to lie. However, personal questions such as those about family structure and motivations to join a group or desert may still face this kind of bias. For this reason we tried to generate different measures for some of our most sensitive questions.

Figure 1.3 shows the average number of months between demobilization and survey participation by group membership. IDE guerrilla fighters had been demobilized, on average, for 1.5 years when they responded to the survey. IPARAS had been demobilized for 9 months on average, while CPARAS had been for 11 months. The fact that our respondents were combatants only one year before the interviews reinforces our perception that problems associated with memory are less pervasive than they would be if we had interviewed ex-combatants who served in wars many years earlier.

Figure 1.3 Time Since Demobilization



Finally, given the length of the questionnaire and the sensitive topics it covers, boredom and tiredness could affect responses. However, both in the pilot and large-scale surveys we asked respondents to assess the questionnaire at the end and their experience of it and 95% of all IDEs and 97% of all CPARAS gave positive feedback. To our enumerators' surprise, many respondents even wanted to talk more about their experiences after two hours of being interviewed.

Overall, we do expect some under- and over-reporting as well as bias in the sample of IDEs. However, we believe we will be able to measure some of these biases by comparing responses across respondents and by cross-checking some responses with existing qualitative evidence—which will be easy for some questions, such as those related to the internal organization of the guerrillas, on which a large literature exists.

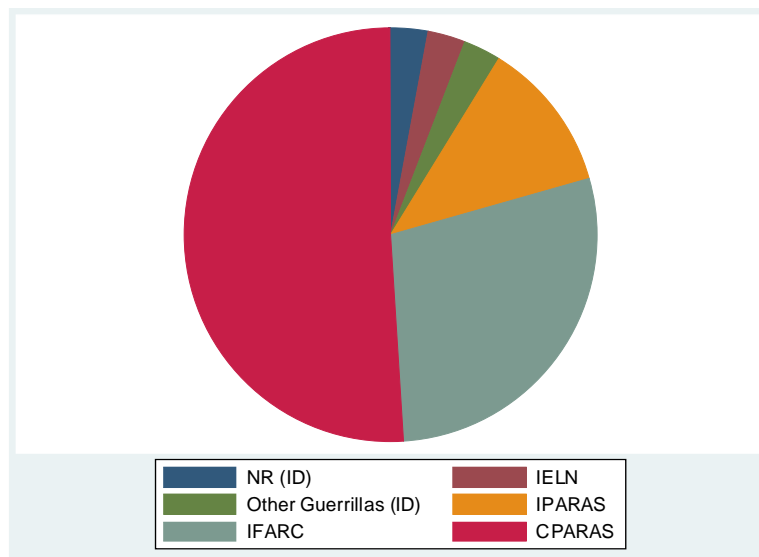
2. Ex-combatants' profile and recruitment

About half of the questionnaire includes questions on ex-combatants' lives before joining any armed group organization. We ask about personal, family, and community characteristics, including the respondents' relations with combatants when they were civilians. The purpose of collecting all these data on ex-combatants' lives before enlisting is twofold: first, to gather evidence that would allow us to test competing hypotheses of recruitment. Second, because a better understanding of ex-combatants' profiles may be essential for assessing various demobilization programs and studying the prospects for reintegration into civil life. This section presents the preliminary results from this part of the questionnaire.

2.1. Individual Characteristics

Figure 2.1 presents respondents by group membership, differentiating between individually demobilized and collectively demobilized. As mentioned before, only paramilitaries have demobilized collectively; hence, we only interviewed collectively demobilized ex-combatants in the case of paramilitary groups. About half of our sample consists of CD paramilitaries (52%). The other half is composed mainly of IFARC, IELN, and IPARAS. A small percentage fought in other guerrilla groups (2.7%) and about 3%—all IDs—did not report their group affiliation when responding the survey.

Figure 2.1. Respondents by Group Membership

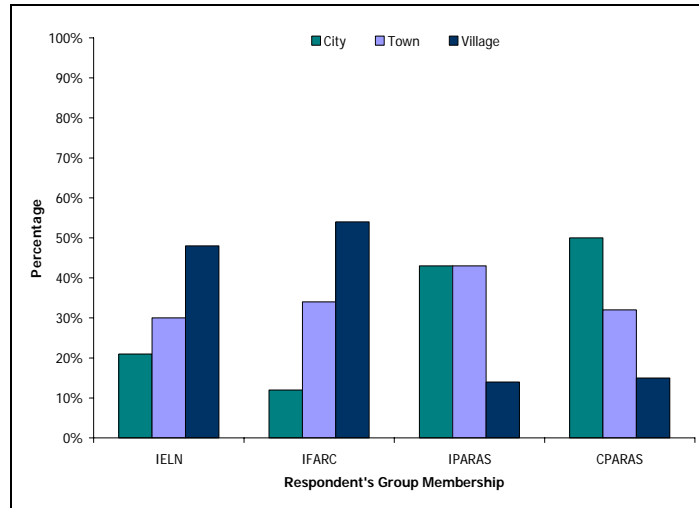


Given that very few ex-combatants come from guerrilla groups other than the ELN and the FARC, our presentation of the data will focus mostly on these two guerrilla groups and the paramilitaries.

As expected, guerrilla groups are more successful in recruiting in rural areas than the paramilitaries, whose recruits come mostly from urban areas (Figure 2.2). It should be

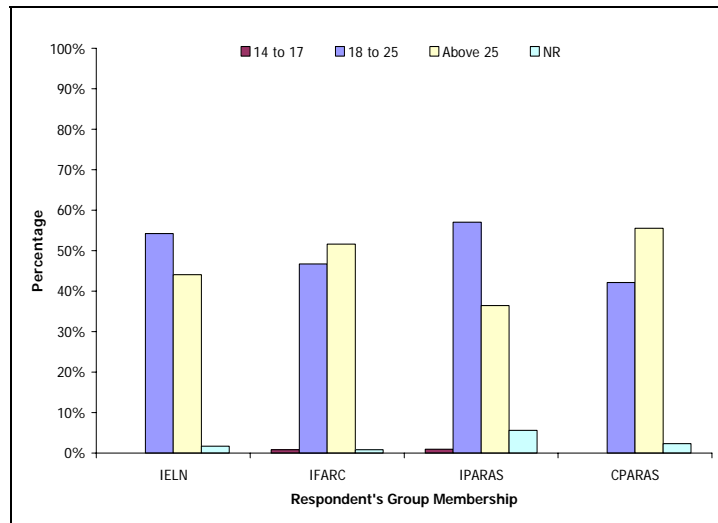
noted, however, that many towns in Colombia don't have the characteristics that are often associated with the term 'urban': these towns are typically small with often only a few state institutions present, and public utilities are inaccessible to a subset or in some cases, most, of the residents.

Figure 2.2. Place of Residence at Time of Enlistment



Turning to age, our sample is young: between 40% and 50% of all respondents are between ages 18 and 25 (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3. Respondents by Age



What is more, the current DRP faces the challenge of reintegrating into civil life primarily young people who have already spent, on average, 5 years fighting (Figure 2.4). The time of service of those ex-combatants who are between 19 and 25 years old is

presented in greater detail in Figure 2.5: about 70% spent more than 3 years fighting, while only 20% spent less than 2 years.

Figure 2.4. Respondents by Age and Time Served

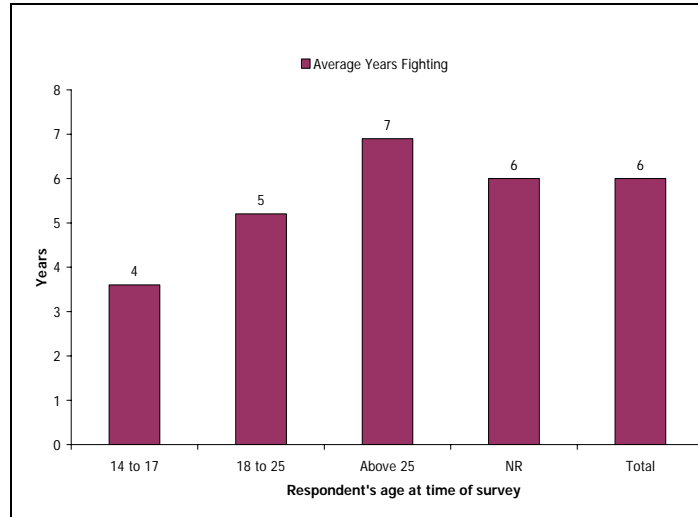
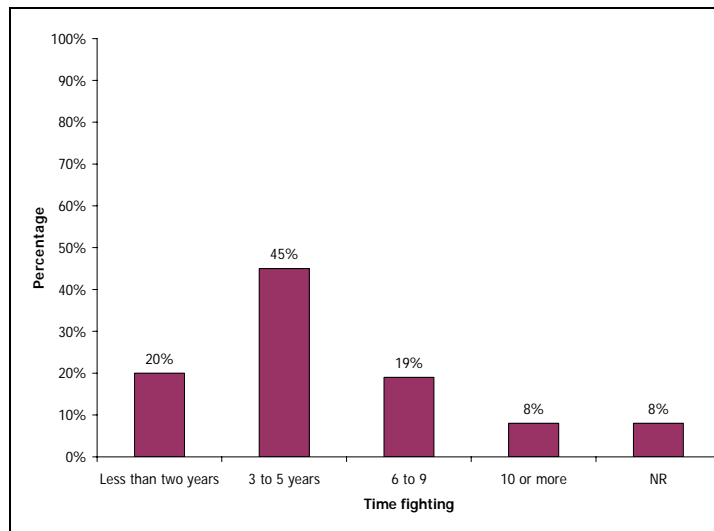


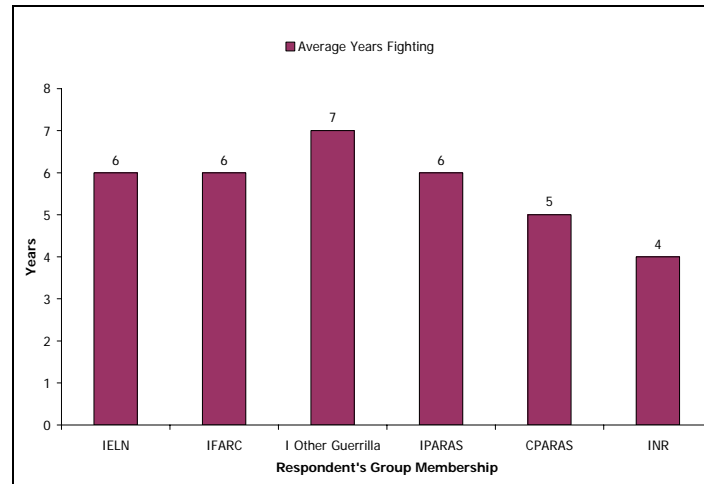
Figure 2.5. Time of Service for those between ages 19 and 25



The average time of service does not vary greatly across armed organizations: for all groups it is between 5 and 7 years (Figure 2.6). This pattern is consistent with the data of the Ministry of Defense on the entire population of IDEs. CPARAS, as well as those who did not respond (NR) to the question on group membership, spent on average fewer years fighting. Members of other guerrilla groups spent on average one more year fighting than other ex-combatants, but given the small size of the sample of those who belonged to

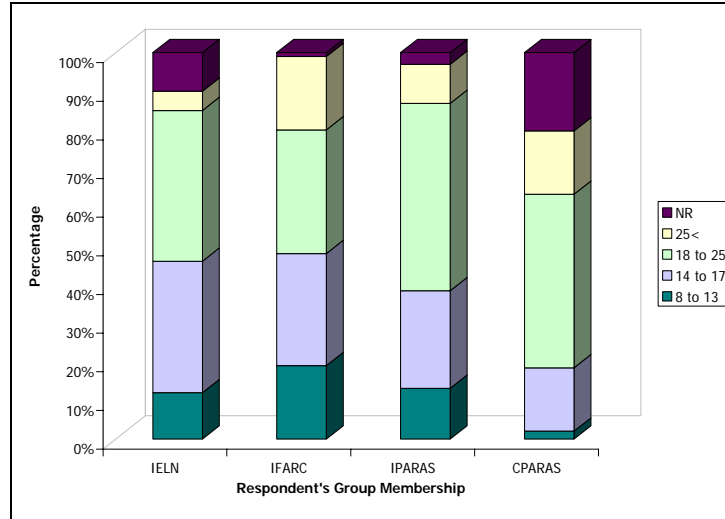
these groups, this result should be taken with caution since it might not be representative of the entire population.

Figure 2.6. Time of Service by Group Membership



Data on age at time of enlistment (Figure 2.7) show that these groups recruit mostly very young people. About 90% of the IELN were below age 25 when they joined; roughly 75-85% of paramilitary recruits were under age 25. The differences between the CPARAS and IPARAS might suggest that those who joined at an earlier age are more likely to desert. However, the fact that about 20% of CPARAS do not report their age at time of enlistment—perhaps because they were under 18—warrants caution in interpreting this difference. It is also remarkable that only 2% of the CPARAS report joining at ages below 14 while 13% of the IPARAS do. This might be a problem of under-reporting given that the public image of the paramilitaries might be of greater importance for the CPARAS than for the IPARAS—the former are still somehow linked to these organizations while the latter clearly broke their ties with them. However, it might also be the case that, as mentioned before, younger recruits are more willing to desert. The FARC is the group with the highest percentage of recruits between ages 8 to 13. However, it is also the group with the greatest percentage of ex-combatants reporting having joined at ages above 25. Given that the FARC and the ELN have been fighting for a similar amount of years (decades, actually) it could hardly be argued that the differences between the two are due to the passing of time.

Figure 2.7. Age at Time of Enlistment by Group Membership



About 15% of IDE guerrilla combatants report having fought in another armed group before they joined the group from which they eventually deserted (Figure 2.8). The rate increases to 23% in the case of the IPARAS and 33% for the CPARAS.

Figure 2.8. Did you ever belong to any other armed group or the National Army before joining the group from which you recently demobilized?

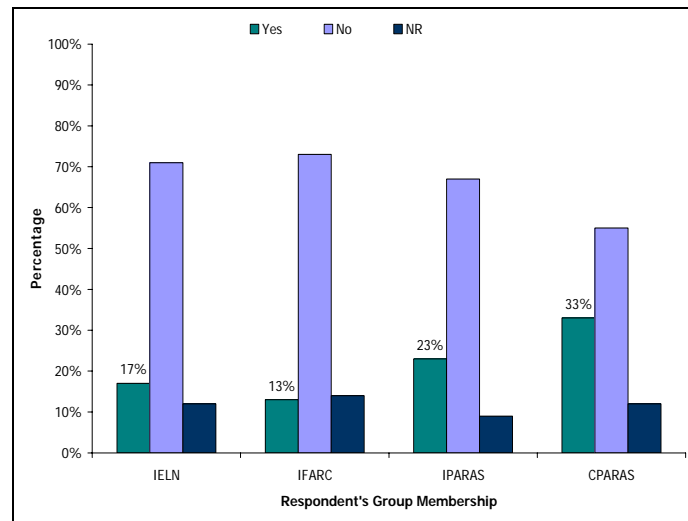
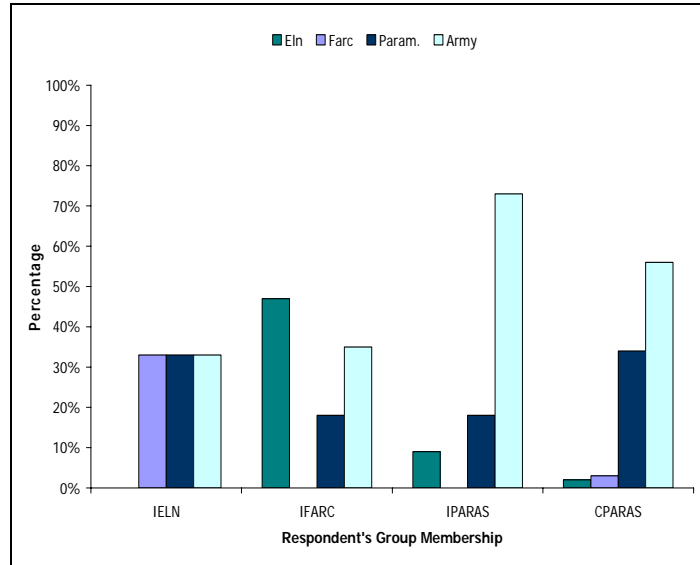


Figure 2.9 presents prior group membership for those who do report belonging to another group before joining the one from which they demobilized. These results show several patterns: first, it is more likely for paramilitaries to move to guerrilla groups than for guerrilla fighters to move to the paramilitaries. This is particularly interesting given the absence of monetary payments in both guerrilla organizations, while paramilitaries

usually do pay monthly salaries to their fighters. Second, the National Army is a source of recruits for all groups, especially for the paramilitaries. And third, movement within guerrilla groups is common, as is within paramilitary factions.

Figure 2.9. Prior Group Membership



In terms of education, close to half of all respondents completed elementary school or attended for a few years. Guerrilla members are less likely to have attended high school than paramilitaries, and they are also less likely to have attended school at all. Very few attended college or received professional training (Figure 2.10). On average, ex-guerrilla fighters are less educated than ex-paramilitaries, but this might be the product of the difference in the groups' base in terms of rural vs. urban areas.

Figure 2.10 Respondents' Level of Education

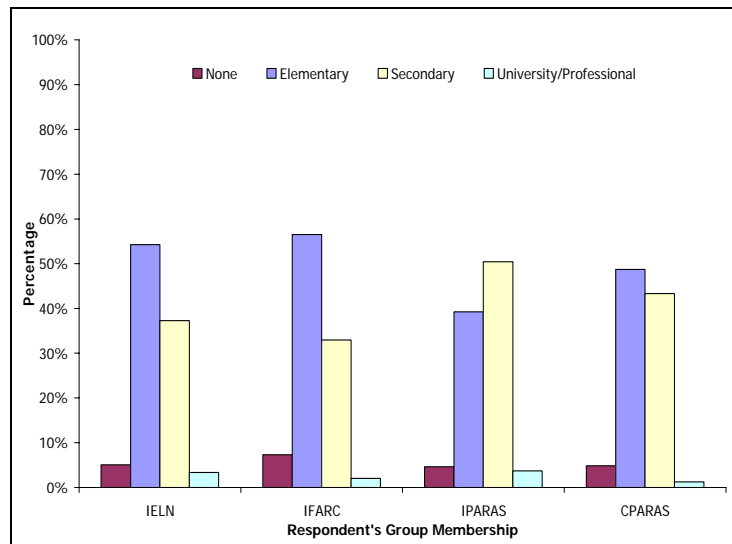


Figure 2.11 shows respondents' occupation at time of enlistment. Contrary to plausible expectations, only a few respondents report being unemployed and looking for a job at the time when they joined (less than 5% in each group). Interestingly, employed persons—even coca gatherers who usually earn much more money than what they would in other manual jobs—even decided to enlist in the guerrilla groups, which do not pay any salaries to their combatants. It should be mentioned, however, that among those who were employed, the majority had temporary jobs, which are usually precarious and underpaid. Also, as will be discussed below, several indicators suggest that ex-combatants do come from poor backgrounds and had few opportunities. Nevertheless, their opportunity costs do not appear to have been as desperate as often posited in the literature that claims greed to be the overriding motivation for joining armed organizations.

As Figure 2.12 shows, between 7% and 15% of all respondents from each group report dropping out of school in order to join an armed organization. This pattern seems to be more common for the IFARC, which is consistent with the findings presented above on age at time of enlistment: this group seems to be more likely to recruit very young people. The difference between IPARAS and CPARAS may be due to under-reporting among the latter; as mentioned before, they may be more willing to cover-up the “incorrect” behavior of their group, such as the recruitment of underage combatants. However, it could also be the case that those who join at a younger age are more likely to desert.

Figure 2.11. Occupation at Time of Enlistment

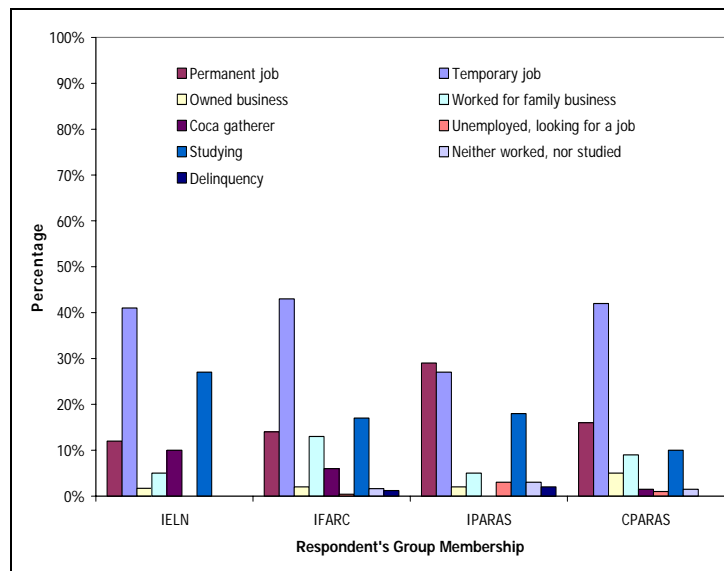
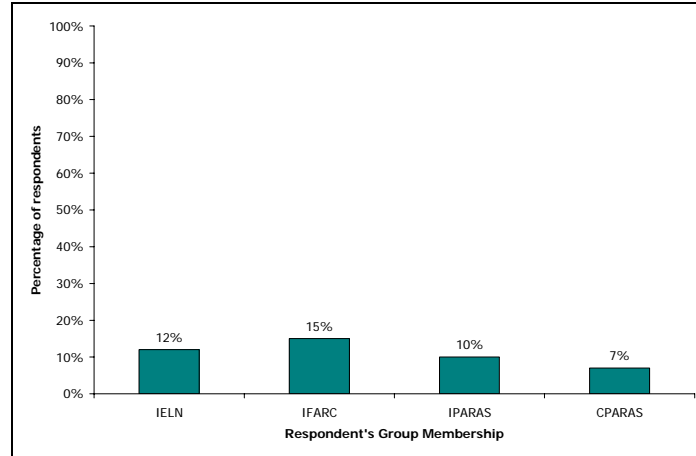


Figure 2.12. Respondents Who Left School to Join an Armed Group



As a measure of combatants' influence in youths' lives and their decision to enlist, we asked respondents at what age they used a gun for the first time and who taught them how to use it. As shown in Figure 2.13, most respondents report using a gun for the first time between ages 14 and 18. Consistent with the data on age at time of enlistment, IFARC respondents are more likely to have used arms at ages below 14 than ex-combatants of other groups, while CPARAS are less likely to report doing so.

Close to 60% of all ex-guerrilla fighters learned how to use a gun with a guerrilla combatant or someone affiliated with the guerrillas, while less than 5% of all ex-paramilitaries learned with guerrilla members. On the other hand, paramilitary combatants and militia members of paramilitary groups taught about 35% of all ex-paramilitaries to use a gun, but taught less than 4% of ex-guerrilla fighters (Figure 2.14). It is worth noting that the percentage of those who did not respond or said another person taught them is very high, especially among ex-paramilitaries.

Figure 2.13. Age When Used a Gun for the First Time

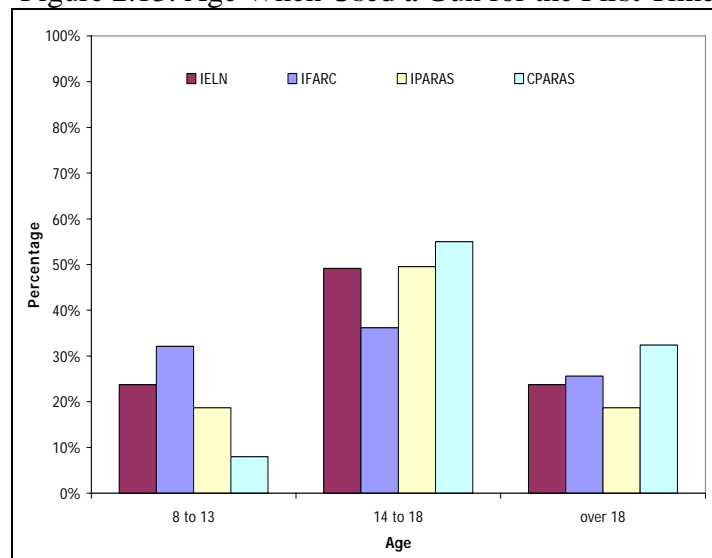
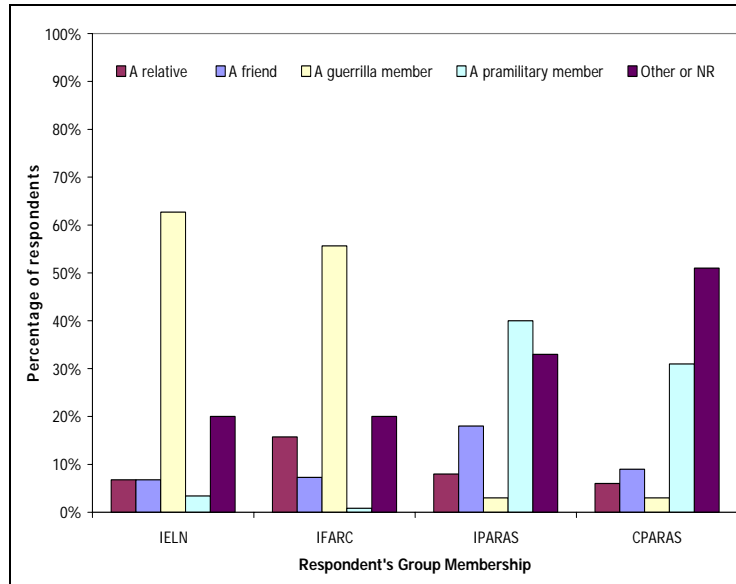


Figure 2.14. Who Taught you to Use a Gun for the First Time?



2.2 Family characteristics

The survey asked about various characteristics of the respondents' families. We present results regarding income and occupation below.

Figure 2.15 shows respondents' answers to the question: "Please think of where you lived for most of your life before you enlisted. If you were to identify the people in that locality as rich, middle class, or poor, how would you categorize your family?" As expected, most respondents say they came from poor families and few identify their families as rich.

Figure 2.15. Respondents' Assessment of their Family's Class

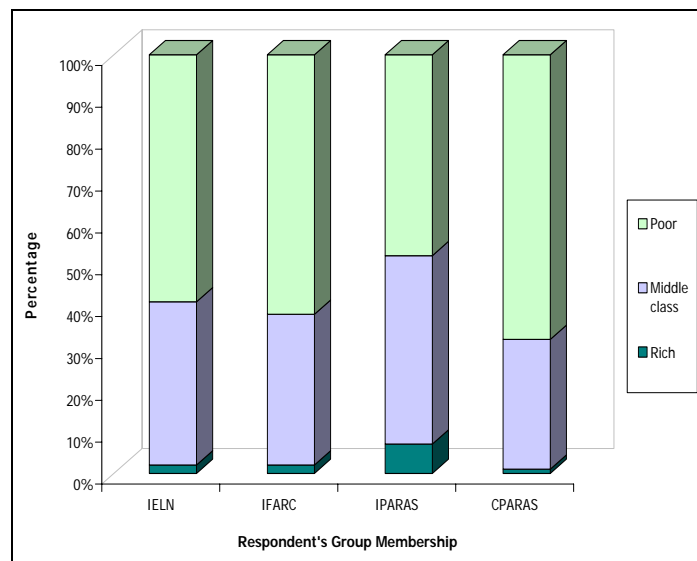
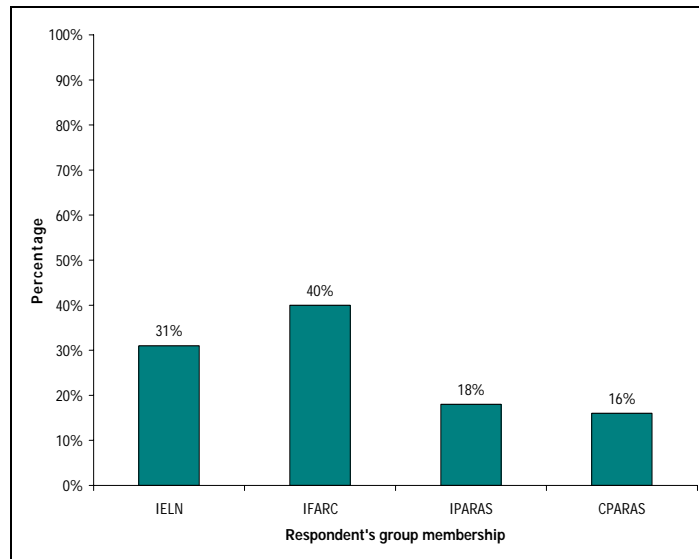


Figure 2.16 presents the proportion of respondents who say that a family member worked as a coca gatherer before they enlisted. Percentages are high, especially in the case of the IFARC (40%) and the IELN (31%). This may be an artifact of the relation between a group's ongoing presence in a particular locality and recruitment to its ranks, since all armed groups tend to be present in areas where coca plantations exist.

Figure 2.16. Respondents with Family Members Working as Coca Gatherers



2.3 Community characteristics

We asked ex-combatants about different aspects of the communities in which they lived, including relations both among local people and with different types of authorities. In this section we present the results on presence of governmental institutions and illegal organizations.

First, responses to a question about the degree of political division in the community of origin indicate that recruitment is not an extension of existing political polarization at the local level (Figure 2.17).

Figure 2.17. Political Division Among Locals in Respondents' Place of Residence One Year Prior to Enlistment

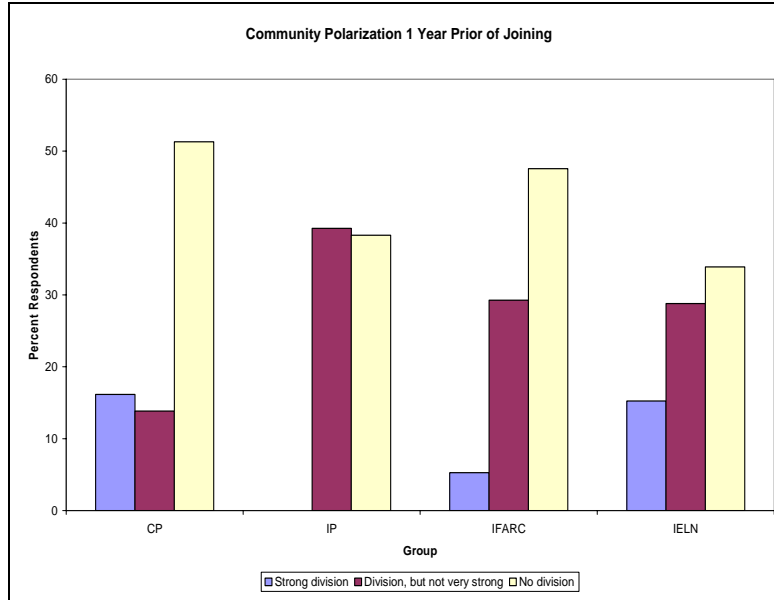


Table 2.1 presents a summary of government presence in the community where the respondent lived one year before enlisting in an armed organization. As can be expected given the different distribution of combatants across rural and urban areas in each group, ex-paramilitaries are more likely to come from areas where greater government presence exists. The isolation of many areas where guerrillas find recruits becomes evident by looking at the percentage of ex-combatants who lived in localities that had a paved road: only 22% of the IFARC and 29% of the IELN did.

Table 2.1 Governmental Presence and Infrastructure in Respondents' Localities at Time of Enlistment

	IELN	IFARC	IPARAS	CPARAS
Police	56%	46%	76%	79%
Army	58%	49%	68%	68%
Health Center	86%	80%	86%	85%
School	97%	93%	93%	92%
National Phone Company (within 30 minutes travel distance)	69%	63%	76%	75%
Paved road	39%	22%	62%	57%
Agrarian bank	61%	41%	62%	60%

Table 2.2 shows presence of illegal groups in respondents' place of residence one year before enlisting in an armed group. Several patterns emerge from these data. First, recruits come from localities with high presence of illegal organizations, not limited to armed groups fighting the war. Given that most respondents lived in small towns or villages (especially in the case of the ex-guerrillas), the presence of "social cleansing" groups and youth gangs is interestingly high. Second, ex-combatants of each group are

likely to come from localities where this group was *already* present. In other words, recruitment appears to be endogenous to presence of the warring sides rather than the other way around as often hypothesized. At least one guerrilla group is present in about 75% of the communities where ex-guerrilla fighters lived, while paramilitaries were present in only about 35% of these localities. The same is true for the ex-paramilitaries: while paramilitary groups were present in about 60% of ex-paramilitaries' localities, guerrilla groups were present in about 40% of these areas.

Table 2.2. Presence of Illegal Groups in Respondents' Place of Residence One Year Before Enlistment

	IELN	IFARC	IPARAS	CPARAS
Social cleansing groups	30%	30%	58%	45%
Youth gangs	36%	19%	35%	42%
Delinquency groups	42%	32%	44%	50%
FARC present	71%	87%	48%	36%
ELN present	71%	24%	20%	26%
Paramilitaries present	38%	28%	70%	54%

Figure 2.18 presents again armed groups' presence in respondents' communities one year before enlistment by group membership. This figure shows which groups ex-combatants interacted with before enlisting. The first point to observe is that only about 10% of the recruits, across all groups, come from localities where no armed groups were present. Less than 10% of the guerrilla members come from areas where only paramilitaries were present, and less than 15% of all ex-paramilitaries come from localities where only guerrillas were present. Again, these results suggest that, contrary to a commonly held view, recruitment does not occur throughout the country but rather is locally focalized. About 60% of all ex-guerrilla fighters lived in areas where only guerrilla groups were present, and about 25% in areas where both paramilitaries and guerrillas were present. In the case of the paramilitaries, the percentage of ex-combatants coming from areas where only paramilitaries were present is smaller, perhaps because paramilitary groups are usually located in areas that had some guerrilla presence, as their goal is to fight them. Guerrillas, on the contrary, still occupy—at least when our respondents enlisted—some areas of the country where paramilitary groups had not consolidated their presence. Further analysis would be required in order to see if ex-paramilitaries are more likely to come from areas cleansed of guerrillas by paramilitary groups, or from areas where both still compete for control.

Figure 2.18. Presence of Armed Groups in Respondents' Place of Residence One Year Before Enlistment

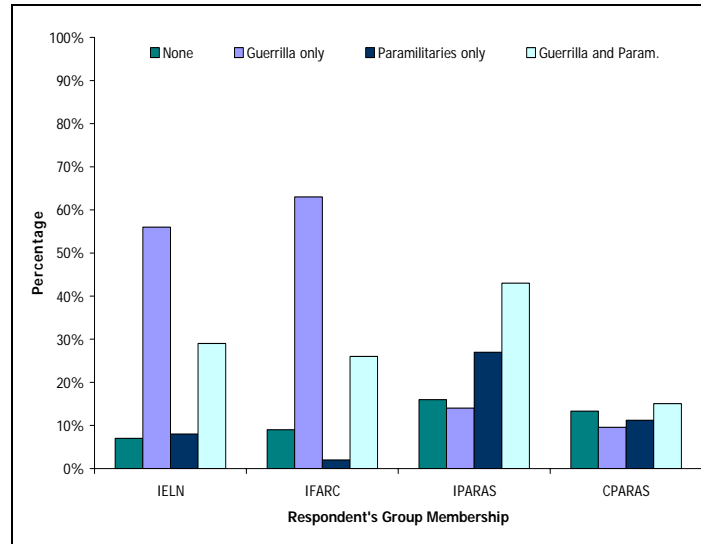


Figure 2.19 presents the same data on armed groups' presence, with the X-axis showing respondents by the type of locality in which they lived. In other words, this is a way to use locality and presence as a proxy for the groups' recruiting success. These results provide a measure of what potential recruits do in different contexts of armed groups' presence and control. Among those ex-combatants who lived in areas where no armed group was present, about 55% decided to join the paramilitaries while about 46% joined a guerrilla group. In areas where only guerrilla groups were present, about 85% joined a guerrilla group, while only 15% joined a paramilitary group. Among respondents living in areas where only paramilitaries were present 75% joined a paramilitary organization, while 25% joined the guerrillas. Finally, in areas where both paramilitaries and guerrillas were present, respondents divided almost evenly across the ELN, FARC, and Paramilitaries: about 30% joined each group. Again, these results suggest that recruitment is endogenous to, and reflects, the armed groups' presence and control.

Figure 2.19. Armed Groups' Presence and Recruitment (Proxy of Groups' Success)

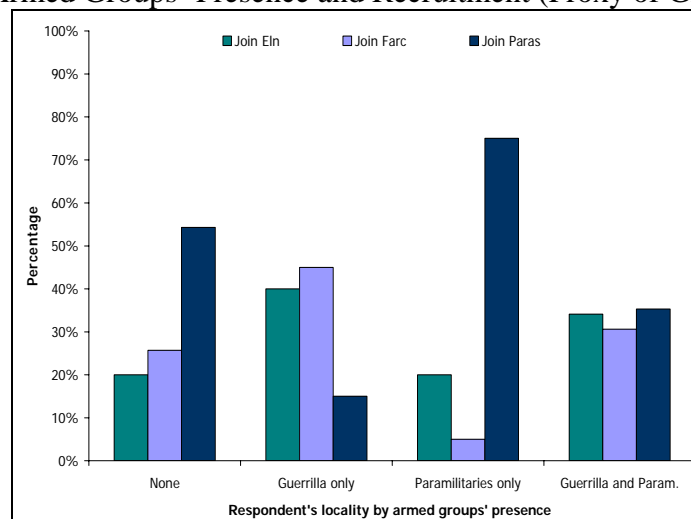
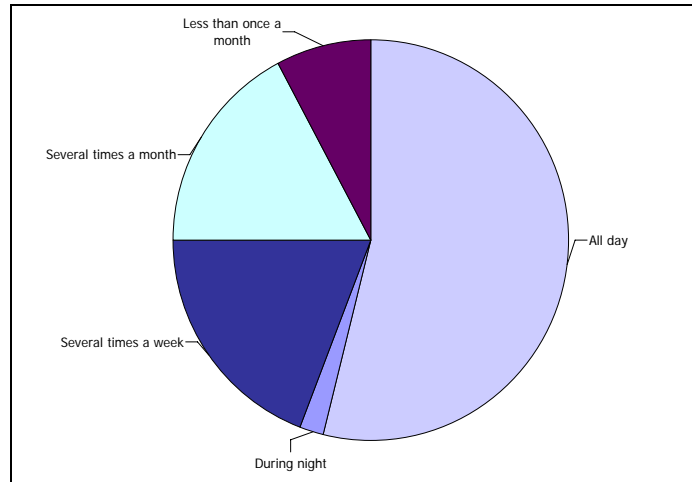


Figure 2.20 shows the amount of time that guerrilla and paramilitary groups spent in respondents' localities and suggests that armed groups' presence tended to be permanent: for more than half of the respondents, combatants stayed in the locality all day and night and for about 20% of the respondents, combatants were present several times a week.

Figure 2.20. Armed Groups' Presence in Respondents' Localities One Year Before Enlistment



We also wanted to get at the vexing question of “popular support” for armed groups. Figures 2.21a to 2.21d show the respondents' assessment of their community's feeling towards the groups that were present in their locality. Several patterns emerge from these responses: first, at least as ex-combatants remember it, the army is generally not disliked by most community members. Second, respondents tend to remember their communities preferring the group they joined more than others, as expected; however, only 50% of all respondents of each group said that most people were happy with the presence of their group in the area. Also, many recognized that people's feelings were conflicted about their group, as well as other groups. Finally, as expected, IPARAS and CPARAS are more likely to remember people in their communities disliking the guerrillas, and IFARC and IELN members are more likely to remember people disliking the paramilitaries. Respondents are more prone to report negative feelings towards rival groups than positive feelings towards the group they belonged to.

Figure 2.21a: IFARC's Communities' Preferences for Combatants

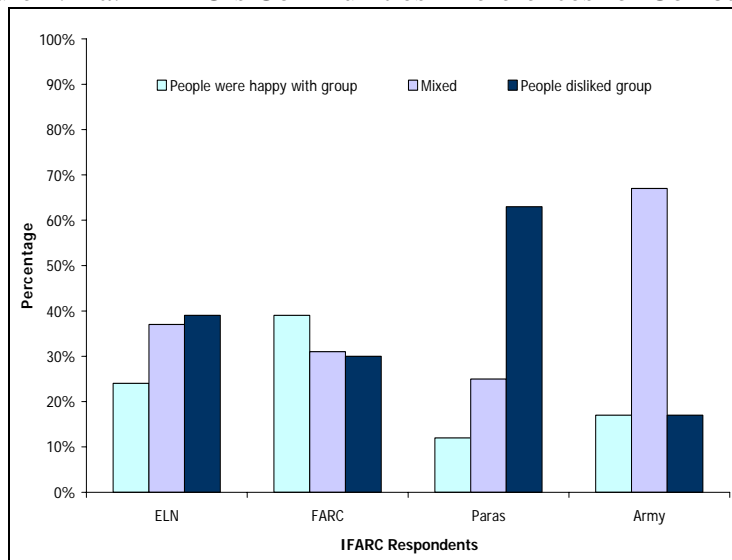


Figure 2.21b: IELN's Communities' Preferences for Combatants

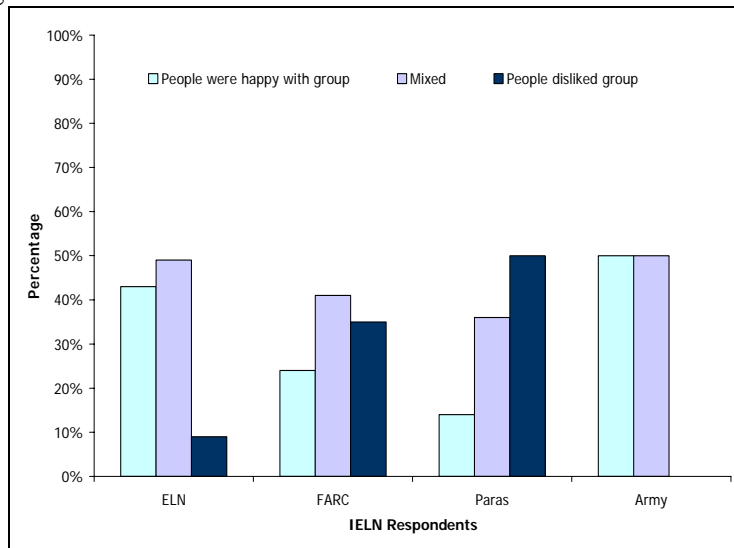


Figure 2.21c: IPARAS' Communities' Preferences for Combatants

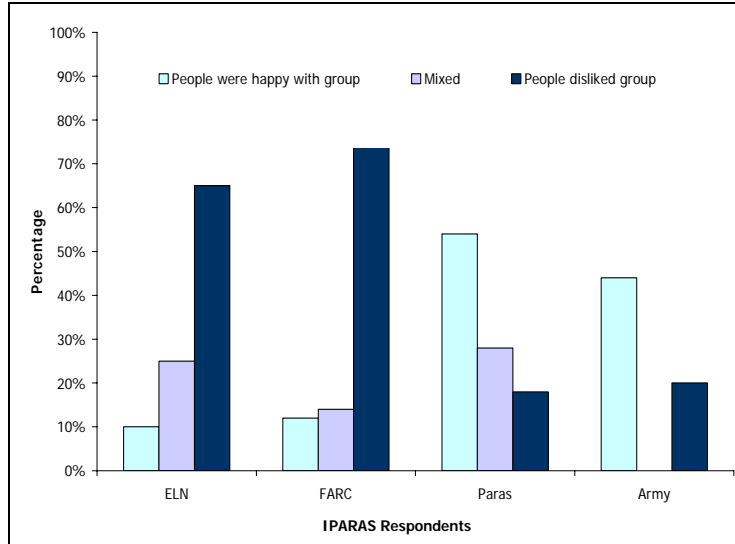


Figure 2.21d: CAPRAS' Communities' Preferences for Combatants

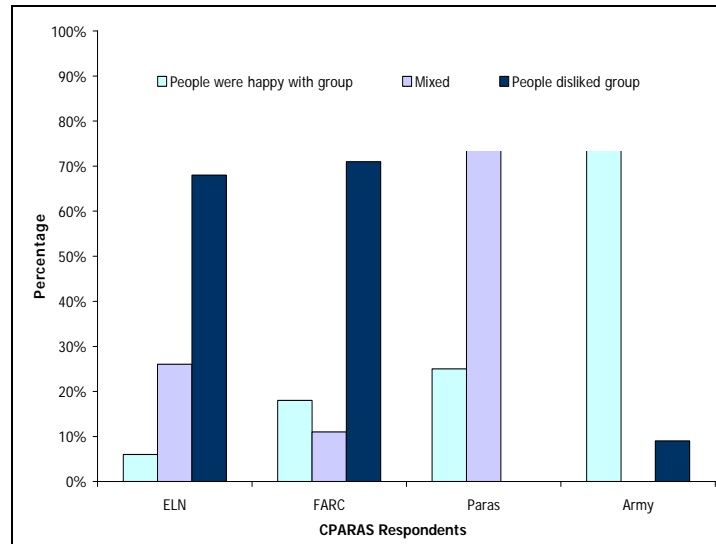


Table 2.3 shows the respondents' assessment of the importance of different people in the localities where they lived before enlisting. The first pattern that emerges in this table is that respondents of all groups remember the combatants of the group that they ended up joining as being very important in their localities; in contrast they don't remember members of groups they did not join as being very important. However, it is worth noting that the percentage of paramilitaries who identify guerrilla combatants as important is not very low: around 22% do. The same applies to ex-guerrilla fighters: about 20% remember paramilitaries being important in their communities. Civilian leaders are thought to be important by close to half of the respondents of all groups. Respondents' assessment of the importance of priests is quite surprising: overall, priests turn out being remembered as more important than mayors, and the result is similar across armed groups. Finally, the

wealthy are considered to be more important by paramilitaries than by guerrillas as could be expected; however, the difference between IFARC and IPARAS is not very large.

Table 2.3. Important or Influential People in Respondents' Place of Residence before Enlisting

	Group Membership			
	IELN	IFARC	IPARAS	CPARAS
A guerrilla combatant	59%	69%	26%	19%
A paramilitary combatant	25%	17%	64%	51%
A civilian leader of the community	44%	67%	48%	60%
The mayor	39%	60%	67%	76%
The priest	62%	62%	61%	78%
The wealthy	31%	51%	56%	62%

2.4 Victimization

Another aspect of the endogeneity of recruitment to the dynamics of the war is that ex-combatants of all groups come from highly victimized families and networks: many report having relatives or friends killed, threatened, or displaced by armed groups before they joined one of them (Figure 2.22). CPARAS seem to be less victimized than all IDEs. In addition, respondents come from areas that are, on average, more violent than national averages. About half of all respondents remember armed groups perpetrating homicides in their community one year before they enlisted, and about one-third say the groups also committed massacres in that area (Figures 2.22; 2.23; 2.24). A comparison between our respondents' communities and the national average confirms that these were unusually violent places (Figures 2.25, 2.26)

Figure 2.22. Victimization by Any Armed Group

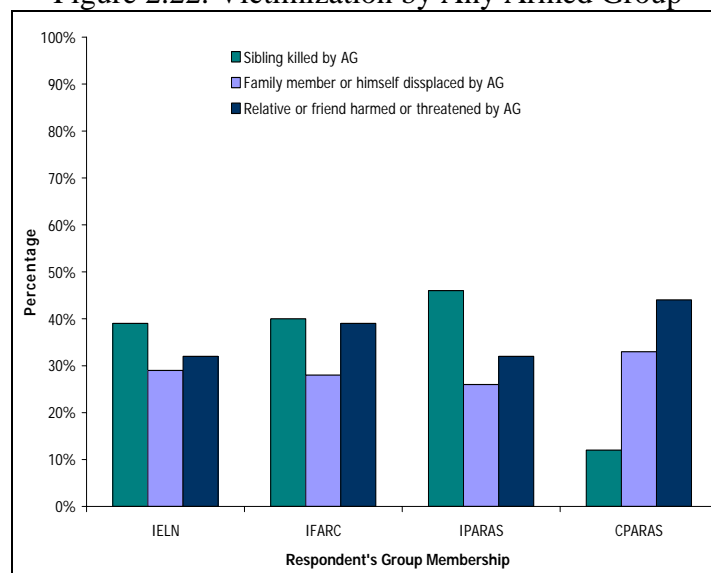


Figure 2.23. Did the ELN, the FARC, the Paras, or the Army Commit at Least One Homicide in the Year Prior to Your Enlistment?

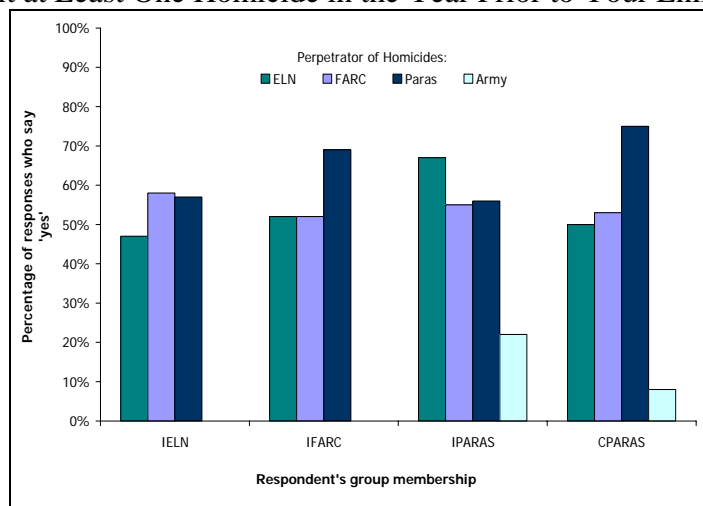


Figure 2.24. Respondents Whose Localities Experienced At Least One Massacre Perpetrated By a Armed Group or the Army One Year Prior to Enlisting

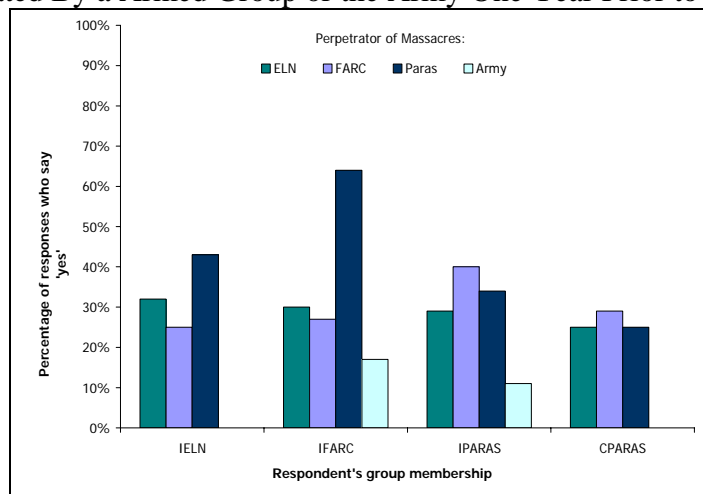


Figure 2.25. Homicides Per 100,000 Inhabitants (1999)

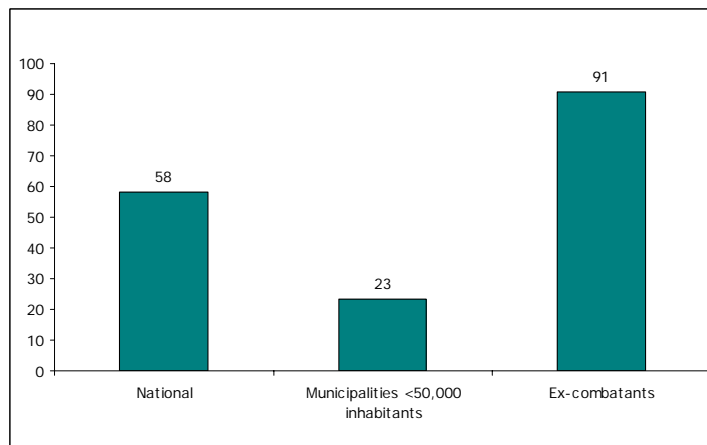
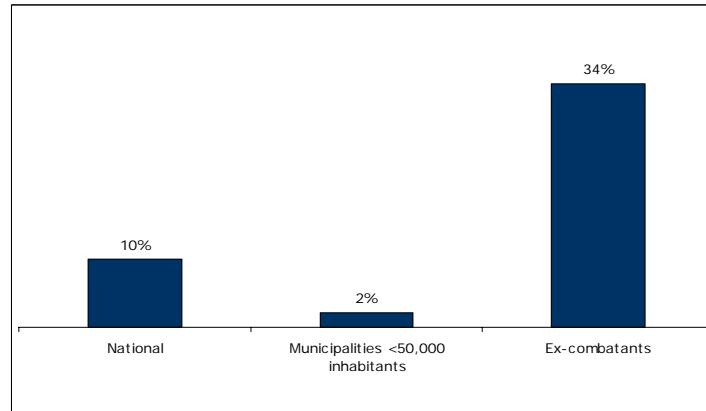


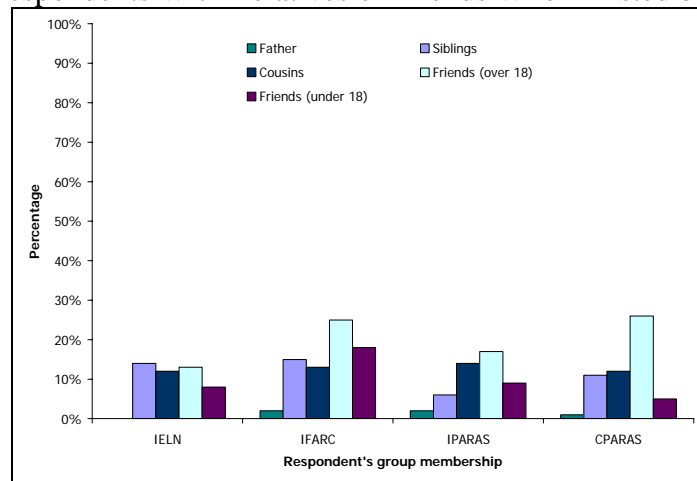
Figure 2.26 Massacres (at least one case between 1997 and 2000)



2.5 Recruitment

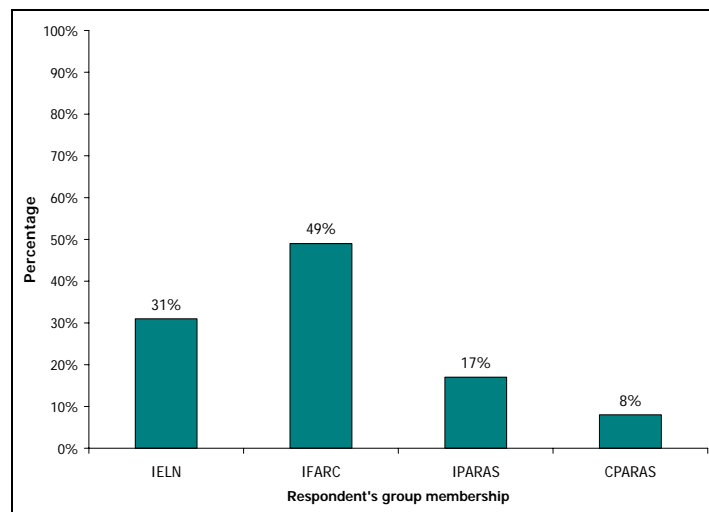
As we have already stated, recruitment appears to be highly endogenous to the local dynamics of war. Networks seem to play an important role in motivating recruitment, as about 25% of all respondents report having relatives or friends who joined before they did (Figure 2.27).

Figure 2.27 Respondents With Relatives or Friends Who Enlisted before They Did



In many cases, enlistment does not seem to occur as a one-time decision, but rather as the result of a process, especially in the case of the guerrillas. In fact, many report being local militiamen before becoming full-time combatants (figure 2.28).

Figure 2.28. Respondents who Joined Local Militias Before Enlisting as Combatants



Turning to the motivation to join, respondents were asked the following question: “Please try to remember the days before you enlisted. How would you best describe your beliefs about the step you were going to make?” As expected, most ex-paramilitaries did not see paramilitary groups as revolutionary organizations but close to half of the guerrillas did—even though ideology does not seem to play the role that the literature often assumes it does (Table 2.4)

Table 2.4 Respondents’ Perception of the Decision to Join Right Before Enlisting

	IELN	IFARC	IPARAS	CPARAS
Was going to enter a revolutionary group	41%	35%	7%	6%
Was going to enter a group to defend society	44%	31%	35%	48%
Was going to have a better life as a combatant	41%	35%	32%	39%
Thought was making a small commitment and would go home soon	29%	28%	26%	28%

Table 2.5 presents respondents’ stated motivation for enlistment. We coded this response in three different ways: first, we asked the interviewees to talk about the reasons they had for joining (as an open-ended question); second, based on the ex-combatant’s answer, the interviewer coded the response using a list of 13 possible motivations (including the ‘*Other*’ category); and third, the interviewer read the list of possible motivations to the respondent, asked which were the most relevant to his or her decision to join, and coded the response. We allowed for more than one answer. Table 2.5 presents the responses given to the third form of coding—i.e. when we asked for the items of the list that played a key role in their decision to join.

Table 2.5 Self-reported Motivations for Joining

	IELN	IFARC	IPARAS	CPARAS
Ideology	19%	12%	7%	13%
Revenge	12%	6%	12%	14%
Attracted by promise of money or goods	20%	20%	26%	43%
Escape from domestic violence	2%	4%	1%	1%
Escape from extreme poverty	5%	8%	4%	15%
Power	5%	9%	10%	4%
To be someone important in the community	7%	5%	7%	6%
Because it was going to be an adventure. For fun.	15%	8%	8%	8%
Because friends had joined before	0%	7%	1%	2%
Forcibly recruited	3%	6%	8%	0.5%
Running away from a threat	7%	4%	4%	3%
Other	25%	25%	21%	16%

Several patterns emerge from these results. First, as expected, ideology is stronger among guerrilla recruits than paramilitaries in the case of the individually demobilized. Yet, about the same percentage of CPARAS and IFARC recognize ideology as a leading motivation for joining. The difference between the IPARAS and CPARAS may be explained by the lower (or decreased?) ideological commitment of those who decided to desert. Revenge is a leading motivation for about 11% of all respondents; most of these interviewees see an event of violence as the key determinant of their decision to enlist. In the case of the IPARAS, almost twice the percentage of those who mentioned ideology mentioned revenge as a leading motivation. The desire to acquire material benefits is a strong motivation for about 22% of all IDEs and 46% of the CPARAS. Given that the FARC and the ELN do not offer economic rewards or salaries to combatants, a greater expectation of such benefit among the paramilitaries is expected. However, the difference between the IPARAS on the one hand, and the IFARC and IELN on the other, is not very high which is puzzling.

Turning to other motivations, although only a few respondents mentioned domestic violence as a key reason to enlist, the fact that around 2% of all respondents perceived membership in an armed group as the way to avoid being harmed at home is revealing about available possibilities for youths in the rural areas. Although only 8% identified “desire to gain power” as a key motivation for joining, many more mentioned it explicitly in their answer to the open-ended question about their motivation to enlist. Given that most recruits are adolescents when they join, this result is not surprising. The desire to be someone important in their community was mentioned by about the same number of respondents who mentioned power as a motivation. Enlisting based on the expectation of having an adventure or fun was identified as a key motivation by 8% of IFARC and paramilitary ex-combatants, and by 15% of IELN ex-combatants. These numbers are

very high if one takes into consideration the hardship involved in becoming and being a combatant. Yet, again, given the ages at which most respondents enlisted, this could reveal how youths think about combatants in regions where the groups have a strong presence. About 4% of all respondents said they joined as a way to seek protection or to escape a threat. This includes individuals who were threatened by other armed organizations, but also some who had private disputes. Finally, it is worth noting that only about 5% of all respondents said they were forcibly recruited. Especially in the case of the IDEs, respondents may have preferred to excuse their participation in an armed group by claiming forced recruitment, either because it made them feel more comfortable in their conversation with the interviewer, or because of concerns about the real anonymity of the survey and the possible implications of responding. Yet, very few respondents said they were forcibly recruited. This result, together with responses given to other sensitive questions, gives us confidence about the attitude of the majority of our interviewees towards responding to the survey truthfully.

3. Characteristics of armed groups

3.1 Internal Organization

As expected, almost all respondents report having received military training. The FARC and ELN appear to provide more scholastic training and to train the fighters in administrative skills than the paramilitaries, but the differences between groups are not as substantial as could be expected (Figure 3.1). A major difference between groups emerges, however, in the investments they make in ideological resources. Whereas the IFARC and IELN respondents report attending meetings about the group's political and ideological objectives quite regularly, the paramilitaries report (consistently across CPARAS and IPARAS) attending such meetings more infrequently (Figure 3.2).

Ideological indoctrination, however, does not appear to produce a notable difference in respondents' perceptions about the proportion of the group who agree with the group's ideology. The pattern is remarkably similar for all groups, with all reporting either generalized agreement or at least mixed agreement. This could be, of course, due to the absence of non-deserters in our sample of ex-guerrilla fighters. The outlier here are the CPARAS, which points to a potential bias: either deserters underemphasize ideological agreement among their comrades or the collectively demobilized feel the obligation to overemphasize their agreement with the group's ideology (Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.1: Type of Training Received

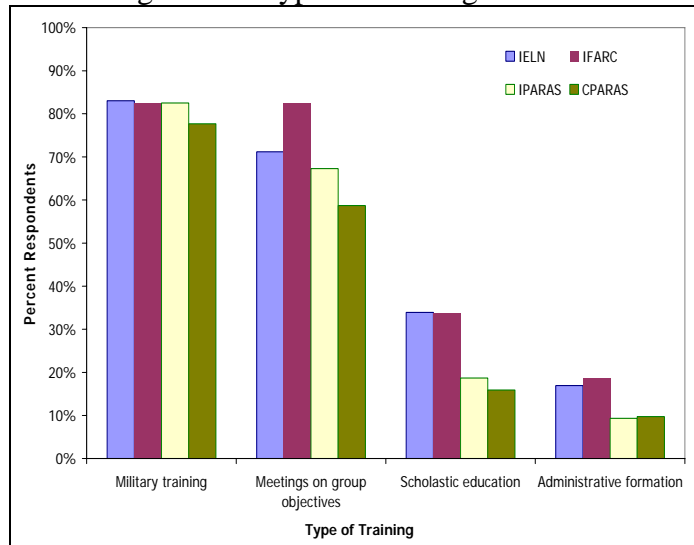


Figure 3.2: Attendance of Ideological and Political Meetings

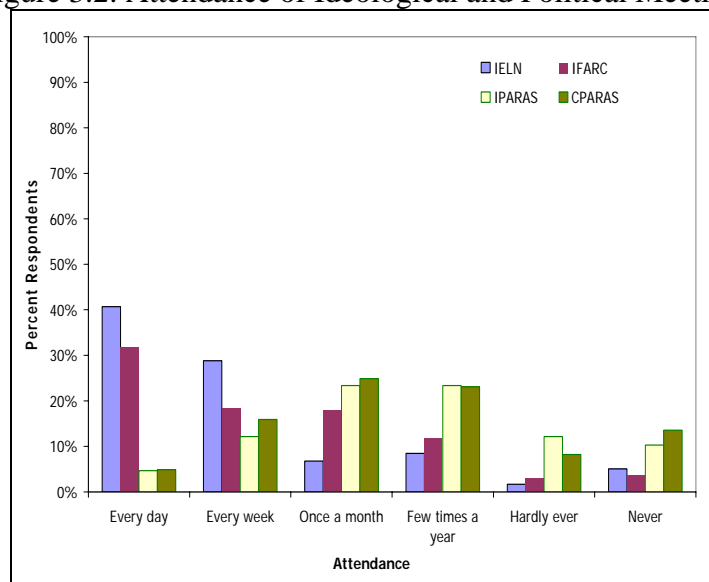
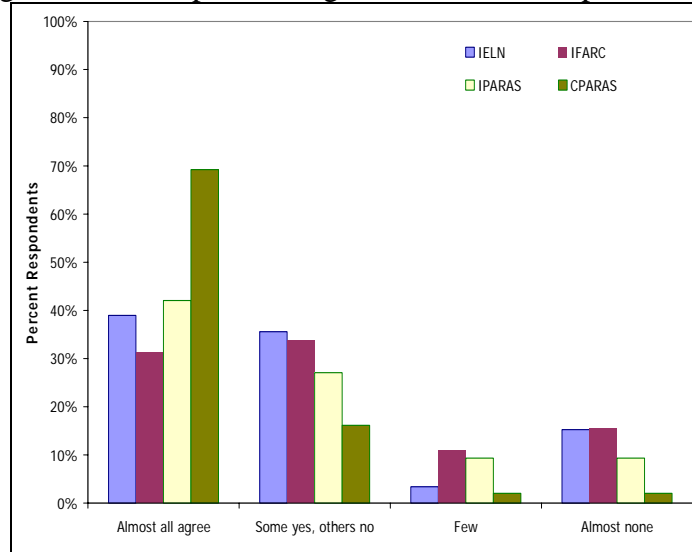
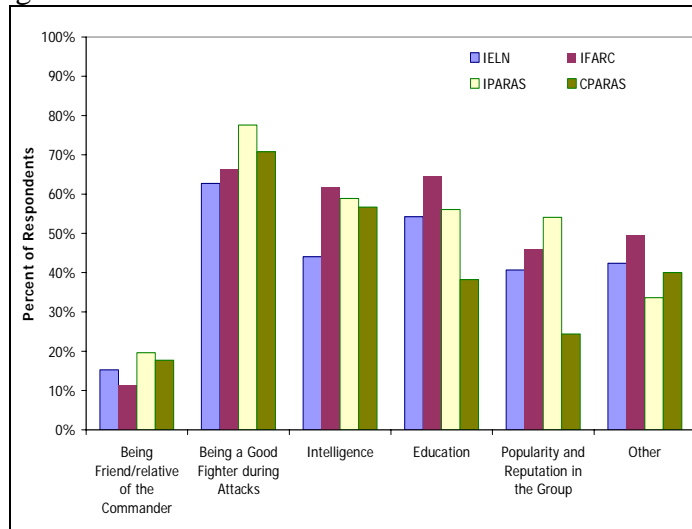


Figure 3.3: Perception of Agreement with Group's Ideology



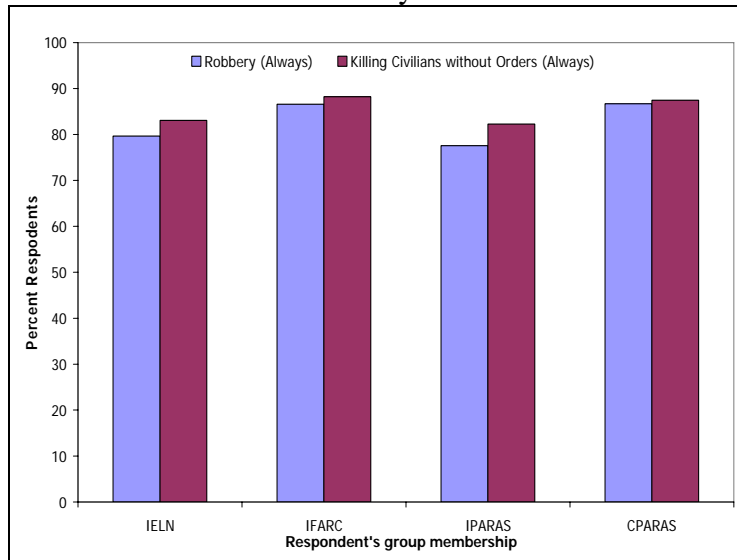
No significant differences appear in terms of perceptions about internal promotion. All fighters emphasize good fighting ability and discount personal relations with the commander, though IFARC and IELN fighters, along with IPARAS, stress education more than CPARAS. Also, the latter seem to particularly discount popularity (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4: What Does it Take to Become a Commander?



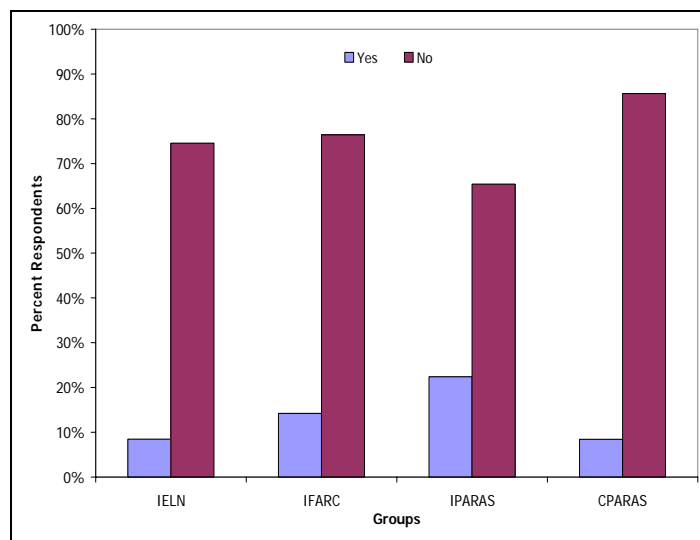
All respondents emphasize their group's iron discipline. When a combatant stole from a civilian or, worse, killed one without being ordered to do so, he was almost always punished, respondents say (Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5: Sanctions against Robbery and Killing without Orders by Combatants: Always



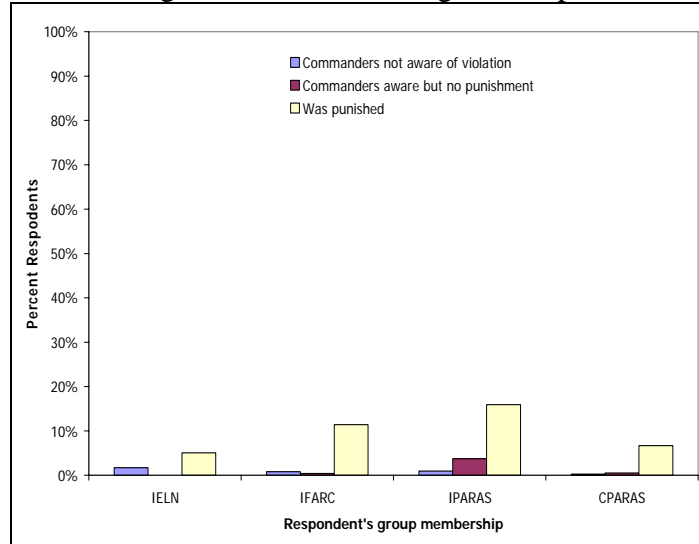
Rape by combatants is a particular sensitive issue. Most respondents report not knowing any combatants who have raped civilians. However, the percentage of IPARAS who do remember at least one case is higher than among both other IDEs and CPARAS (Figure 3.6)

Figure 3.6: Did you Know of Any Combatant Who Raped a Civilian?



Rapists were punished, our respondents report, though the great majority of respondents across groups did not respond to this question since they said they did not know of any cases of rape (Figure 3.7)

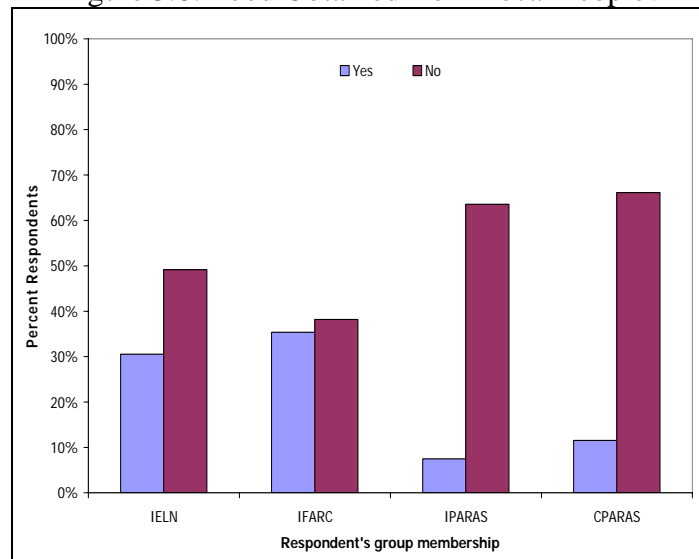
Figure 3.7: Sanctions Against Rape



3.2 Relations with Civilians

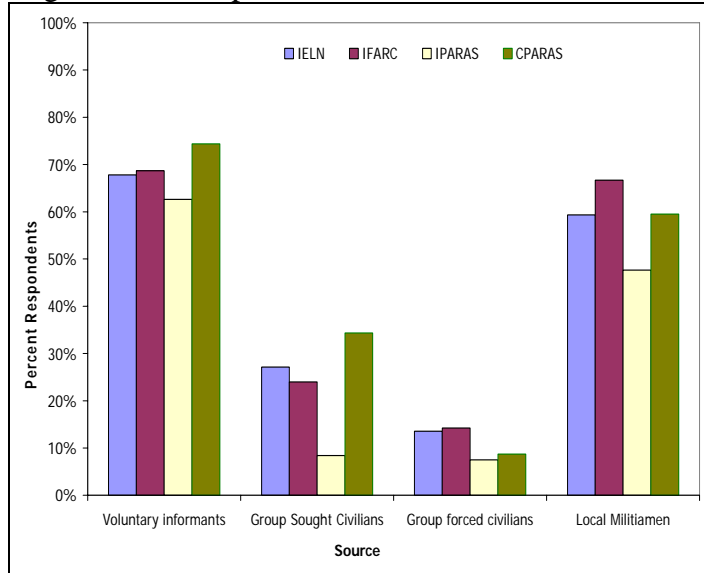
One area in which the groups do differ is the extent to which units rely on the local population for the procurement of food. The paramilitaries are much less likely to do so, which suggests different types of relations between the groups and the populations they rule (Figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8: Food Obtained from Local People?



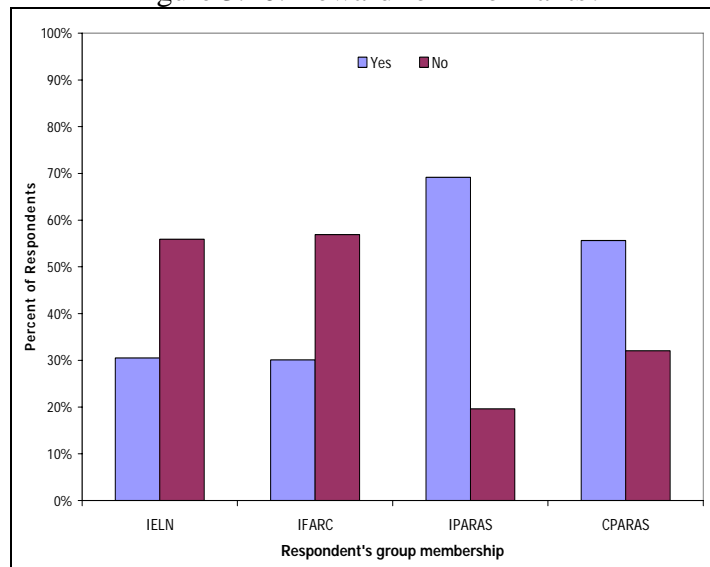
There is a striking similarity across groups in their sources of local information. Respondents from all groups report relying on the voluntary provision of information by civilians and on local militiamen (reflecting their ability to control an area) rather than just seeking individuals out or forcing them to provide information (Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9: Group's Sources of Local Information



The question of whether groups give rewards for the information they receive produced one this section's few clear-cut differences between paramilitaries and guerrillas: whereas the paramilitaries do reward their informants more often than not, the opposite is true of the guerrillas (Figure 3.10).

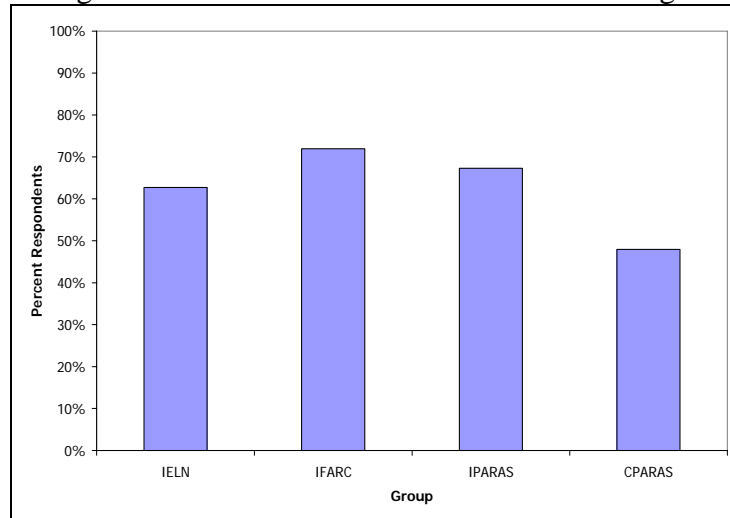
Figure 3.10: Reward for Informants?



4. Denunciation, Violence, Control

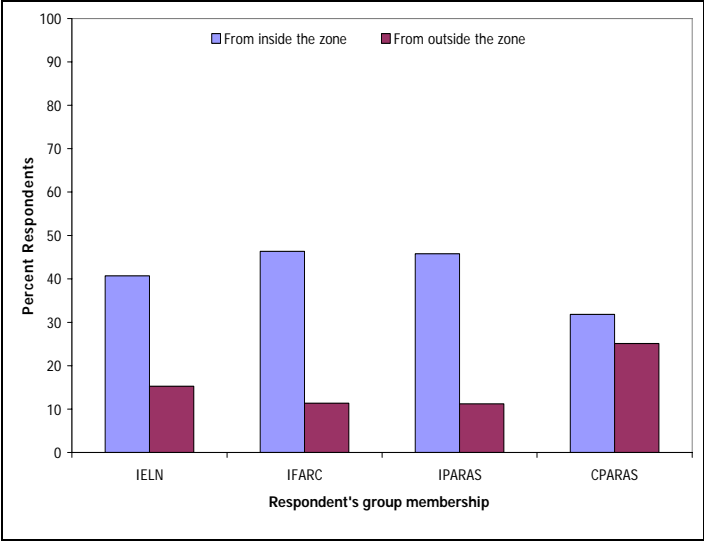
Why are civilians targeted and victimized? The data suggest that the management of information lies at the source of much victimization, especially its worse forms. Figure 4.1 shows that respondents, consistently across groups, believe that informing for a rival group carries a high risk of punishment for civilians.

Figure 4.1: High Risk of Punishment for Civilians Informing Rival Groups



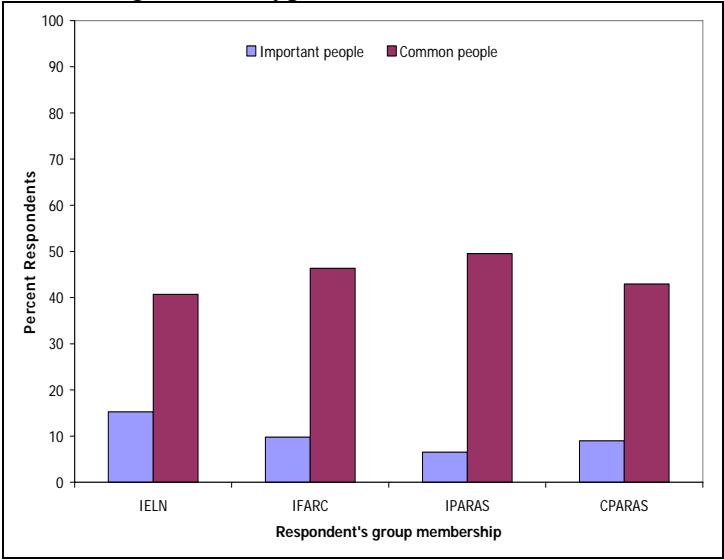
To better round out the picture of how violence against civilians occurs, we asked our respondents to think of a specific event where violence took place against civilians. We then asked them a series of questions about that particular event. The picture of violence that emerges from this set of questions is the following. First, violence tends to target people from the area where the group operates as opposed to violence being perpetrated against outsiders (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2: Geographic Origin of Civilian Victims



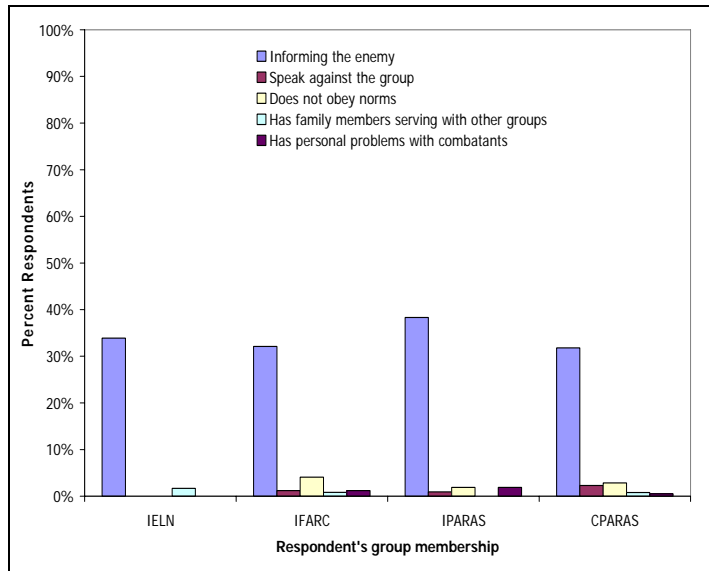
Second, there is agreement across groups that ordinary people tend to be victimized much more than “important” people (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: Type of Civilian Victims



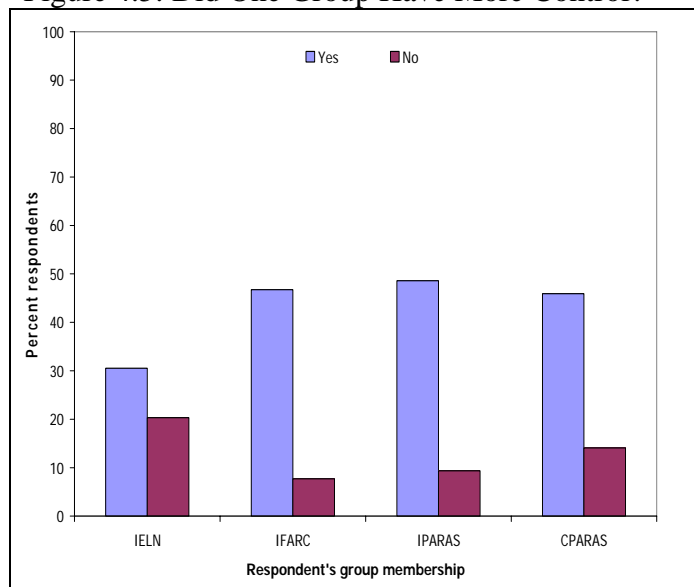
Third, confirming the previous data, victimization appears to be mostly about information—and this is remarkably consistent across groups (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4: Causes of Civilian Victimization



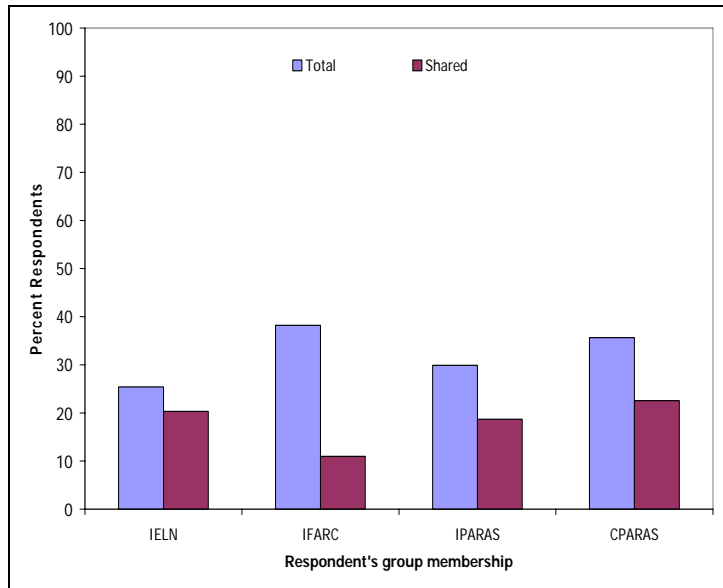
Respondents across groups do agree that when the particular act of violence they selected took place, one group had more control (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5: Did One Group Have More Control?



Nevertheless, a majority of respondents say that the violence took place when one group had full control, rather than under shared control, with the IFARC emphasizing full control. A substantial minority point to a situation of shared control (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6: Degree of Control



At the same time, however, when asked to evaluate the relation between control and violence, our respondents clearly associate higher levels of control with lower levels of violence and vice-versa (Figure 4.7, 4.8). These responses point to the complexity of this relationship.

Figure 4.8: Relation between Control and Violence

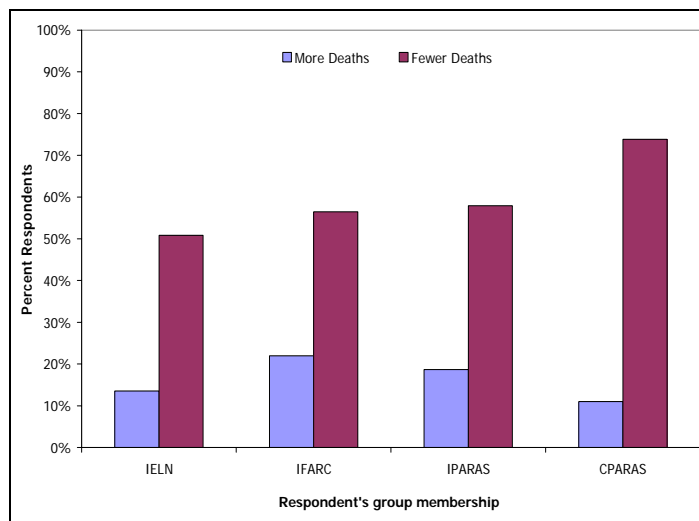
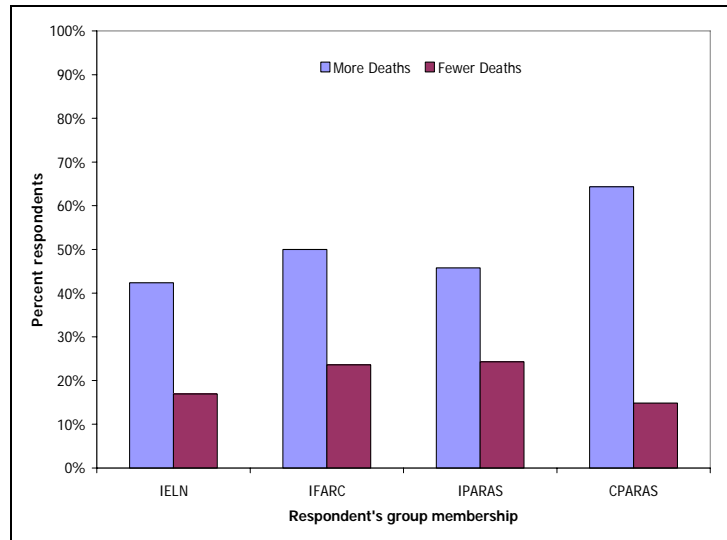
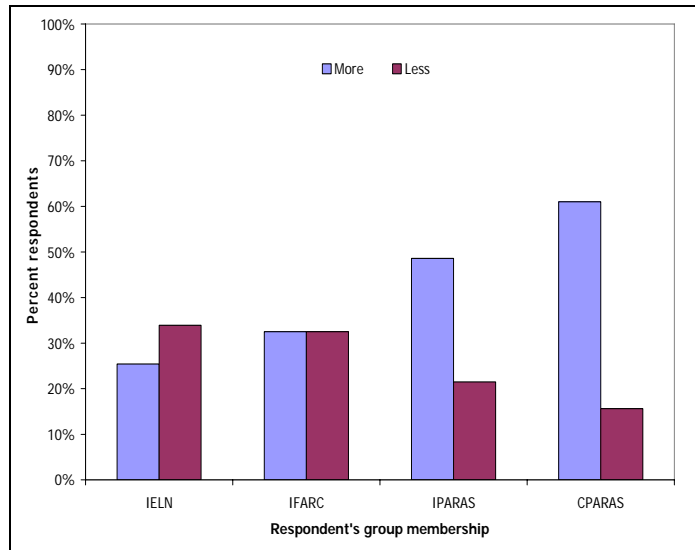


Figure 4.9: Relation between Control and Violence



What was the overall effect of violence on collaboration? When asked if they think that violence subsequently causes more or less collaboration, respondents exhibit a mixed reaction. Whereas former paramilitaries believe that violence works in the direction of increasing collaboration, IFARC are evenly divided, and IELN privilege the opposite view by a thin majority (4.10).

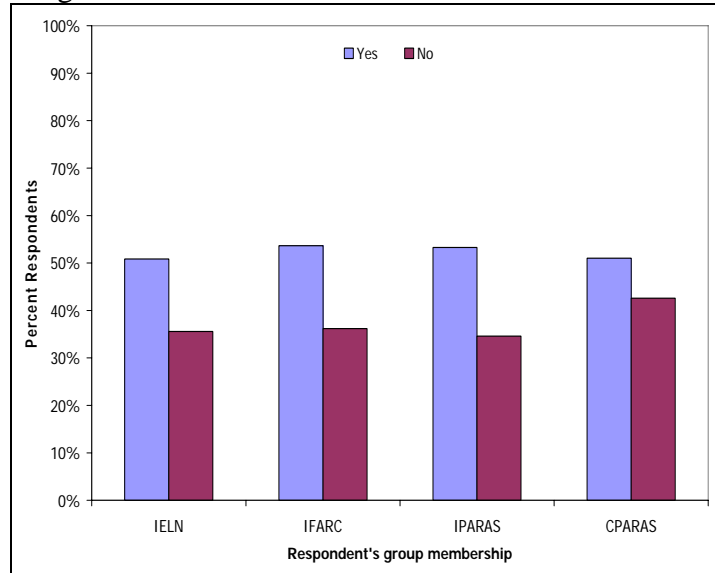
Figure 4.10: Does Violence Cause an Increase in Civilian Collaboration



4.2 Denunciations

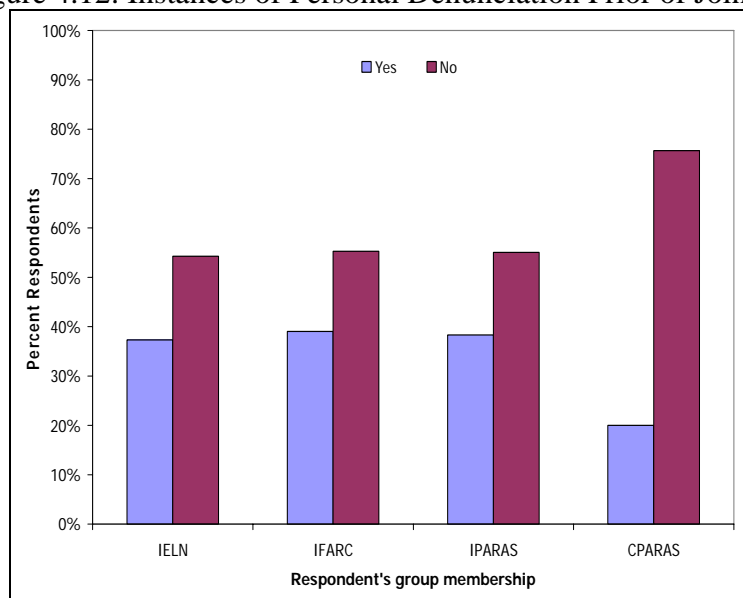
When asked whether they are aware of denunciations motivated by personal conflicts rather than political imperative, the majority of respondents respond affirmatively, though a significant minority gave a negative answer (4.11).

Figure 4.11: Denunciations for Personal Reasons



However, when asked earlier in the interview whether they remember, from their lives prior to joining their group, people from their communities who denounced neighbors as collaborators, a significant minority of respondents from every group but the CDE respond positively (Figure 4.12).

Figure 4.12: Instances of Personal Denunciation Prior of Joining?



The cross-tabulation of these two questions halves the number of respondents with no experience of denunciation. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 suggest the ubiquitous character of personal denunciations: 39.74% of CDE and 59.39% of IDEs who report witnessing no personal denunciations as combatants witnessed personal denunciations as civilians prior to enlisting. Only half of those not reporting personal denunciations as combatants have no experience whatsoever with denunciations.

Table 4.1 Respondents Who Knew of Personal Denunciations Before and After Joining an Armed Group (CPARAS)

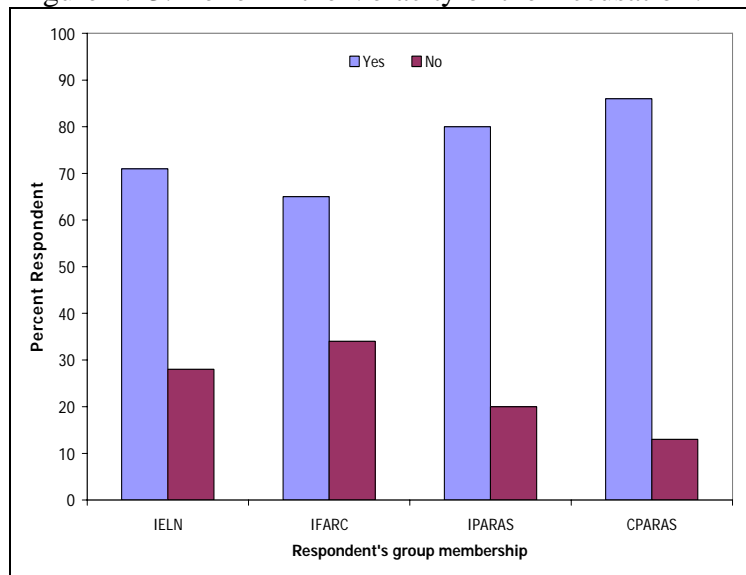
			Personal Denunciation as Combatant?	
			No	Yes
Personal Denunciations Before Joining	Yes	40%	56%	
	No	55%	40%	

Table 4.2 Respondents Who Knew of Personal Denunciations Before and After Joining an Armed Group (IDEs)

			Personal Denunciation as Combatant?	
			No	Yes
Personal Denunciations Before Joining	Yes	59%	30%	
	No	51%	41%	

Last, the belief in the veracity of the accusations against civilians is very high across the board, and higher still among former paramilitaries (Figure 4.13).

Figure 4.13: Belief in the Veracity of the Accusation?



5. Demobilization and Reintegration

Those who desert an armed group have usually attempted to do so more than once in the past (figures 5.1 and 5.2). Given that most paramilitary groups allow combatants to ask for leaves of absence, take vacations, and even resign, these groups seem to face less desertion. The FARC and ELN, on the contrary, regard becoming a combatant as a lifetime commitment and seldom are combatants allowed to leave the group.

Figure 5.1. Did You Try to Leave the Group before Demobilizing?

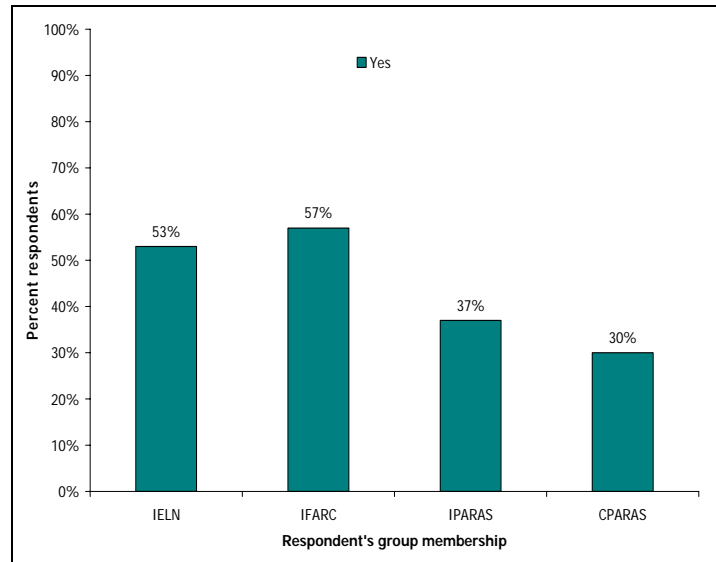
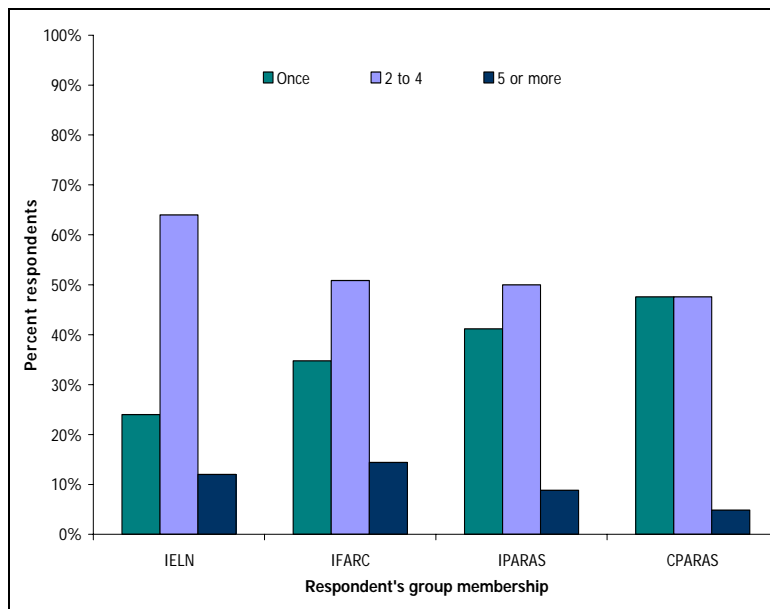


Figure 5.2 How Many Times Did You Try to Desert?



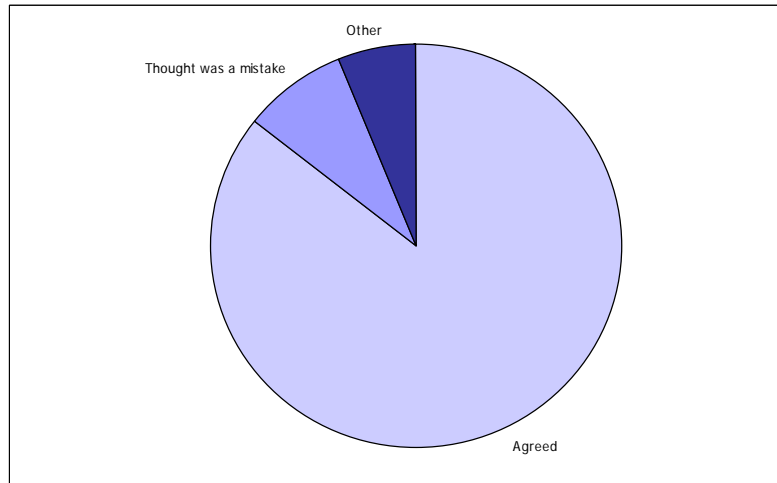
The main motivations for deserting are exhaustion with life as a combatant and the desire to return to one’s family. Only about 3% of respondents list earning money as the key motivation behind desertion (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Motivation to demobilize (ID only)

	IELN	IFARC	IP
Be with family again	44%	55%	50%
Tired of life as a combatant	44%	38%	24%
Find an activity to make money	2%	2%	4%
In order to study	0%	4%	5%
To start a new life and form a family	18%	10%	10%
Trusted this government	2%	5%	6%
Thought group was close to lose and the war would be over soon	0%	2%	4%

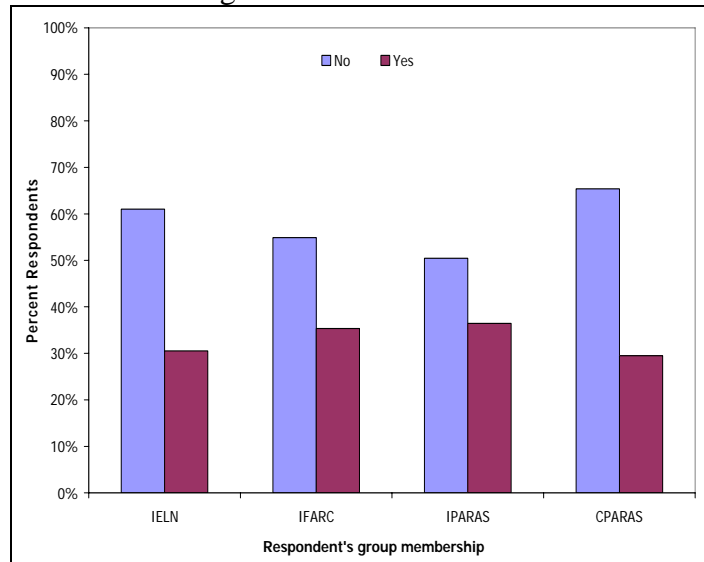
Turning to the CPARAS, many say that they only learned about their demobilization on the same day it happened: their commander ordered them to gather, turn in their weapons, and abide by the demobilization program. Given that most rank and file combatants did not participate in the negotiation process it is possible that they were not convinced of the benefits of disarming and demobilizing. Figure 5.3 shows CPARAS’ response to the following question: “Did you agree with the demobilization of your group? Or did you think it was a mistake?” Most respondents say they did agree with the decision while 8% say they did not. Although this is a small percentage, ex-combatants’ attitudes towards the negotiation might be important to consider for designing the components of the reintegration program as well as for ensuring that they don’t join another organization and resume fighting.

Figure 5.3 Collectively Demobilized Paramilitaries' Opinions about their Group's Demobilization



With regard to the difficulties of life as a combatant, there are few differences across groups in terms of how many people have been hurt in battle. IDEs are not significantly more likely to have been hurt compared to CPARAS (Figure 5.4), hence desertion cannot be explained by an unusually high exposure to the rigors of the battlefield.

Figure 5.4: Hurt in Battle?



Turning to prospects for reintegration, we asked respondents about their willingness to go back to their place of residence before they enlisted. In the case of the CPARAS, we asked them if they were living there at the moment. Figure 5.5 shows their responses: about 75% of all ex-guerrilla fighters say they would not go back to their localities. The percentage is smaller for the case of the IPARAS (60%), and even smaller for the CPARAS (33%).

Figure 5.5 Ex-combatants' Willingness to Live in their Place of Residence at Time of Enlistment

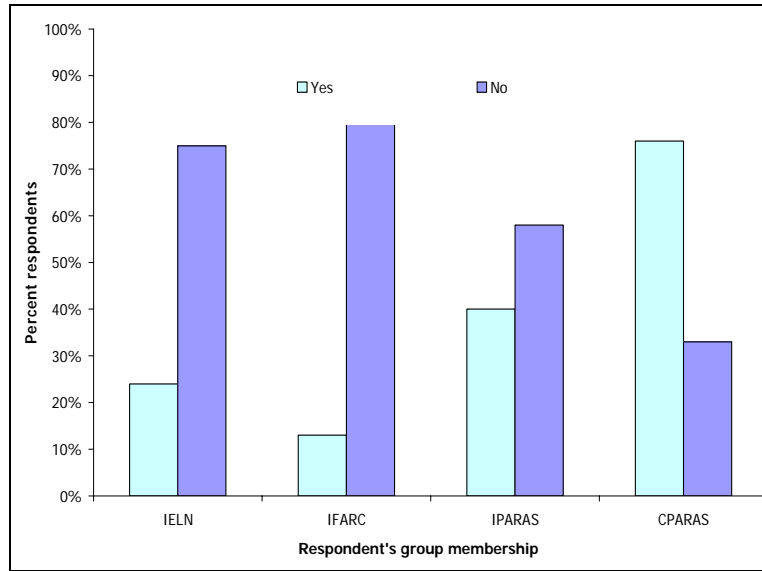
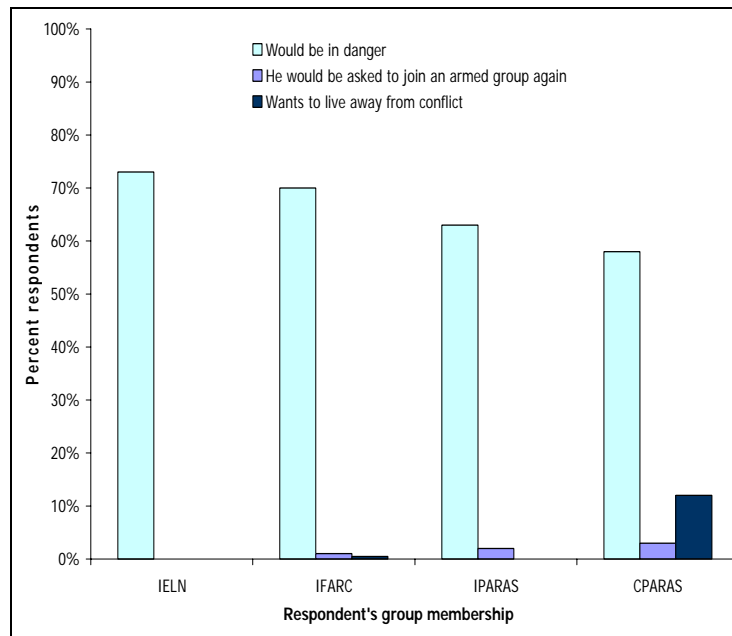


Figure 5.6 shows the reasons why those who would not go back feel that way: the main reason for respondents of all groups is fear of not being secure.

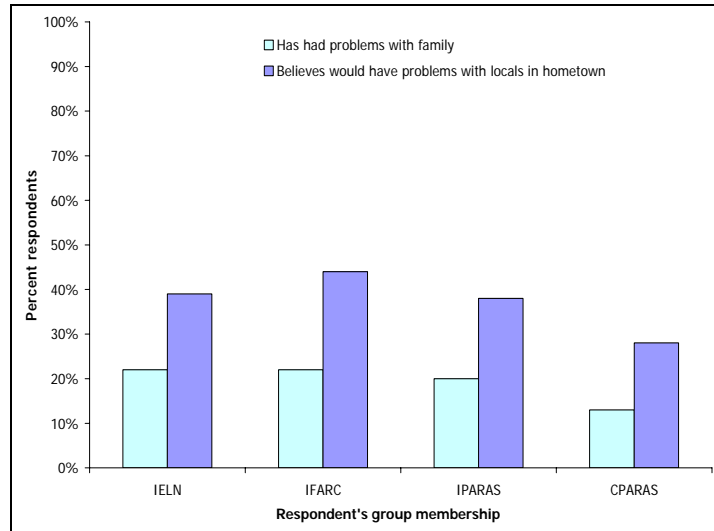
Figure 5.6 Respondents' reasons for not going back to their localities



We also asked questions about respondents' expectations for reintegration. Figure 5.6 shows answers to two questions: first, 'Have you encountered problems with your relatives due to being an ex-combatant?' And, second, 'If you were to go back to your hometown, do you think you would have problems with locals due to being an ex-

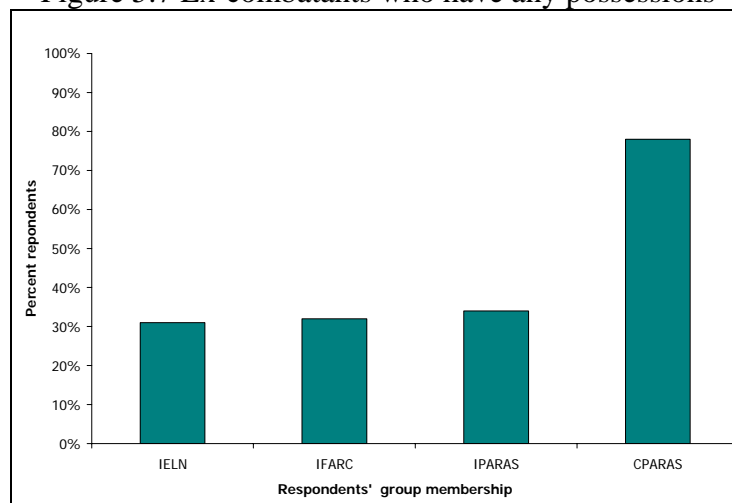
combatant? Responses across IDEs are very similar: about 20% have had problems being accepted by their relatives and about 40% believe they would have problems with locals if they were to return to their hometown. CPARAS seem to be more optimistic: 13% report having problems with relatives and 28% expect having problems with locals in their hometowns.

Figure 5.6 Respondents' Problems Reintegrating



Turning to ex-combatants' overall economic situation, around 32% of IDEs report having material possessions either in their hometown or in another place; about 78% of CPARAS report having any possession (Figure 5.7).

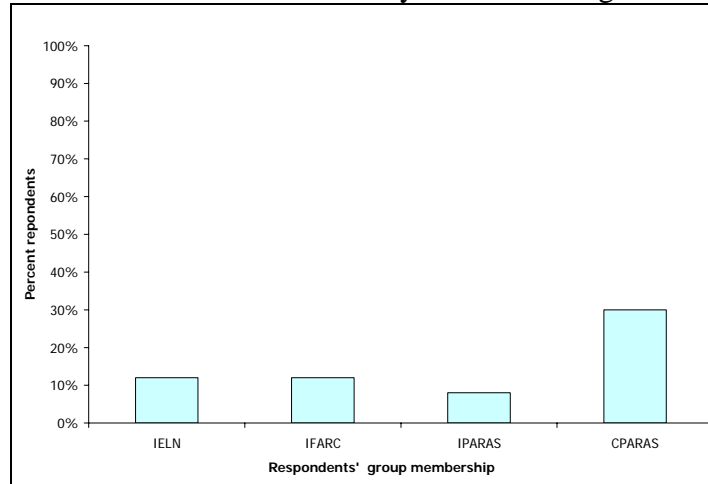
Figure 5.7 Ex-combatants who have any possessions



Only 13% of all IDEs report working at the time when the survey was conducted. CPARAS, on the contrary, seem to be much more integrated in terms of finding a job: 78% say they are working. This might be due to the fact that most CPARAS remain

living in the areas where they operated while being combatants. Presumably, networks and opportunities are more available to them than to demobilized combatants seeking jobs in areas that are new to them.

Figure 5.8 Ex-combatants Who Said They Were Working at Time of Survey



In terms of economic need, about 60% of all IDEs say that someone depends on their income right now. The percentage is greater among CPARAS, again, perhaps because most of them are living areas where their families live.

Figure 5.9. Does someone depend on your income right now?

