From Predators to Providers: The Role of Violence and Rules in Establishing Social Control

by

Timothy Flynn Wright

B.S. United States Military Academy at West Point (2000)
M.A. United States Naval War College (2012)

Submitted to the Department of Political Science
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

at the

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

June 2018

© 2018 Timothy F. Wright
All rights reserved

The author hereby grants to MIT permission to reproduce and to distribute publicly
paper and electronic copies of this thesis document in whole or in part in any
medium now known or hereafter created.

Signature redacted

Signature of Author............................

Timothy Flynn Wright
Department of Political Science
May 23, 2018

Signature redacted

Certified by..........................

Roger Petersen
Arthur and Ruth Sloan Professor of Political Science
Thesis Supervisor

Signature redacted

Accepted by..........................

Ben Ross Schneider
Ford International Professor of Political Science
Chair, Graduate Program Committee
From Predators to Providers:
The Role of Violence and Rules in Establishing Social Control

by

Timothy Flynn Wright

Submitted to the Department of Political Science on
June 1, 2018 in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

ABSTRACT

In the modern world, social order is most often maintained by states, using a complex web of institutions, norms, and systems to control the population and govern their actions. In this dissertation, I ask how groups establish and maintain social control absent these powerful structures. To answer this question, I propose a new theoretical construct, based on a foundation of social science and observation of the competition for social control that occurred in Baghdad, Iraq from 2006 to 2008. I identify and test what is both necessary and sufficient for a group to establish social control over a population under conditions approaching anarchy.

I argue that to establish social control, a group must do three things. First, a group must possess specific latent capacities that enable them to credibly control violence. Second, groups must apply violence in purposeful ways, ascending a hierarchy of increasingly complex collective activities to establish social control. Finally, social control is achieved only when the group uses violence to provide a specific set of benefits that provide utility not only to the group, but also to the population it seeks to control. I define this step as adjudication. Implications and applications are discussed.

Thesis Supervisor: Roger Petersen

Title: Arthur and Ruth Sloan Professor of Political Science
Acknowledgements

It is common to hear people discuss a PhD thesis as “my dissertation” or the degree as “my PhD”. I strongly believe that, in this case, such language is highly misleading. Perhaps more than most, I can hardly claim that this document is mine alone. I am deeply indebted to an entire community of scholars, soldiers, and family that helped bring this work into existence.

First and foremost, I could not have accomplished this task without my outstanding dissertation committee. Roger Petersen, my chair and advisor, had a deep influence on my personal and professional development during my time at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His interest in my work, his methodological rigor, and his patience with my shortcomings were absolutely essential to my success. The US Army gave me three years to complete a PhD. I could not have done it without Roger. Barry Posen clearly outlined the expectations of Department of Political Science and the MIT Security Studies Program then challenged me to meet them. He set the tone for my education and development as a political scientist, for which I am endlessly grateful. J. Chappell Lawson introduced me to the sub-field of comparative politics, a part of the discipline that I had little awareness of or interest in before I arrived at this institution. I can easily say that my greatest growth as a political scientist came in this field. His engagement and energy drew me into a field that had a direct impact on the direction of my education at MIT. In short, without this committee, this dissertation would not exist.

From 2011 to 2012, I attended the Naval War College. Up until that point, I had served only in tactical infantry and special operations assignments, happily operating at the tip of the nation’s military spear, a pure tactician. The year I spent at the war college expanded my perspectives, challenged my assumptions, and made me aware of how much more I had to learn about strategy, policy, and war. Andrea Dew, the Co-Director of the Center for Irregular Warfare and Armed groups, took a personal interest in my development as a leader and as a thinker. She pushed me to apply theory and rigor to my personal experience, to develop hypotheses and test them against data beyond my own. Most importantly, she was the first person to tell me that I had the ability to earn a doctoral degree. She set me on the path that led to this dissertation. Marc Genest collaborated with Andrea on my independent study that served as my first academic foray into the topic of social control, and he was instrumental in pushing my academic limits. Finally, Captain Tom Sass, US Navy, Retired, then a professor, now a personal friend, continued to provide energy, enthusiasm, and support for this project and my time at MIT. I relied on his insight on countless occasions.

I arrived at graduate school fully expecting a solitary existence as a graduate student. I was pleasantly surprised to find that, at MIT, nothing could be further from the truth. The graduate students in the Department of Political Science and the Security Studies Program are some of the most intelligent, capable, and
successful people I know, but more importantly, they proved to be selfless, caring, and invested in the success of each member of our group. The 2015 cohort of Andy Halterman, Shiyao Liu, Kelly O’Connor, Sara Plana, Erik Sand, Meicen Sun, Rachel Tecott, Minh Trinh, and Clara Vandeweerdt pulled me through coursework, general exams, and the dissertation process by investing their personal time and energy into helping me overcome my shortcomings. Their fellowship and support will be missed. Others, including Marsin Alshamary, Lena Andrews, Paige Bollen, Matt Cancian, Jessie Clark, Megan Goldberg, Marika Landau-Wells, Philip Martin, Timothy McDonnell, Nina McMurry, Aidan Millif, Kacie Miura, Gabriel Nahmias, Cullen Nutt, Reid Pauly, Ignacio Puente, and Blair Reed helped in numerous ways. From helping me grasp the finer points of econometrics and causal identification, to reading drafts and providing feedback, to listening to presentations and talks, each had a demonstrable impact on the quality of this work. Most importantly, they never hesitated to challenge me if my work had wandered off in the wrong direction, or if I failed to perform at a high enough level. Honest feedback, positive reinforcement, and unwavering support were hallmarks of this group of incredible people. Thank you.

I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge the contribution of the Army officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers that have influenced me over my career. Thanks to Colonel Tom Guthrie, US Army, Retired, and Major General Walt Piatt, US Army, two mentors that have always challenged me to think, lead, and adapt. They willingly invested their time and effort into my personal development. Simply put, I owe any and all professional success I may have to these men. Colonel Thomas Burke, Lieutenant Colonel Sean Morrow, Lieutenant Colonel Jarron Wharton, and Major Joseph McCarthy, members of the Army’s Advanced Strategic Planning and Policy Program (ASP3) have provided a tight-knit circle of support and trust throughout my time at MIT. They constant support, feedback, and counsel had a direct impact on this dissertation and my success in this program. Additionally, thank you to all of ASP3 for allowing me to pursue this opportunity to develop into a more effective Army leader. Following my time in Iraq as a company commander, General David Petraeus took a personal interest in my professional development, encouraging me to pursue opportunities that expanded my horizons and challenged my assumptions. He challenged me to think hard, write, and move beyond the standard coursework at the Naval War College and broaden my educational foundation. Like many officers in my generation, GEN Petraeus made a substantial and indelible mark on my Army career. I am in his debt.

Most importantly, I am forever thankful for the officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers I have had the blessing to serve with over my 18 years in the Army. From the 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 25th Infantry Division, and the Regimental Reconnaissance Company of the 75th Ranger Regiment, I have served with some of the strongest, bravest, and most capable people in the country. Their impact on me has been profound. Most importantly, I want to thank all those who served in Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment from January 2006 to June 2008. My failings were many and my successes were few, but all that the company accomplished and achieved was a direct result of the hard work,
dedication, and selfless sacrifices of the men of Destroyer Company. The driving force behind this dissertation was Danny Fuentes, Jason Morales, and Oscar Saucedo. I hope that, in the future, someone else can read this work and do a better job than I did in Baghdad.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge my family. To my parents, George and Mary, you never failed to challenge me to live up to my potential, then support me along the way. From late night pickups at basketball practice, to long trips to West Point Rugby games, to continuous support through years of deployments, you set the example for parenting that I strive to follow. To my brothers and sister, George, Stewart, and Anne, thank you for your unending support and good-natured ribbing over being a gray-haired college student. Special thanks to George for his last-minute copy editing of my final draft.

Thank you to my wife, Wendy. To quote a favorite song, you sacrificed so much of your life in order for this to work. Our family works because of your tireless effort and dedication to our marriage. You have handled my combat deployments, jobs with unending hours, and finally, years of me with my head in a book or banging away on a keyboard. Through it all, you have kept me sane and raised our children to be happy, healthy, and excited about the future. I love you. Finally, to our children, Bronwyn, Griffith, and Fiona, thank you for putting up with my long hours and time apart. You are growing into amazing human beings, and you provide the motivation for all that I do.

Wendy, Bronwyn, Griffith, and Fiona – I dedicate this work to you.

Timothy F. Wright
Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army
Department of Political Science
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
June 1, 2018
# Table of Contents

Chapter 1 – Introduction .................................................................................................................. 13
  Hypotheses ................................................................................................................................. 17
  Case Comparison ....................................................................................................................... 29
  Implications ............................................................................................................................... 31

Chapter 2 – Hierarchy of Social Control ....................................................................................... 33
  Social Order ............................................................................................................................... 35
  Social Control ........................................................................................................................... 42
  Collective Activities .................................................................................................................. 45
  Latent Capacity ........................................................................................................................ 59
  Investment ................................................................................................................................. 66
  Conclusion ................................................................................................................................. 69

Chapter 3 – Battle for Baghdad ..................................................................................................... 73
  Social Unraveling ....................................................................................................................... 75
  Absence of State ....................................................................................................................... 77
  Competitors .............................................................................................................................. 87
  Shia Violence and Sunni Response ......................................................................................... 91
  Late 2006 – Organizational Changes ...................................................................................... 95

Chapter 4 – Battle for Baya‘a .................................................................................................... 101
Chapter 1 – Introduction

On March 17, 2007, I was in Iraq as a company commander in the second brigade combat team. I deployed as part of the Surge, the force increase ordered by President George W. Bush to halt the rapidly expanding civil war. That day, my company – Delta Company of 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry – took responsibility for Bayaa, a neighborhood in south-central Baghdad. Roughly 2 square kilometers in size, Bayaa was home to nearly 20,000 middle-class residents of both Shia and Sunni faiths. The wave of violence that had consumed other parts of the country following the destruction of the Golden Dome in Samarra was now hitting this neighborhood, and we were tasked with stopping it. We were armed with new equipment, new doctrine, and a new strategy – the 91 men of D Co were to take control of the neighborhood, halt sectarian violence, and win the support of the population to create time and space for Iraqi Security Forces and the Iraqi Government to take control of their own country. Dubbed Operation Fardh al-Qanoon (Operation Imposing Law), it was a last-ditch effort to salvage Operation Iraqi Freedom.

When we arrived, our battalion of approximately 750 soldiers took over for a 130-man company. For the previous 5 months, they had attempted to control the western half of the Rasheed District, an area of 36 square kilometers that was home to nearly 300,000 people. As Bayaa had been relatively calm for most of this period, the company had focused their efforts on the more violent areas to the west. Information about the neighborhood, its people, and the threats it faced was sparse. A rough outline of the conflict was sketched just before we took over. Since the beginning of the year, this nice, middle class neighborhood had become a battle ground in the sectarian war that had consumed much of the country over the last year. On one side, Sunni militias, partnered with Al Qaeda in Iraq, were attempting to destabilize the
government by sowing violence, chaos, and fear. Shia militias, with Muqtada al-Sadr’s Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) in the lead, were fighting back. With Iranian support, they were attempting to cleanse the country of all Sunnis and take control of the government. The population was caught in the middle: victims of violence, forced to support these groups in order to survive. The Iraqi Army and other security forces were building capability, but they were not big enough or skilled enough yet to do much about it. The Iraqi government was ready to lead the country, but the violence was so great that political solutions were nearly impossible.

Our arrival marked a clear departure from the coalition strategy of the previous years. For much of 2005 and 2006, the US-led coalition had taken deliberate steps to disengage from combat operations. Under the assumption that American presence fueled resentment and violence, daily operations in and amongst the population were largely handed over to Iraqi Army, National Police, and local police forces. US forces consolidated onto sprawling forward operating bases, focusing their efforts on targeting former Ba’athist leaders and AQI “terrorists” while planning to fully withdraw. When sectarian violence exploded during early 2006, Iraqi security forces either retreated or took sides. After three failed operations to contain this violence, US units resumed operations inside neighborhoods in an attempt to quell the violence. Little progress was made, as these units simply lacked the combat power to have a measurable impact on the situation. Fighting continued, and it appeared the country was in a full-scale civil war.

The Surge added five additional brigade combat teams to the US forces in Iraq, two of which were sent directly to Baghdad. The Army’s newest doctrine, Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency, provided the conceptual framework of our strategic and operational plans. First, we would establish constant presence in Bayaa to protect the population from militias
causing the violence. We would then identify the “fault line” between the warring factions and put ourselves between them, like separating two boxers in a fight. Once established in the neighborhood, we would then conduct operations with Iraqi security forces to clear the insurgent groups from our area. With the militias gone, we would then hold our ground to prevent their return. This would give us and our Iraqi partners control over the area to rebuild the local government, social services, and economy that had broken over the last 4 years of war. These actions would win the support of the population, and they would turn against the militias in favor of the elected Iraqi government.

Within days, we realized the situation in Bayaa was vastly different than expected. Rather than Sunni and Shia militias fighting over the neighborhood, we quickly discovered that JAM dominated Bayaa. They were systematically pushing Sunnis from the area, identifying individual Sunni families and giving them 24 hours to leave. If they refused, violence followed: either a physical attack on the house, or a member of the family would be kidnapped, tortured, and in many cases, killed several days later – his body left in the streets as a reminder of the consequences of disobedience. The Sunnis would then retaliate by sending car bombs into the neighborhood market, despite little Sunni militia presence in the neighborhood itself. The National Police remained on the periphery of the neighborhood, running check points but doing little inside, and the local police focused mostly on directing traffic. Both wanted no part of taking on JAM. The streets were mostly empty, the markets were closed, and people hid in their homes to avoid the violence.

During the next 6 months, we fought our way into our neighborhood and implemented our operational plan. By May, we had struck 27 IEDs, faced regular RPG and sniper attacks, and lost so many men that I had to reconstitute a platoon with soldiers from another company. We
had, however, established ourselves in Bayaa. We conducted clearing operations throughout the neighborhood by taking weapons off the street, capturing known enemy combatants, and fighting hard when ambushed. We worked with the National Police battalion stationed in our area, developed working relationships with local leaders, and established rapport with the local population. We distributed goods, services, and benefits, both big and small, in line with our prescribed strategy.

Though highly costly, our operations failed to achieve their intended results. We had maintained constant presence, but by the end of the summer, most Sunni families had either left the neighborhood or were in hiding. An influx of migrants from other areas turned Bayaa into a Shia neighborhood. We had conducted both large-scale clearing operations and precise targeting operations that had successfully taken JAM members off the streets, but they seemed just as strong as the first day we arrived. We demonstrated that we were willing to fight and that we were quite effective at bringing violence to bear on the enemy, yet rarely did people come to us for protection from insurgents. Despite good relations with leaders and the public, they rarely provided us intelligence information. What intelligence we did receive was passed over the phone and in clandestine meetings away from the area, but never publicly where anyone else could see. We started neighborhood improvement projects and distributed aid packages, but we received little more than smiles in return. We were on the streets, with more firepower and greater resources than JAM, yet it was JAM, not my company and our Iraqi government partners, that the population obeyed, listened to, and went to when they needed help. How did JAM get their support? What were they doing that we were not? How did JAM gain and maintain control over Bayaa?
This puzzle of control – who has it and why – motivates this dissertation. I apply political science theory and methodology to this critical juncture of the war in Iraq to generate hypotheses about (1) what is necessary to establish control over an area when the state has been wiped away, (2) the process by which control is established, and (3) why so many groups fail to do it effectively. My hypotheses are theoretically grounded in the work of Charles Tilly, Margret Levi, and Mancur Olson and their theories on the evolution of states out of anarchy, Robert Dahl’s concept of power, and Robert Bates’s analysis of the breakdown of political order. They are refined by my observations and experience in Bayaa: an experience which yielded a unique and uncommon data set. I had daily and unfettered access to a neighborhood that was dealing with near anarchical conditions in an active war zone. This experience supplies the data needed to refine these social science theories and generate new knowledge of how order can emerge from anarchy.

This theory explicates the necessary conditions a group must meet to compete for control, and the activities they must perform that are sufficient for creating the basic building blocks of social order. This work aims to provide both academics and policy makers a heuristic model that can more reliably predict outcomes in other areas facing similar competitions. I demonstrate this model’s utility with analyses of similar neighborhoods in Baghdad in 2007 and 2008, showing that outcomes are better predicted by this model than by alternative explanations. These findings have theoretical and practical implications for both academics and policy makers, and they may have application across multiple contexts in the future.

Hypotheses
Social control is the ability of a group to shape the behavior of a population so that it consistently conforms to the group’s wishes without direct supervision. It is the foundation of
any ordered society. To determine how social control is established, however, one must first
determine its essential elements. Some argue that the obedience and orderly behavior of people
as they live and work together is maintained by a common set of values or morals which come
from religion, culture, or both.¹ Others argue that the market situation and individuals' relation
to it allows small groups of people to control the behavior of the masses, using their economic
strength to capture and control the structure and order of society.² Still others suggest that state
institutions provide a set of systems and processes that regulate behavior and exert independent
influence over the functions of society.³ While there is explanatory value in all of these ideas,
when the state is disrupted, weak, or non-existent, I argue that violence, or the threat of violence,
trumps all other sources of control.

Hypothesis #1 – Collective Activities

Violence is an incredibly powerful tool that can be used in many ways, and it sits at the
heart of any social order. A group may use violence to provide people security from those who
might harm them or to punish those who behave in unacceptable ways. One could use violence
to coerce behavior and compliance, while others could use violence just to steal things. Violence
for violence's sake does little to create order, but when purposefully applied, it can create order
from chaos and facilitate group control over a population.

To establish social control, a group must perform a specific set of collective activities to
control the behavior of others so that it benefits not only themselves, but the entire population.
The group benefits from violence by using it to extract resources from the population, such as
money, manpower, or political support. In return, the group uses its control of violence to

provide safety and security for the population. This frees the population from devoting energy to their personal security, allowing them to pursue productive activities. As the cases I explore show, Mancur Olson’s conceptualization of a group’s transition from roving to stationary bandits and Charles Tilly’s ideas about the origins of the state in a protection racket provide a start point for conceptualizing why and how groups use violence in different ways to create varying levels of control and order. ⁴

To establish social control, a group must develop the ability to use violence in complex ways. The collective activities they must perform exist in a hierarchy. The activities performed in the first step are necessary for the second step, the second are necessary for the third, and so on. As the group progresses up the hierarchy, each step lowers the burden of security that the population must provide itself. As the group becomes more capable and the benefits they provide increase, the population increasingly complies with the group, provides it benefits, and relies on it to order their daily lives. ⁵ Social control is achieved when population chooses to exchange (to provide and draw upon) resources with one group over others. ⁶ Social control is the most basic form of social order.

Sometimes groups use violence to simply take resources from the population, a common behavior in contexts where the state does not exist. They use violence in an organized way to extract resources from the population. This benefits the group, but does nothing for the population, and it does not create order. This collective activity, known as predation, is the most

⁵ Tilly, “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime.”
basic application of violence by a group against a population, and is the baseline behavior out of which a group must evolve to begin to establish social control.

The first collective activity in the hierarchy of social control is coercion: the ability to use or threaten violence against the population to dictate their behavior. This allows the group to extract resources from the population and direct their activity in ways that are productive for the group. Since people rarely volunteer their own money and labor, the group uses force to get people to do things that they would not otherwise do. The population complies, but only because they are forced to, as the group is taking all benefits for themselves and providing nothing in return. Coercion provides a minimal level of order – often only at the end of a gun. It is, however, the first step towards social control.

The second step in the hierarchy is protection, where a group not only takes resources and coerces behavior, but also chooses to protect the population from other groups who might do the same. This collective activity is much more difficult and complex, but it provides significantly more benefit to the group. Keeping other groups out provides exclusive access to the resources and benefits of the population. This is the first step where the population receives benefits from the group, as they no longer face violence from other groups. It is not, however, sufficient for social control. While the population is safe from violence from other groups, they are not secure. Under protection, there is no one protecting the population from each other, and there is no one for the population to turn to if they are preyed upon by another member of the population. Nor is there a body to whom they can turn to resolve internal disputes or disagreements. When a group

---

7 Imagine someone voluntarily paying taxes or moving off their family farm because a group asked nicely.
is only offering protection, the population will continue to seek an entity that can take the
security burden from them.

The next step in the hierarchy of social control is decisive, a step I call adjudication. When a group provides adjudication, it not only takes resources, directs behavior, and keeps other groups out, but it now chooses to regulate the interactions of the members of the population itself. When it takes this step, the group provides the rules that govern the population’s behavior, monitors the population to insure compliance, and punishes those that violate the rules. Though this is significantly more complex and costly than protection, it is in both the group’s and the population’s interest. When a group provides adjudication, it removes the burden of security from members of the population, allowing them to devote their energies to productive behavior. This is in the group’s interest, as a more productive population means more resources from which the group can extract a share. It is in the population’s interest in three ways. First, they benefit from greater productivity just as the group does. Second, adjudication makes insures that people interact predictably and consistently by punishing those that do not. Third, the group is now a resource for the population to draw on when they need a dispute resolved. This reciprocal relationship – where the population exchanges resources for internal and external security-based benefits – is sufficient for social control.

The next steps in the hierarchy – distribution and production – strengthen the group’s social control. Once a group provides adjudication, it can then start distribution: the provision of goods and services that enhance the productivity of the population. Systems that reduce transaction costs, improve quality of life, and increase the output of individuals add additional

---

incentives for the maintenance of control and order. Finally, a group in control can shape and direct the energies of the population towards production, or centrally directed economic behavior. At this level, social control is robust and stable, and violence becomes only one part of a complex web of incentives and structures that provide order. These higher levels only contribute to social control under two circumstances. First, a group must perform coercion, protection, and adjudication before it attempts to distribute or produce. Attempting distribution or production before the lower steps in the hierarchy will not lead to social control. Second, a group must maintain its capabilities in the lower level steps once they are established. If a group fails to maintain each step in the hierarchy, it will lose social control.

When social control is established, the behavior of the population changes. When a group provides reciprocal benefits, it no longer has to constantly threaten or use violence to extract resources. Social control is marked by a voluntary provision of resources from the population to the group. Taxes are paid, rules are followed, information is provided, and support is given not because the population must, but because they chose to give these things up to the group in return for the benefits they rely on. As it is difficult to disentangle what is driving compliance with rules or tax payments, there are three key resources that are truly voluntary that indicate popular choice. First, it is nearly impossible to coerce credible intelligence and information from an individual. Second, the population is not forced to use the group to resolve their personal disputes. Third, political support, specifically votes, are nearly impossible to attribute to an individual. The group that receives credible intelligence, resolves disputes, gets the most votes, or any combination of the three, has social control.

---

9 There is a long-standing debate within the literature on voter behavior under authoritarian regimes as to whether individuals comply with groups wishes based on norms of reciprocity or due to actions by brokers to enforce
When multiple groups are present, the group that progresses to the highest point on the hierarchy will establish social control. In Bayaa, there were multiple groups present, and each performed different collective activities. The local police chose to use violence for predation, extorting money from the population for traffic tickets and taking payoffs from those who committed petty crimes to avoid being thrown in jail. The National Police were not much better, performing minimal coercive and protection functions. When there was no D Co patrol to plan and direct their operations, they mostly operated checkpoints to prevent Sunnis from re-entering the neighborhood and deter car bombers from attempting an attack. They too lined their pockets with the occasional payoff or bribe. They would only do more when forced to by D Co.

Clearly, our intention was to establish social control, to enter into a reciprocal relationship with the population where we, and eventually the Iraqi Government, provided security, goods, and services to the population in exchange for popular support, intelligence, and rejection of sectarian practices. We could coerce – when we told people to get down, they got down, when we told them to leave an area, they left. When we entered their house on a raid or to search, they didn’t resist. We were actively protecting them, countering violent behaviors by other groups while avoiding civilian casualties and collateral damage. We were managing a host of projects to bring electricity, trash collection, and economic growth back to the area. We were shepherding a local council to provide basic governance functions within the neighborhood. We were implementing most of the logics of the counterinsurgency doctrine in FM 3-24 and the strategy and tactics of the Surge, which ought to have yielded the support of the population.

compliance. This dissertation does not weigh in on this debate, nor is it germane to the hypotheses and evidence investigated in this study, as both sides of the debate agree that when a secret ballot is used, there is no way to coerce the choice of the individual in the voting booth. See Chappell Lawson and Kenneth F. Greene, “Making Clientelism Work: How Norms of Reciprocity Increase Voter Compliance,” *Comparative Politics* 47, no. 1 (2014): 61–85.
However, despite our best efforts, the population was providing intelligence to JAM and going to them to solve their problems, not us. JAM had social control.

JAM operated at every level that we did. They clearly had coercive power, demonstrated by their forcible removal of the Sunni population. They actively protected the neighborhood, countering Sunni groups that sought to retaliate against the neighborhood with bombs and IEDs. They provided social services as well: homes to the homeless, money for displaced families, and the everyday essentials like cooking oil and gas for generators to families in need.

The actions of JAM differed from ours in one key respect – they were adjudicating, and we were not. If a family came to us to saying they had been robbed, we directed them to speak to the local police (who would only investigate if bribed). If their house was taken from them, they could file a complaint with the Iraqi courts, but there was no courthouse in Bayaa, or anywhere outside the Green Zone. If someone mistreated their daughter, there was nothing I could do for them. They could, however, go to the Sadrist Headquarters, known as the Office of the Martyr Sadr, or OMS. There, their complaints would be heard, both parties would be brought by JAM to the OMS, and each would plead their case. On the spot, the leadership of the OMS would make a decision and direct remuneration or punishment. JAM would carry out those orders, and, as evidenced by the purging of the Sunni population, were quite capable of insuring compliance. Despite the name of our operation – Fardh al-Qanoon translates to “Imposing Law” – JAM was the law, and as a result, the population established accepted their social control over ours, and provided JAM with all the intelligence and support they needed to sustain themselves in Bayaa.
Hypothesis #2 – Latent Capacity

Since there is much to be gained by a group if it establishes social control, then it begs the question why more groups do not attempt to take control over a population, and why so many groups in many different places fail when they try. There are two necessary conditions that a group must meet before it can perform the collective activities that lead to social control. Building on Robert Dahl’s concepts of power, I hypothesize that a group must have the latent capacity to effectively compete for control.¹⁰

There are three components of latent capacity. Indiscriminate and random violence does little other than sow anarchy and destruction. To be useful, violence must be targeted to achieve a specific purpose and used to create a deliberate effect. Therefore, a group must have the organizational capacity to employ violence in specific and effective ways. Among other things, they must be able to attack and defend, react and adapt, and direct and follow orders. This enables the group to direct violence at the right people and at the correct place and time to achieve maximum benefit for the group. Second, the group must have the implements necessary to carry out the violence and back up their threats. These tools must provide a relative advantage over the population such that an individual has little chance of success if he or she resists. Finally, the group must be close enough to the population to credibly threaten and employ violence when they so desire. They must have the proximity to consistently use violence as they see fit. If the group comes and goes without any ability to monitor what is going on within the population, their ability to use violence to establish control is limited and ineffective. These three elements of latent capacity – organization, tools, and proximity – are necessary for a group to perform the collective activities that lead to social control.

In the case of Bayaa, there were multiple groups that met this threshold and could control violence. The local police had the organization and structure, having been trained centrally and most occupying their jobs for years, armed with pistols or rifles with police cruisers and motorcycles, and occupied their station at the northern end of the market. The National Police were similarly trained but outfitted with even greater numbers and types of weapons, including RPGs and machine guns. As we took responsibility for Bayaa, they began living in fortified positions in the neighborhood. JAM was built upon the political organization created by Mohammed Mohammed Sadeq al-Sadr in the 1990s, and despite early failures, had grown its military capability significantly during the last several years. JAM was well armed with Iranian weapons, ammunition, and explosives. Their headquarters, the OMS, was in the southeast corner of the neighborhood, and over time, most of the organization lived in Bayaa. The Sunnis clearly had the organization and tools to employ violence as they saw fit, as demonstrated by their use of car bombs that had killed or injured hundreds of people. Since they were absent from the area, however, this violence did little to establish social control. When they migrated from the neighborhood, they lost their ability to compete for control. By putting my company in Bayaa, the US was able to effectively compete for control for the first time. After the United States dismantled the Iraqi state, both by military action (the invasion) and by fiat (Coalition Provisional Authority Orders #1 and #2), the US military deliberately chose not to compete for control. Notwithstanding scattered individual unit actions, US forces incrementally pulled back from the population to our increasingly isolated bases after the invasion, choosing to focus on finding Ba’athists, killing terrorists, and building the Iraqi Army. From 2004 to 2007, despite highly capable organization and tools, US forces lacked the proximity to compete for social control.
Hypothesis #3 – Investment

If adjudication provides the greatest benefits and creates stability, why would a group choose to do anything less? I hypothesize that groups choose to climb the hierarchy to adjudication based on their ability and will to bear the costs – organizational costs, monetary costs, and human costs – of that transition. This choice depends on their investment. The longer the group plans to be in a place, the more willing they are to bear those costs themselves. The shorter term their orientation, the more likely that they will remain lower on the hierarchy or bargain with a group that has already established social control. For the critical step from protection to adjudication, the costs escalate substantially. Organizational costs are high because adjudication demands the group do much more than violence alone. Coercion and protection require a complex application of violence, but the activities are only violent in nature. Adjudication requires a wide variety of organizational functions: rulemaking and modification, judgement of the rules and the meting out of punishment, enforcement of those rules and monitoring the population’s adherence to them. The monetary costs are higher as well, as many more resources are required manage such a complex set of functions and offices. Finally, performing these functions increases the human costs. More people are needed to carry out sentences and monitor the population to ensure that if people violate the rules they are held accountable. You must not only deter crime by punishment but reinforce your credible commitment with presence. This requires much more force than coercion and protection.

With these higher costs, the group must visualize a future where payment of upfront and recurring costs for ascending the hierarchy will pay off over time. A group with a long-term orientation will invest in its organization and establish social control, for it can expect that the resources it extracts over time to outweigh the costs of adjudication. Conversely, if a group only intends to be there for a short time, or if a situation is uncertain and unpredictable, it will choose
to extract as many resources as possible as quickly as possible, discounting the future. It will not invest to establish social control and will instead act in a predatory or coercive manner. When that occurs, the group will continue to face challengers, either external (group(s) that use violence at a higher level) or internal (popular groups who wish to bring internal order to the population).

In Bayaa, only JAM decided to bear the costs of adjudication, and they were rewarded with social control. The local and National Police did not. They were content with extracting resources and staying alive by not challenging JAM for control. My situation was more complex but rooted in the same problem. When I discovered that JAM was providing the rule making, enforcement, and most importantly, adjudication functions for the neighborhood, I realized they were doing something that we simply could not do. We had no capability, will, or authority to take over settling interpersonal disputes amongst the population, much less enforce domestic decisions made by some coalition authority. Even if we were willing, the Iraqi court system was exclusively focused at the national level, trying former Ba’athists, and pursuing corruption cases. There was no authority for US forces to provide adjudication, and even if we had the authority, there was no impartial legal entity that could provide those services down at every company, or even battalion’s level. The demand would overwhelm anything we could bring to bear. Lacking that, what was our alternative? Was Captain Wright to become judge, jury, and, in effect, executioner? Absolutely not, so we changed our approach. Rather than continuing to fight all of JAM, we bargained with the political leadership of the OMS to reduce violence and cooperate on our initiatives. Violence dropped to almost zero, but the OMS and JAM retained social control.

---

Case Comparison

To evaluate the preceding hypotheses, I will compare the case of Bayaa to similar competitions in different neighborhoods in Baghdad during the 2007-2008 timeframe. I will apply the theory to the competition for social control that occurred in other neighborhoods that have similar structure, demographics, and groups. By choosing the same time and place, the scope conditions remain relatively constant, as does the overarching strategy of the groups. If the theory is correct, then among the groups that have (1) the necessary latent capacity and (2) investment to perform the collective activities in the hierarchy, the one that progresses to the highest level will establish social control. If the theory is incorrect, then social control will come from other sources.

After I evaluate the competition for social control in Bayaa, I will evaluate the competition for social control in 5 neighborhoods in the Tisa Nissan district of Baghdad. Each of these neighborhoods, Beladiyat, Mashtal, Kamaliyah, Amin, and Fedaliyah, had more than one group present that met the necessary conditions – the latent capacity and investment – to compete for social control. In each of these neighborhoods, groups performed different collective activities within the hierarchy. A total of 11 distinct groups will be evaluated, generating predictions, based on the activities they perform, about which ones will establish social control. I will then evaluate the popular choice in each of these neighborhoods to determine whether or not the theory consistently and predictably provides insight into who wins the competition. Lastly, I will use these cases to explore alternative explanations for the outcomes in Bayaa, comparing it with Tisa Nissan neighborhoods to determine if this theory suffers from (1) omitted variable bias, (2) a violation of the exclusion restriction, or (3) model mis-specification.
If my hypotheses are incorrect, then one should see outcomes determined by something other than the collective activities a group performs in a neighborhood. It is possible that identity explains why JAM won in Bayaa and the US lost. This variable is omitted from my theory. Yet, it is commonly suggested that ethnic and religious differences made it impossible for the United States to take control of Iraq, and that an attempt to disengage from the conflict as quickly as possible avoided an inevitable backlash that the US eventually faced. If this is true, then populations should consistently choose to support the groups that most closely match their salient identities. Regardless of the collective activities the US performs, the population should select co-ethnics over the coalition.

It is also possible that I have over-emphasized the importance of collective activities. Some suggest that counterinsurgents can win by simply being the strongest and applying the greatest amount of force.¹² If being violent is enough, then the latent capacity and investment of groups ought to predict which one establishes social control, not their collective activities. If this is true, then I have violated the exclusion restriction, placing too much emphasis on coercion, protection, and adjudication, and the population will select the strongest, most violent group, to provide social control.

Finally, it is possible that I have mis-specified the process by which groups establish social control. There is an extensive body of literature that argues order is maintained by norms and culture rather than violence. If this is true, then we should find cases of groups that do not have control over violence maintaining order in a population. In Iraq, tribal adjudication could serve this purpose. If sheiks are making rulings and handling disputes without the ability to use

¹² This method is commonly associated with Israel’s responses to Palestinian violence or Russian actions in Chechnya.
violence, then my theory loses some of its value. If sheiks are making rulings while maintaining the ability to enforce them with violence, then less damage is done to the theory.

**Implications**

This dissertation makes several important academic and policy contributions. First, it identifies the conditions under which violence matters most. There is no dispute that control of violence underpins every social order, but in a stable society, there are other factors – norms, values, religion, economic structure, institutions – that matter just as much. This study demonstrates that under conditions where there is no state or other source of order, violence trumps all other methods of control.

Second, if a group wants to establish social control under such conditions, then they must follow a deliberate set of steps, a hierarchy of social control. Taking these steps towards social control take priority over all other activities. There was substantial debate about what was most important for the coalition to focus its effort on following the defeat of Saddam Hussein. Some focused on the distribution of oil revenues, others fought for democratic elections, while still others focused on bringing former Ba’athists and war criminals to justice. While important, these concerns mattered little to victims of the looting, theft, rape, and murder, which erupted on Iraq’s streets post-Saddam. When the US failed to immediately establish social control and focus on moving the new Iraqi government through the progression, other groups rushed to fill the void. The Iraqi government spent the next four years building its own capacity in our absence.

Finally, the critical step for social control, adjudication, is highly costly. The competition centers around violence, and as such, will likely be bloody and dangerous. If groups are local, will take them time to grow the organizational capacity to perform such a complex task and to
develop the skills and systems to adjudicate effectively. If a 3rd party intervener initially establishes social control with its own substantial resources, it is likely that it must expend a similar amount on developing an indigenous group to take over. Failing to do so risks loss of control and renewed competition. The Iraq War cost billions of dollars and countless Iraqi and American lives, yet competition for social control over parts of Iraq, most recently and notably by ISIS, continue.

By identifying the necessary and sufficient conditions for groups to gain social control, I hope to help future leaders and generations avoid the logical fallacies that often become cannon after such a conflict. We often over-fit of the experience, building all doctrine and ideas based on the assumption that the next conflict will have exactly the same properties as the previous one, overlaying an approach that is mismatched to the conditions on the ground. Just as bad is the belief that the previous conflict was an aberration, a situation so unique that nothing can be learned from it and that it is best left behind and forgotten. One would be hard-pressed to find someone who lived through such a conflict who was not tempted in one direction or the other. Both directions, however, are flawed. As long as there are wars, weak states, or broken societies, issues of violence and social control will remain relevant. Therefore, this dissertation is not a personal history of how D Co figured out how to defeat an insurgency, nor is it a refutation of FM 3-24 or the Surge strategy. Though motivated by personal experience, this work hopes to find a middle ground between social science theory and practice, overlearning and ignorance of past lessons, and, perhaps most importantly, academia and policy.
Chapter 2 – Hierarchy of Social Control

The protagonist in the movie Apocalypse Now is an Army Captain in Vietnam, traveling up a river in a small boat to find a rogue officer deep in the jungle. As he reaches the last American outpost, he gets out of the boat to find out what to expect further up the river. It's night, and the outpost is engaged with the enemy. As he makes his way through the position, he finds it to be a shambles, with the men occupying the position in various states of distress. When he first asks who's in charge, a clearly panicked gun team firing wildly at the enemy respond, “Ain’t you?” The leader of the gun team then runs to “Roach”, a private who calmly responds to their pleas for help by firing a grenade and stopping the attack. The Captain asks his question again, “Do you know who’s in command here?” Roach simply replies, “Yeah.” Roach was.

In many places in the world, determining who’s in charge of a given area can be just as difficult. For decades, the surface of the earth has been neatly divided into states. Yet, in many places and at varying times, states may not fully control what goes on inside their borders. While the term “ungoverned spaces” is popular, it is often a misnomer – someone or some group other than the state is in charge in those places. What determines who is in control in any given place?

Social control is the ability of a group to shape the behavior of a population so that it consistently conforms to the group’s wishes without direct supervision. It gives one the power to influence the behavior of a given population, to direct them to do things and not do things that they otherwise would or would not do. Social control is the foundation of social order – the structure around which societies are built and states form. In high functioning states, control and order are provided by a complex web of bureaucratic institutions that allow the population to
survive and thrive. In places where the state is weak, non-functional, or non-existent, no such web exists. Under such conditions, social control depends on a group’s ability to use violence in specific ways that return benefit not only to the group, but to the population as well. These ways of using violence – collective activities – are sufficient for a group to establish social control, but they are neither simple nor easy to perform. It is therefore necessary that the group possess certain qualities – latent capacity – and a willingness to bear costs – investment – that the collective activities demand. The most effective provider of social control – the group that possesses the necessary characteristics and uses them to perform the sufficient violent activities – will be in charge.

This chapter will first explore the concept of social order and the existing explanations of its origins and structure. Next, this chapter will introduce the concept of social control as the foundation of social order, an idea well rooted in political philosophy and theory. While there is consensus that violence plays a role in establishing social control, less is understood about how much it matters and what one must actually do to convert violence into social control. To address this gap, this chapter will define the variables that are both necessary and sufficient for social control, explain how they interact, and identify observable actions and outcomes that indicate specific values for each variable. In later chapters, this heuristic model will be applied to a single area in depth. The model specifies which groups should be considered contenders for social control and why their actions succeed or fail in establishing social control. Subsequent analyses of other neighborhoods demonstrate the generalizability and reliability of this approach and its predictions.
Social Order

The question of how to establish and maintain social order has been a central focus of political scientists, philosophers, and sociologists for centuries. The concept of a social order is foundational in understanding how people and groups interact and how they manage, distribute, and exchange power amongst themselves. Social order is the state of being that exists within a given territory that describes how people and groups interact with each other. Social order is dictated by rules and norms and enforced by sanctioning mechanisms for those that behave outside those boundaries. According to the philosopher Friedrich Hayek, for there to be order, behavior amongst individuals and groups within the order must be consistent, or, at the very least, within an acceptable range of variation for order to exist.13 Consistency or predictability on its own, however, is not enough for order, as members predictably violating the rules and norms of the group is counterproductive for order. Members must also act cooperatively, complying with the rules and norms established within a society. The more predictably and cooperatively the members behave, the greater degree of order exists.14 As the social order becomes more complex, a structure develops, consisting of channels and obstacles that regulate behavior. These pathways control exchanges and actions within an acceptable set of parameters, establishing a regular pattern within which individuals can behave without dictating their behavior. This complex web of incentives and sanctions yields political stability.15 In very small social orders (e.g. small groups of familial units), rules, decisions, and sanctions can be

13 Friedrich A. Hayek, Law, Legislation and Liberty: Rules and Order, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 36. In his words: “a state of affairs in which a multiplicity of elements of various kinds are so related to each other that we may learn from our acquaintance with some spatial or temporal part of the whole to form correct expectations concerning the rest, or at least expectations which have a good chance of proving correct.”
adjudicated collectively. In all others, the system that provides order is controlled by a small subset of the people within the social order. This smaller group is imbued with the responsibility to manage and maintain order for everyone else.\(^\text{16}\)

Explanations for the sources of social order are legion. Thomas Hobbes argued that social order arises when people cede their individual rights and independence to a sovereign who can act on the behalf and benefit of the population. The sovereign assumes responsibility for making and enforcing rules, protecting the population from outside threats, and ordering the lives of the population. The population, in turn, enjoys life freed from the endless competition and conflict that arises from living in an anarchical world. This concept of a social contract, a mutually beneficial agreement entered between people and a smaller group of leaders, was expanded on by John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau in later periods. Though their ideas diverged significantly in some areas, these thinkers all agreed that government provided social order.\(^\text{17}\)

Others suggested that social order exists independent of such government. David Hume first suggested that though governments can be a source of order, they are far from the only system. Other systems, built on providing advantage and utility to the individual, can be just as useful. Adam Smith took this a step further and argued that a vibrant economy, unencumbered

\(^{16}\) Mancur Olson, The Logic of Collective Action; Public Goods and the Theory of Groups., Harvard Economic Studies: V. 124 (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1965); Olson, “Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development,” 576. However, Olson was far from the first to identify the necessity or the roles of rulers. In Discourse I, Section 5, Machiavelli referred to these ruling group as the grandees, or those who want to dominate or oppress the people, and the people, those who do not want to be dominated or oppressed by the grandees. Niccolò Machiavelli, Discourses on Livy, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Nathan Tarkov, vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

by government, would distribute goods and set the boundaries for human interaction. Marx goes further still, arguing that government itself was captured by those in the highest economic classes. Their power was derived not from an agreement with the population that they ought to be in charge, but rather from their control over the most important parts of industry. Their power allowed them to shape the rules and social order to their benefit at the cost of the masses in the working class. An individual’s role in the economy, or their class position, ordered their lives. Class dictated how people interacted, and with whom. Those who had economic power wielded political power, not the other way around. As economic power dictated who got to make the rules, economic power led to political power, and therefore control over the social order.

In the early 20th century, alternative ideas emerged about the origins of social order. Culture, norms, and trust were the true source of order, independent of both government and economy. New social science by Emile Durkheim, Clifford Geertz, and Talcott Parsons argued that social values and cultural norms governed human behavior and interaction, which accounted for the wide variation in social orders found around the world. The concept of trust as a form of social capital that facilitated transactions and regulated interactions followed, expanding sources of social order that provided insight on how behavior was controlled in both democratic and autocratic environments. Elinor Ostrom took this a step further, suggesting that combinations of public and private organizations could create better outcomes for all involved, more so than either could independently.

---


Despite the wide variety of sources of social order, today the institutionalized, bureaucratic state is widely thought to be the optimal provider of social order. By 1945, the entire surface of the globe was divided into sovereign nations—states—that were the ostensible provider of social order in the territories they controlled. Though definitions vary, a broad consensus within the social science literature defines states as a collection of bureaucratic institutions that a small group of elites use to control violence and make, enforce, and adjudicate rules within a defined territorial space. States use this institutionally-provided control to extract resources from their population and do purposeful things. In return, states provide the population the goods and services necessary for survival, including protection from actors outside its borders and punishment for those who break the rules within.\(^{20}\)

In any system of social order, those in charge have a wide variety of tools they can use to create and maintain order. They establish and maintain a codified set of rules and laws that delineate the boundaries of acceptable behavior within the population.\(^{21}\) The group develops and implements policies that return economic and social benefits to the population, such as the reduction of economic transaction costs by establishing standardized currencies, weights and measures, and markets for trade.\(^{22}\) The group provides public goods and services that improve the lives of the population, such as maintenance of roads and sewers, education systems, and


provision of health care. They also cultivate and reinforce social norms and cultural values that provide informal guides for proper interaction amongst the population. Furthermore, the group in charge can establish systems by which the population can communicate with them to see that the issues which are important to the population are addressed. The group can also manage the regular exchange of power amongst subgroups within the population. Finally, and most importantly, the group controls the means and legitimate use of violence, not only to protect the population from external actors who might threaten or exploit the people, but also to regulate the behavior of the members of the population themselves. Violence, either in threat or in application, is essential for establishing and maintaining the boundaries of behavior that makes interactions predictable and cooperative. In his thoughts on the role of violence in maintaining order, Jeremy Bentham explains:

"The profit of crime is the force which urges a man to delinquency: the pain of punishment is the force employed to restrain him from it. If the first of these forces be the greater the crime will be committed: if the second, the crime will not be committed.""27

When all other measures fail to shape behavior, punishment and violence provide control. It is the foundation of social order.

24 The foundational work on social norms and culture as a provider of social order is found in Emile Durkheim, The Division of Labour in Society, trans. WD Halls (London: Macmillan, 1984); Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures, vol. 5019 (New York: Basic books, 1973); Parsons, The Structure of Social Action.
In the highest-functioning states, bureaucratic institutions perform many of these functions, which in turn helps promote a predictable and cooperative society. Security institutions – national militaries, border forces, and intelligence services – provide protection from external actors. Law enforcement institutions – police forces and gendarmes – provide the order within, linking their enforcement authorities and actions to a judicial system that exercises judgement independent of the whims of whomever controlled the government. Economic institutions reduce transaction costs by providing the population with access to capital through property rights and the markets, currency, and weights and measures. Developmental institutions create infrastructure and public works necessary for the population to survive and thrive, such as roads and railways, education, and healthcare. These three sets of institutions lower transaction costs amongst its members, enabling growth, while a final set of institutions – extractive institutions, for example taxation and tariffs – provide the resources to pay for these state functions. When this bundle of institutions exists, the population is freed from expending resources on personal safety, protection, and transaction costs to pursue productive activities that benefit both themselves (by increasing their income and resources) and the state (by increasing the revenue available for extraction).

Unfortunately, not all states are high functioning. In fact, it is rare, if not impossible, for a state to have even a handful of these institutions operating at their full potential. In many places in the world, the state is only capable of providing low levels of capacity across these institutions. In other states, only some of the institutions are present while in still others, no

---

29 Michael Mann referred to this unfettered control over the rules and their enforcement as "despotic power" in Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State"; Similar concepts are discussed in Fukuyama, "What Is Governance?"; and Weber, The Theory of Economic and Social Organization.

institutions exist. This is especially true in developing contexts, where in some circumstances a state exists but lacks the desire, capability, or capacity to execute the functions for which it was intended. In others, a state may have high capacities in certain geographic areas but fails to extend the institutions of the state from the center to the periphery. When the capacity of the state drops to minimal levels, other groups control and provide the social order.

Under such circumstances, a wide variety of non-state groups can and often do provide social order. Tribes and family networks, ethnic sects, religious organizations, or social organizations have all, in various contexts and time periods, provided social order. These groups often rely less on bureaucratic institutions and more on traditional means of enforcing order. Just as with states, these groups often rely on a rules-based order, often framed around cultural ritual and enforced by social sanction. Dispute resolution can be negotiated between parties, requiring payment or compensation for the violators. Non-compliance can be punished with exile, disenfranchisement, or consequences after death, like hell or purgatory. These methods can be just as effective as bureaucratic institutions but may be more limited in their reach. They may control only small pieces of territory, populations, or both. Just as with states, they provide social order through a complex web of sanctions, rewards, norms, and beliefs that make it difficult to disentangle the source of social order, and how it forms from nothing.

To study this phenomenon and understand how social order emerges, one must look to conditions where the existing social order has been disrupted or destroyed. There are several triggers for such an event. In the modern world, these conditions can be found in places where

war has triggered the collapse of the state, civil society, or both. Similar conditions can exist following a natural disaster, where devastation and sparse resources can trigger widespread chaos, and the sanctions and rewards of either state or civil society no longer have salience or meaning for the population. Economic collapse could have a similar effect, causing popular panic. A sudden contraction of state institutions and functions can create a vacuum that must be filled. When an area experiences rapid and destructive change, the social order can fracture and must be rebuilt. Under such circumstances, it is prohibitively difficult for a group to immediately construct a complex web of sanctions and rewards, re-energize traditions and norms, and create institutions that are usually the sources of social order. For a group to take charge, it must first establish social control.

Social Control

*Social control* is the ability of a group to shape the behavior of a population so that it consistently conforms to the group’s wishes without direct supervision. It is the foundation of social order, the structure around societies are built and states form. When a group establishes social control, the compliance of the population with the group’s wishes comes not from coercion but from an exchange of resources and services between the group and the population it controls. In this transaction, the group receives resources from the population, most often taxes, material resources, or labor, such as soldiers to fight on behalf of the group. It can also include intelligence or political support, such as voting, attendance at rallies, or demonstrations in protest. In return, the group provides benefits that the population cannot provide themselves. The essential resource – the one that comes before all others – is the application of violence to direct individual actions, to protect the population, and to make, enforce, and adjudicate rules. This reciprocal relationship benefits the group as it creates a regular inflow of resources that
need not be continuously coerced. It also benefits the population as it frees them from devoting energy to their own security, allowing them to be productive.

What then is the observable indicator that a group has established social control over a population in any given territory? The actions of the population determine where social control lies. The group that has social control is the one two whom the population turns over other alternatives to provide for their survival. To whom does the population look to for protection from external threats? To whom does the population go to for resolution of disputes between members? Where do people go when they lack the basic necessities for survival? The group that not only directs action, compels behavior and receives the benefits of popular action, but is also the group the population voluntarily provides benefits to, has established social control. Especially when the population has alternatives, that is, multiple groups to choose from, their choice of whom to provide intelligence and information is a critical indicator of social control. The provision of sanctuary, logistical support, and even fighters for the group are additional indicators, as are voluntary political behaviors, such as voting, demonstrations, and civil disobedience. The final key indicator is the group to whom the population turns to settle disputes and resolve issues within the population. The population’s choice of whose rules to follow is a clear indicator of the group that has social control.

Violence is at the core of social control. Throughout history, the centrality of violence – either using it or avoiding it – is repeatedly noted in places where the social order had broken down. In antiquity, Thucydides describes the Coreyra as a place so broken down by war that “everyone had come to the conclusion that it was hopeless to expect a permanent settlement and so, instead of being able to feel confident in others, they devoted their energies to providing
against being injured themselves." Similar sentiments are expressed by those living in war-torn areas ever since – when the social order breaks down, individuals and families are forced to fend for themselves, devoting all their energy to their personal security. When this atomization of the population occurs, avoiding violence overrides all other ideologies, traditions, or norms and drives behavior. As recounted by Stathis Kalyvas in his excellent work on violence, a Chechen aid worker spoke to its overpowering effect:

"The suffering is so intense, and the suffering is not about politics. The vast majority of the people we were meeting, they wanted to stay alive; they wanted a life in which their houses weren't bombed and there wasn't chaos and shooting on the street. Politics was not nearly as much on their mind as staying out of harm's way."

Given the centrality of violence in the lives of every individual living under such conditions, it follows that order comes from controlling violence and using it in useful ways. This connection between violence and control is well-established, as are the ways that various systems (bureaucratic, traditional, economic, etc.) incorporate violence into the social order they provide. What is less well understood is how a group transitions an area from anarchy to order.

The theory presented here argues that the intermediate step between anarchy and order is control. To establish social control, a group must perform a specific set of collective activities that revolve around the productive use of violence. To perform these activities, the group must

---

possess both the latent capacity within the group to control violence and the investment in the area necessary to bear the costs associated with seizing social control. Each of these variables—collective activities, latent capacity, investment—is addressed in subsequent sections.

Figure 1: Determinants of Social Control

**Collective Activities**

The ability of a group to establish social control depends on its ability to perform a specific set of *collective activities* that apply violence in useful ways. When a group uses violence to compel and coerce the population to do what it says, to protect the population from other groups, and to regulate their day to day interactions, it will establish social control. These collective activities—coercion, protection, and adjudication—fit together in a hierarchy that also includes higher level functions. A group must first build the ability to coerce before it can protect, as the skills and attributes necessary for protection include coercive capacity. The same is true for protection before adjudication. If a group attempts to adjudicate before it can coerce, protect, or both, then it will not establish social control. Similarly, if a group builds to adjudication, but fails to maintain its coercive and protective capabilities, it will lose social control. If a group attempts to do other useful things for the population, such as distribution of
goods and services, before it provides adjudication, then those activities will have little bearing on social control.

Charles Tilly offers a useful typology for how violence can be used to create order and, eventually, a state. He argues that the minimal activities of a state are state-making (attacking and checking competitors and challengers within a state’s territories), war-making (attacking rivals outside the territory claimed by a state), and protection (attacking and checking rivals of the rulers’ principle allies either inside or outside the state). These three functions are made possible by extraction, or the drawing of resources and means from the subject population. Once these are established, states naturally move to perform functions of adjudication (authoritative settlement of disputes among the members of the subject population), distribution (intervention into the allocation of goods among members of the subject population), and production (control of the creation and transformation of goods and services by members of the subject population).36

While this typology is a useful starting point, there are key differences between the use of violence by a state and the use of violence by groups competing for control over a population. First, it neglects the reality that some groups may choose simple predation, the taking of resources akin to street crime. Second, it fails to identify that actions such as statemaking, warmaking, and adjudication may be interdependent, that building the capability to do all three is an iterative process, requiring capabilities in one before moving on to another. Third, it does not acknowledge the significant relationship between statemaking (eliminating internal rivals) and

adjudication (regulating the internal behavior of its citizens). These two functions are highly intertwined, a fact which Tilly misses by splitting them into separate categories.

Rather than two pools of activities performed by states, it is more useful to look at these activities as a hierarchy—a progression of activities that must be followed to establish social control. These six collective activities—predation, coercion, protection, adjudication, distribution, and production—vary from simple to complex, low to high cost, and few to many benefits returned to both the group and the population. As these collective activities are hierarchical, the ability to perform higher level functions (such as adjudication and distribution) requires the group to maintain the ability to perform lower-level functions (such as coercion and protection). Lastly, though predation is a viable way to use violence amongst a population, it does not contribute to social control.  

Predation

At the most basic level, a group can use violence for simple predation—the taking of the population’s resources for the group’s use (i.e., “give me your things”). When a group is predatory, the interaction between the group and the population is one-way, as the group simply takes what it wants, with no reciprocation expected or offered. Material resources are most often (though not always) the target, and predatory behavior may occur one time or iteratively. In a more formal sense, all value goes to the group, while negative value goes to the population. The costs for the group are low, both in terms of force required and the amount of organizational energy necessary to facilitate the transaction. This collective activity requires a high discount rate—they desire to get as much as they can from the population because little value is placed on

---

37 Olson, “Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development,” 567.
things they can gain in the future. The results of this strategy are generally negative for the population – they must expend energy and resources producing security and order for themselves, and they lose resources to the group. This makes the area less productive and unstable, as other predators may seek to exploit the situation, or other groups may compete for control. As this is roughly equivalent to street crime, it is insufficient to provide social control and order.

There are many observable indicators of a predatory group. First, their interactions with the population will be purely extractive, i.e., taking resources from the population. This often manifests itself in the form of checkpoints or roadblocks for simply extracting cash payments. A predatory group may do these at random places and times, and they do not discriminate from whom they extract. The predatory group may also take control of vital resources, such as food, fuel, or water, and charge exorbitant prices for them. Finally, they may simply steal from people or their homes.

Predatory actions by the group affect the population’s behavior. As the population wishes to avoid predation, they will prioritize their individual security over all other things. Economic activity will decrease over fears of theft and violence. People will avoid public spaces to keep themselves from being targets. Families will often keep their children home from school, restrict movement outside their homes, and limit their interactions to only those whom they trust. Predation effectively breaks down civil society to the family level and contributes to the state of anarchy.

Margaret Levi, Of Rule and Revenue (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Olson, “Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development”; Bates, When Things Fell Apart. The concept of discount rates as they apply to the behavior of groups will be discussed in greater detail later in the chapter.

Coercion

Coercion occurs when a group uses violence to control behavior. It is the first step in the hierarchy that leads to social control. Behavior is controlled through a negative reciprocation of action – the population must either comply with the group or face punishment (i.e., “do what I say or else”). As with predation, the interaction between the group and the population is one way and based entirely on threat or use of force. It differs from predation in that targets both resources and actions. Coercion alters the behavior of the population to benefit the group. Like predation, all value goes to the group, while the population at best gains zero value by changing their behavior to ensure they do not receive punishment (negative value). The costs to the group are higher than with predation. It requires more force, as altering behavior requires a level of monitoring and enforcement; a more continuous interaction than discrete incidents of extraction. Organizational costs remain low, however, as this application of force requires only a rudimentary skill set in violent behavior. The required discount rate remains high for the group, as no concern is given for returning long-term benefits to the area. As with predation, the outcomes for the population remain negative. Since the group with control of violence is expending little energy in preventing predation from outsiders or inside the group, the population will have to expend resources on security and will be less productive. Often, the behavior the group is compelling the population to follow is counter-productive to the accumulation of resources.

Coercive groups frequently take resources. But, an observer may also note a change in the population’s behavior – particularly behavior that benefits only the group, not the population. Forced migration, press labor, occupation of homes, interrogation, and night letters are classic coercive behaviors. Check points can be used, but for different purposes than under predation. Rather than a tool for extraction of resources, check points ensure compliance with the group’s
directives. For example, if a sub group within the population was told to leave, then checkpoints would be used not necessarily to steal but to insure the subgroup had left and not returned. The population’s behavior in response to coercion is similar to predation – little positive activity can occur while families must provide their own security from violence. Though coercion is a necessary, but insufficient, component of social control.

Protection
When a group offers protection, it seeks to control behavior not only through coercion, but by also promising to use their control of violence to protect the population from other groups who wish them harm. Protection operates on a positive reciprocation of action, as compliance is gained not only by the threat of violence but also by an exchange of benefits for the population in the form of security (i.e., “do what I say, and I won’t let other groups harm you”). This clearly distinguishes it from lower collective activities. Costs for the group are significantly higher in force requirements: not only must the group have the force to compel behavior, it must also have the force to prevent other groups from gaining access to the population. The organizational costs remain low, however, as the group is only using its organization for force, albeit on a larger scale. When a group chooses protection, it usually requires a longer time horizon for the group and its interaction with the population, which indicates that its discount rate has lowered somewhat from that required for coercion.

Protection can manifest between a group and a population in many ways, with different outcomes for the population. The first is the protection “racket”. In this case, protection is ostensibly offered to the population to prevent other groups from being predatory, but the group offering protection and threatening predation are the same. This is the lowest cost strategy for

---

the group, as it requires little expenditure of resources for protection and maximizes profits. This type of protection is marked by regular collection of resources from the population and/or their businesses, often in the form of cash payments. A protection racket exists in the absence of threats – there is no other group threatening the population. This is also the least beneficial interaction for the population, as they are still being coerced for their resources with little returned benefit. This large delta between benefit for the group and the benefit for the population makes stability elusive.

Second, protection can take the form of the “insurgency” model, where the group with control of violence offers to protect the population from groups that are different than the group offering protection. This model is often applied by states facing insurgent or rebel groups, painting them as predatory regardless of the true intentions of the insurgent. Militaries and gendarmes are the most common executers of these protection schemes. In addition to payments, one should also observe some type of “hardening” of the terrain the population occupies. Defensive obstacles, limited access points, and overwatch/early warning systems are examples of such hardening. The group presence may now be much more overt to deter other groups from preying on the population by showing strength. The purpose of checkpoints expands in this model to prevent outsiders from gaining access to the population. As long as the insurgent group is perceived as a threat by the population, then the difference between the value returned to the group versus the population is smaller, resulting in a more stable order than the racket. However, if the population does not see the “insurgent” as a threat, or if they sympathize with or support the “insurgent, then the difference between benefits will be perceived as high, making it difficult for the group to establish social control.
Finally, there is the capacity model, where a group offers protection to the population so that they expend less of their energy on security and more on being productive. In this model, the population benefits from more security and greater economic focus, while the group benefits from the greater resource pool from which they can extract. This is the most positive protection scheme, as the perceived benefit differential is lowest. This is also the costliest strategy for the group, making it the most difficult, and therefore least likely, scheme.

As a result, most protection schemes are only marginally sufficient for social control and are often unstable. The population in these areas can divert some energies away from security, as there is less threat from other groups. However, with no regulation of behavior amongst the population, one must still guard against the crime and misbehavior of individuals. Under protection, civil society can reform, and productive behavior can resume. As there remains a need for security within the population, it is also likely that internal challengers to the protector for social control may arise. Such challengers may offer the same level of protection but also institute order among the population. Therefore, the group must do more than just protect if it wants to fully establish social control over an area.

**Adjudication**

*Adjudication* provides social control by protecting the population from external *and* internal threats. No longer is force used simply to control the behavior of the population regarding the group’s interests. With adjudication, force is also used to regulate the behavior of the population as they interact with each other. This is a positive reciprocation of action, exchanging compliance with the group’s wishes for external protection and internal stability (i.e. “do what I say, and I’ll provide order”). Under adjudication, the group codifies and communicates the rules under which the population will live, uses force to monitor and enforce
those rules, and creates a mechanism that makes decisions on punishment for breaking the rules and adjudicating disputes between members of the population.\textsuperscript{41} This raises costs significantly for the group. Not only must they possess the force necessary to compel behavior when necessary, protect the population from outside threats, but also now monitor and enforce the rules. They must do this in two ways: between the group and the population and between the members of the population themselves. The group must also ensure their rulings on disputes between members are adhered to and carry out punishment for those that refuse to comply. The organizational costs, low in the first three categories, increase significantly under adjudication. No longer is the group using organization to simply employ force, it must now expand the organizational capacity to create some sort of a deliberative judgement body that makes decisions. By taking on adjudication, new skill sets are required to function in a policing role. Finally, the significantly larger forces will now require more administration and management, further increasing the organizational costs to the group. Finally, such an investment in resources and management of the population’s interactions requires a lower discount rate for the group and a more long-term view for the future.

When a group chooses adjudication, there are many additional observable indicators. Rules and laws are codified and published or communicated in other ways. Some sort of court, judge, or legal panel is established and made known as available to hear disputes and make rulings. At least some of the group’s organizational capacity is devoted to monitoring the population and enforcing the group’s rules. The group has the capability to not only apprehend those that break the rules and punish them but deter crime by the credibility of their enforcement.

\textsuperscript{41} Hume, \textit{Essays, Moral and Political}. He offered that government “ultimately had no other object or purpose but the distribution of justice.”
mechanisms. This often requires an increase in the overall size of the organization as it develops new departments and functional areas. Finally, if a group is adjudicating effectively, the population should be coming to the group to resolved disputes, indicated by an increase in interaction between the population and the group through its adjudicating body.

Despite the significantly increased costs, the benefits are much higher for both the group and the population. Adjudication is the first level of social control where the perceived delta between benefit returned to the group – control over the population to extract resources of various types – and the benefit returned to the population – social order so that the population can focus on productive behavior – is small. The population has tangible evidence that they are receiving benefit in exchange for their compliance with the group at the individual level. Rather than some larger collective good provided by protection from external threats, the population now has a resource that is useful in their daily lives – the knowledge that if they obey the rules they will not be punished, and those that do not obey the rules will be. They now have a resource they can use to solve problems that are beyond their ability to fix – they can go to the group for resolution of conflict and justice for wrongs. 42

Furthermore, adjudication differs from protection in that it creates a symbiotic relationship between the group and the population. Under protection, the group is detached from the daily lives of the population, focused on the periphery of the population and keeping threats out. Interactions with the population are often limited and inconsistent. With adjudication, the group inserts itself into the daily lives of the population. The group’s rules their enforcement not only create regular and consistent behavior amongst the population, but they also provide

42 For an explanation of the importance of individual incentives over collective goods with regards to achieving compliance of individuals and collective action, see Olson, The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups.
opportunities for regular and consistent interaction with the group itself that are not possible under protection. By imposing not just rules, but systems for conflict resolution, punishment, and appeal, the population can conform to the way in which they are expected to act, but also trust in the system that is imposed. Under adjudication, resources extraction also becomes part of a system. This provides the group regular income and the population consistent interactions, both with the group and with each other. In doing so, takes the first step toward social order.

Lastly, by the group taking on the responsibility for the provision of security, the population can now focus their energy and resources entirely on productive activities rather than self-preservation. This benefits the group as well, as a more productive population results in greater resources from which the group can extract. More significant for the group, however, is that the population is less likely to resist extraction of resources than they would in other forms of social control. The reason for this is simple: they are secure and focused on being productive. The likelihood of quasi-voluntary compliance with the group’s wishes increases dramatically under adjudication, resulting in greater benefit for the group. Adjudication is the threshold for social control.

Given the increased benefits for the group under adjudication, it may seem surprising that groups often choose not to perform these collective activities. There are many reasons why they do not. First, as outlined above, costs are significantly higher under adjudication than the lower

---

43 To be clear, regular extraction can occur at other levels. In the previously described protection racket, one can imagine a group demanding regular payment for security. Movies with about organized crime are filled with such references. While it is possible at protection, a consistent and regular extraction is a necessary characteristic of adjudication.

44 Recall that order is defined by regular and consistent interactions between individuals in both Ake, “A Definition of Political Stability”; and Hayek, Law, Legislation and Liberty. Vol. 1.
levels, both in terms of force and organizational capacity. The group may simply lack the ability to make the transition. Second, there may be structural variables, such as distance, poor resource wealth within the population, or population density which escalate costs in other ways than force and organizational capacity. Third, the discount rate of the group may be naturally high, and there is little perceived benefit in such an investment in the population, despite the added long-term benefit. Fourth, by implementing a rules-based order, the group is establishing an expectation of accountability of behavior, not only within the population, but between the population and the group as well. Not playing by their own rules could undermine a group’s social control and incite resistance that adjudication was supposed to reduce. A group may calculate it does not want to risk creating a norm of rule-following if they do not want restrictions placed on their behavior. Fifth, there may be biases that keep a group from realizing that providing order could be in their long-term interest. Militaries rarely see policing and judicial functions as a core capability of their organization, and that bias, whether cultural or cognitive, could cause them to miss the adjudication step.

**Distribution**

The final two levels of social control are built on the foundation of adjudication – once a rules-based order is established, then the group in charge can shift some of its attention to doing other things that improve the performance of the population. In doing so, the group increases its standing with the population, by reinforcing social control by mechanisms other than force.

**Distribution** is social control based on order and benefits. The group provides useful things back to the population that are only possible through collective action and control, such as collective goods and services that lower transaction costs and benefit the population (i.e. “do what I say, and I’ll give you all these things”). As with adjudication, the discount rate of the group is low and organizational costs are high. Because social control is not just about force, but
also about maintaining the benefits that stability and productivity have brought, the costs associated with force decrease under distribution. If a group is engaged in distribution, one should observe the group providing material goods, services, and benefits to the population in addition to the functions of adjudication.

Production

Production is social control based not only on social order and benefits, but also with actions by the group that create growth and development. This is the costliest strategy, and it is only possible once the other levels of social control are achieved. As with distribution, discount rates are low and organizational costs are high, but the force costs continue to drop as institutions develop, which promote social control and order. Under production, in addition to the distribution functions, the group now directs the productive activities of the population, enhancing and improving the economic performance of the population and increasing the future prospects of all. This is the most stable equilibrium for both the group and the population. See Figure 2 for a full typology of the determinants of social control.

Figure 2: Hierarchy of Social Control
Summary

As previously stated, these levels of social control are additive, excluding predation. Each level of social control up to adjudication contributes to the credibility of the group's control of violence. Coercion validates to the population that the group can employ its tools and make the population do what it wants. Protection demonstrates that the group not only has tools but also possesses the organizational capacity to use them to protect the group from others. When the group achieves adjudication, it demonstrates to the population that the group is now committed to more than just taking from the population: they are invested in the population.

Attempting to move to a higher level without the credibility of the lower levels is ineffective. It is wasted effort for the group and fails to increase the strength of social control for the population. It is useless to attempt to establish a rules-based order if the group is unable to compel behavior. Why follow the rules of a group if they cannot enforce them? Attempting to distribute goods and services without adjudication is similarly wasteful. If a group attempts to distributed they will lose those goods to the racketeers. If goods are being distributed but adjudication is coming from somewhere else, why risk punishment for defecting to the other group? Similarly, distributing services to a population that does not have a rules-based order will do little to improve the social control of the area. The population will expend its effort on internal security rather than productivity, and stability will prove elusive.

Performing the right combination of collective activities – coercion, protection, and adjudication – is sufficient for social control. If a group follows a specific progression of increasingly complex collective activities, then it will establish social control. If a group chooses predation, coercion, protection, or any combination of the three, then it will not. If a group attempts to perform higher level activities before the lower level activities are performed, then it
will not establish social control. Finally, and relatedly, if a group builds to a higher level but ceases to perform lower level activities, then it will lose control.

Performing such activities, however, is no small task. The activities in the hierarchy of social control are increasingly complex and costly to perform. As the saying goes, if they were easy, then anyone could do it. In places where social order has broken down, competitions for social control can occur. When they do, it is necessary that a group has the latent capacity within itself to move up the steps of the hierarchy.

**Latent Capacity**

A group’s ability to perform these collective activities hinges on its *latent capacity* for violence. It must have the necessary *organization* for violence, the requisite *tools* to physically conduct the violence itself, and the physical *proximity* to monitor the population and credibly threaten or use violence to compel the population do what the group wants. In “Concept of Power”, Robert Dahl offers a definition of power – the ability for one to get another to do something they would not otherwise do – and an analytical framework that is useful for understanding why organization, tools, and proximity matter. Power is based on a relation between two entities, where the stronger party uses its differential advantage over the weaker party to compel the weaker party’s behavior. In order for one to have power over another, it is necessary for the stronger party to have a base, or source of strength, the means to translate that source into something that influences the weaker party’s behavior, a scope of demands that the weaker party can meet, and enough of the base/means combination to maximize the probability that the weaker party will comply with the stronger party’s demands. Furthermore, he argues that there can be “no action at a distance”. A connection between the parties is necessary; a literal and figurative closeness between them such that the threatened consequences for non-
compliance are credible. A group’s latent capacity for violence – the organization that provides the base, the tools that provide the means, and the proximity that provides the connection – gives credibility to the group’s threats and actions. Furthermore, latent capacity provides the group access to information and intelligence about the population and other groups. This information enables the group to effectively direct its collective activities in productive ways, both towards the population and its competitors for social control.

Organization

Organization is essential for a group to control violence in a given area, as it provides the structure for the organization to apply violence in useful ways. Effective organization is the source of power and the capability that provides a group significantly smaller than the population it seeks to control a necessary advantage. For organization to be effective, a group must have the ability to turn violence on and off and maintain its structure when challenged or under fire. It also must be able to conduct basic operations (how to shoot, move, and communicate as a unit) and advanced operations (how to plan tactically, operationally, and strategically, how to link violence to a desired effect, etc.). Organization provides both the formal and informal structures that help the group develop and maintain these capabilities. Formal structures are the rules, task organizations and specifications of roles, and systems that explicate the functions of sub-units and members of the group, while informal structures are the personal relationships, interpersonal trust and confidence, and shared experiences among the sub-units and members that enable the group to solve unexpected problems and function under pressure. Without these structures that come from organization, the group will not be capable of controlling violence.46

Tools
In order to make violence, the group must also have the physical tools necessary to employ violence on the population. The exact nature of the tools can vary by context, but they must provide the group, in both effectiveness and in volume, a marked advantage over the population’s tools to resist them. In contexts where access to firearms is severely curtailed, lots of men with baseball bats or machetes can provide this marked advantage if the population only has shovels. Concealable firearms, though not very powerful compared to heavy machine guns, provide a significant capability advantage in places where most citizens have no access to guns. Where arms flow freely, rocket propelled grenades, mortars, and bombs can provide the advantages necessary to overwhelm the resources of a family armed with a rifle. To be clear, the tools of violence must provide a marked advantage over the population, but they do not necessarily have to overpower other groups competing for control. The critical condition is that they have the tools to compel the population to follow their rules.

Proximity
Lastly, the group who seeks to control violence must have, in conjunction with the organization and the tools, proximity to the population such that the group is credibly committed to controlling violence. Again, proximity is contingent on context, as distance matters in different ways in urban settings versus rural, mountainous versus plains, and developed versus undeveloped contexts. The group who seeks to control violence must be close enough so that violence can be employed by the group within the population to threaten it effectively. Furthermore, the group must then monitor the population and ensure that it acts in accordance the group’s wishes. Proximity ensures there is a close relationship between what the group says it will do with violence, what it actually does, and what the population believes will happen if
they resist the group’s control.\textsuperscript{47} A group that is organized to commit violence, possesses the necessary tools in sufficient number for violence, and is close enough to the population to effectively threaten and use violence can credibly commit to controlling violence within a given territory.

As Putnam asserts, comparing power is very difficult, as there are many bases of power and rarely are the compatible. For the purposes of this project, I will ensure comparability of groups by evaluating whether or not they meet the necessary conditions to compete for control. If a group meets the baseline – their organization, tools, and proximity give it a marked advantage over the population they seek to control – then they are viable competitors. As such, their collective activities can be compared in a useful way.

\textbf{Organization, Tools, or Proximity}

It is not possible to move up the hierarchy with only one of the three conditions met. Organization alone is insufficient. An organized group without tools or proximity is unable to pursue predation, coercion, or protection – it simply lacks the means to do violence. An organized group can do other things, such as make decisions on rules and laws, distribute goods, or attempt to produce valuable things. However, none of these activities will contribute to the group’s ability to gain social control, as they lack the ability to compel people to do things they would not do otherwise. Tools alone enable a group to be predatory or coerce behavior, but without organization or proximity, it is no more useful for a group than random street crime. Higher level strategies need organization and are therefore unavailable to a group with tools alone. Proximity without organization and tools has no impact on social control.

\textsuperscript{47} Kalyvas, \textit{The Logic of Violence in Civil War}, 118–24.
Organization and Proximity

Groups with organization and proximity lack the ability to achieve even a minimal level of social control. Though groups with organization and proximity could make rules and judgements, or they could distribute, without the ability to enforce their rules or compel behavior, their actions will not contribute to social control. An organized group within a population can attempt to coerce by means other than violence, such as threatening social or cultural sanction. Such threats, however, are easily over-ridden by a group that does have the capacity for violence. This is especially true under conditions approaching anarchy, where violence carries the greatest importance.

Proximity and Tools

Similarly, a group that has tools and proximity, but lacks organization, will have little impact on social control. Without organization, the group lacks the ability in focused ways, to stop and start violence as necessary, and perform the more complex tasks that are required to ascend the hierarchy. The group can be predatory and minimally coercive, but without organization, these actions will be indiscriminate, and will not lead to social control.

Organization and Tools

When a group has organization and tools, but lacks proximity, it can perform many of the collective activities on the hierarchy. However, those activities will not lead to social control. An organized group with the tools to control violence can be a successful predator and effectively raid the population for its resources, but such actions will not enable the group to establish social control. A group that has organization and tools can compel people to behave a certain way, but only while they are physically present.48 The lack of proximity means that when the group leaves the area, social control goes with it. The same flaw exists with a group offering

---

protection. Their ability to both control behavior and provide external security for the population is only valid while the group is physically present, which means that their control is temporal and inconsistent. A group with tools and organization may be capable of making rules and enforcing them, but their lack of proximity will make their application of this process—the monitoring of behavior to determine when the rules have been broken—uneven and inconsistent. This provides the opportunity for other groups, pursuing lesser strategies of predation or coercion, or individuals who simply wish to prey upon the population, to threaten the resources of the population. The lack of proximity means that the population must devote its energies to security when the group is not present. A group without proximity to the population lacks the credible commitment to the role of adjudicator, inviting challengers who offer more effective and consistent social control. Without proximity, distribution and production also fail to provide social control. In addition to the lack of effective adjudication, the goods which are distributed or produced may provide greater incentive for other groups or individuals to pursue predatory or coercive behavior amongst the population.

Organization, Tools, and Proximity

Only when all three latent capacities are present—organization, tools, and proximity—is it possible for a group to effectively perform the collective activities that lead to social control. These latent capacities provide the group with the ability to both use and credibly threaten the use of violence. They also provide the group with the ability to prevent others from using violence, if they so choose.

Perhaps most importantly, they enable the group to gather information and intelligence that is vital to establishing social control. Proximity provides the consistent and regular interactions with the population and other groups to gather information and intelligence about
their behavior, strengths, and vulnerabilities. Organization enables the group to effectively collect, process, and disseminate this information amongst the group so that the group can calibrate its collective activities to have the greatest effect. This information then enables the group to more effectively employ its tools in directing the behavior of the population and in competition with other groups. As the group ascends the hierarchy, it must learn which members of the population must be coerced, where the population is vulnerable and needs protection, and who is violating the group’s rules. The group must learn who is part of rival groups, their tactics and capabilities, and where they are most easily targeted.

Furthermore, as the group spends more time amongst the population, demonstrating the credibility as a competitor for control, it will attract early supporters. As the group begins to provide benefit back to the population, some people will begin to reciprocate with information and intelligence the group needs. There are myriad reasons for early support. For example, they may believe the group will win, they might have a personal dispute with other groups, or they stand to benefit personally if one group defeats another. Such support only comes when the group demonstrates it has the latent capacity – the organization, tools, and proximity – to win. Without it, there is no reason to believe the group can successfully establish social control, and therefore there is no incentive for members of the population to risk providing support. Without these capacities, a group lacks the ability to effectively perform the collective activities in hierarchy, and therefore will not establish social control.49

49 There is a significant body of work that theorizes on the effectiveness of non-violent conflict and civil resistance. Specifically, it argues that groups can successfully win control over an area by using non-violent means. While the work in this body of literature is excellent and well-established, it is outside the scope conditions of this work. In that literature, non-violent resistance is effective when used against an existing government or regime, where laws, norms, and cultures still hold value. The competitions this dissertation investigates occur when none of those things are present. See Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).
Investment

A core challenge for any group who wishes to establish and maintain social order is one of cost. Modern states spend billions of dollars a year, manage extensive taxation programs, have massive redistribution systems and service sectors, and employ millions of people to operate such systems. They build and maintain large bureaucratic institutions that contribute to social control in myriad ways. While they do an exceptionally capable job of maintaining social order, by any measure – monetarily, organizationally, structurally – they are prohibitively costly for any group to create and maintain. In places where social order has broken down, using a complex web of incentives, norms, and sanctions, supported by a set of institutions to create and maintain a social order, is simply not possible.

Costs are high, even under circumstances where violence determines who establishes social control. Managing any type of organization is costly. Members must be paid, equipped, and supplied. As the group ascends the hierarchy, more complex and specialized skills are required, increasing costs again as new members with the right skills are added. To effectively monitor and enforce rules, the organization must be able to cover the territory it seeks to control, which requires more fighters and greater mobility. If a group seeks to distribute, costs expand again. Furthermore, establishing social control is often a competitive process. Groups fight for social control, and in those fights, members are killed, sometimes in droves. If a group competes for social control and loses, members face punishment, including jail, exile, or even death. If there is high disorder, why would a group do anything but prey on the population, taking all that they can as quickly as they can? Why not remain, as Mancur Olson called them, roving bandits?50

50 Olson, “Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development,” 568.
There are strong incentives for groups to seek control, despite these costs. First, social order is essential for survival, and in places where it is weak or failing, there is a high demand for groups that can bring order to chaos. Hobbes was correct when he stated, four centuries ago, that without order, man would live in a constant state of “war of every man against every man.” In such circumstances, individuals are forced to divert their energies from productive activities (such as farming, production of goods, and trade) to security activities, protecting themselves from those who would take their resources or lives. This in turn makes survival difficult and the future bleak. Therefore, in places where social order is threatened or falling apart, groups that can provide order are highly valued and welcomed by the population.

Second, control of the social order is an immense source of political power and material wealth. Such control enables the group to change people’s behavior so that their activities benefit the group in charge. The group can extract resources (e.g., tax its citizens), direct collective action (e.g., raise and employ armies), and build institutions (e.g., construct governments) that provide benefits to both the group and the people that would not otherwise be possible. Groups use control to shape systems to their perpetual advantage. The greater the extent and success of the social order, the greater the benefit to the group in charge. Finally, there are non-material or security reasons for a group to want to provide social order, such as a desire for an independent nation, relief from oppression or exploitation, or self-determination of

---

54 The incentives for groups to seek control over a population and territory are well explored in Levi, *Of Rule and Revenue*; Olson, “Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development”; and Tilly, “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime.”
for the population. These powerful forces inviting competitors for control of the social order wherever it is weak, despite the high costs.

A group’s level of investment in the area determines whether or not they ascend the hierarchy towards social control. Investment is simply the amount of value they place on the area and the population in question. If the group’s valuation of the area is low and there is no intention of remaining, then there is no incentive for the group to bear the costs of competing for social control. If the opposite is true, then investment is high. This concept is commonly expressed as the group’s discount rate, or the level to which a group preferences current benefits over future benefits. If the group has no reason to think it will be in the area for the long term, whether due to a nomadic outlook, an uncertain security situation, or for some other reason, then the group has no incentive to limit what it takes or bear the costs of competing for social control. This “high discount rate” incentivizes predatory behavior over the other costlier collective activities in the hierarchy. If a group believes or desires to be in an area for the long term, or they are confident and secure in their future, then they are incentivized to behave in ways that derive the greatest benefits to the group over the long term. Groups with a “low discount rate” have the incentive to ascend the hierarchy and establish social control, thereby locking in a steady stream of resources that will yield them greater benefits over time than will predatory behavior.55 Therefore, a high level of investment in the area and population is necessary to perform the collective activities that lead to social control.

Indicators of high levels of investment revolve around expenditure of resources inside the area. Competing for social control under conditions approaching anarchy is a violent activity,

---

one that costs lives and property. Groups with the latent capacity to compete for social control often opt out for this reason. The clearest indicator is the group’s willingness to fight with other groups that are attempting to establish social control and take casualties in pursuit of their goals. Similarly, a group that has high investment will likely seek out and improve its infrastructure within the population. Establishing and renovating robust headquarters and offices are indicators the group wishes to remain in the area. Further indicators include the group members taking up residence with the population, moving their families into the area, marrying into the population, or entering into long-term contracts with the population.

Conclusion

To summarize, this theory explains how groups take control of a population when the things that normally provide control and order are stripped away. In order to bring a population out of anarchy and under one’s control, a group must perform a specific set of collective activities that apply violence in useful ways. A group must possess the ability to direct popular behavior, protect the population from other groups, and adjudicate the behavior of the population itself. Collectively, these activities together are sufficient for social control. The group must ascend a hierarchy of activities from coercion to protection to adjudication, maintaining lower-level behaviors as it moves to higher levels. If a group skips steps or performs other activities, it will not establish social control.

To perform these collective activities, the group must possess both the latent capacity for violence and a high level of investment in the area it seeks to control. It must have the organizational capabilities to perform the increasingly difficult collective tasks in the hierarchy. It must have the tools of violence that give them a marked advantage over the population. The group must also have the proximity to credibly threaten, monitor, and enforce rules over the
population. These capacities provide the group access to the information and intelligence that enables to direct their collective activities in productive ways. Lastly, it must be willing to bear the costs of competition, to have a long-term perspective on their interaction with the population. Without these qualities, the group will fail to effectively perform the collective activities that lead to social control.

This theory challenges several ideas about social order and control. Many theories argue that social control and order can come from many sources, most prominently, that norms of behavior, social sanction, and honor can sufficiently provide order independent of violence. While these functions clearly provide order in many contexts, this theory argues that under conditions approaching anarchy, violence overrides all other sources of order. If this theory is correct, examples of groups maintaining order through social sanction under these conditions should be difficult to find. Second, modern theories of counter-insurgency place significance on the distribution of goods and services to the population. Specifically, they argue that things like digging wells, collecting trash, or building schools cause the population to support one group (in their context, the government) over another (the insurgent). This theory argues that those behaviors do not contribute to social control unless adjudication is being performed. If this is correct, then there should be few examples of a group with social control distributing goods without also providing adjudication. Third, this theory has challenges some ideas about the role of identity in social order. Because violence is so compelling, and under conditions approaching anarchy it is central in the lives of the population, this theory argues that the identity of a group will matter little to a population as long as it can provide control. While ingroup/outgroup dynamics clearly matter in many contexts, this theory argues that they are secondary under
certain conditions. Therefore, we should expect to see popular support vary not by identity, but by the location of a group on the hierarchy of collective activities performed.

To assess the validity of this theory, the following chapters will empirically evaluate its central claims regarding social control. Chapter 3 will show that the conditions in Baghdad, Iraq from 2006 to 2008 neared anarchy, and that many places experienced an open competition for social control. Chapter 4 will provide an in-depth evaluation of the theory of social control in the Baghdad neighborhood of Bayaa. It will show that groups’ latent capacities and investment determined who entered the competition for social control, and that collective activities, more than any other factor, determined the winner. This detailed examination of the competition for social control and the generalizable patterns I identify are the primary contribution of this dissertation. Chapter 5 will then demonstrate the utility of this theory by comparing the competition in Bayaa to similar neighborhoods in Baghdad that experienced a similar set of circumstances. Though these are not pure controlled comparisons, the variation in these neighborhoods demonstrate that the theory travels well to other areas and more consistently predict outcomes than alternative explanations. These evaluations demonstrate that this theory of social control can help both scholars and soldiers better understand how order can emerge from anarchy.
Chapter 3 – Battle for Baghdad

From 2006 to 2008, multiple groups fought for control over the neighborhoods of Baghdad. After an overwhelming victory by Shia religious parties in parliamentary elections on 15 December 2005, the Sunni population felt more threatened and isolated than ever before. On 22 February 2006, the bombing of the Al-Askari Mosque in Samarra by Sunni extremists convinced the Shia population that Sunnis were a threat to their very existence. Sectarian identities hardened, and rage spread within the Sunni and Shia across the city. Iraqi security forces, the Iraqi government, and their coalition partners proved to be either unable or unwilling to intervene, and Baghdad descended into a cycle of violence that, in many places, turned neighbor on neighbor, fragmented social bonds, and created an environment of near anarchy. From neighborhood to neighborhood, potential providers of social control emerged, moved in, or abdicated roles in their communities.

Success or failure in this competition was not predicated on groups’ moral authority, their designated roles, their resources, or their firepower, but instead on how they used their latent capabilities within each neighborhood, and the responses it engendered within the population. Though macro trends emerged, winners and losers of this competition varied by neighborhood according to groups’ latent capabilities, investment, and collective activities. In some places, organic Sunni groups held up against offensive operations by Jaysh al Mahdi and US forces. In others, Jaysh al-Mahdi seized control with breathtaking efficiency. In still others, infighting and internal weaknesses kept social control in flux amongst groups until the central government was able to establish it years later. By exploring the ways in which groups competed for and won
control within neighborhoods, a generalizable pattern emerges that provides some clarity over how social control is established in near anarchical conditions.

Before evaluating the process by which groups competed for social control in Baghdad, one must first appreciate (1) the conditions under which this competition occurred, (2) how those conditions came about, and (3) the identities of the groups who attempted to compete for social control. This chapter will explore these conditions and groups in depth, illustrating the conditions under which competition occurred, and where this theory of social control holds.

Three broad conditions must be stated up front. First, though this chapter will explore the macro trends and conditions that exist throughout Baghdad during this time period, not all neighborhoods experienced competition for social control at exactly the same time or in the same way. Though the larger trends matter, it is only through individual exploration of neighborhoods, from the disruption of social control until its reconstitution, that a generalizable pattern emerges. As this is not the same for every neighborhood, this study does not claim to explain all outcomes across Baghdad. Secondly, and relatedly, not all neighborhoods in Baghdad experienced competition for control. In highly homogenous areas, such as Sadr City and Ameriyah, violence did not trigger a competition for social control. These neighborhoods, though they experienced significant violence, never experienced the level of social fragmentation or atomization necessary to invite competitors for social control. This theory does not apply to places where existing social control does not fragment. Finally, this study explores competition in a modern, built up society. It is a very different environment from one where collective action or access to resources predicates survival. In agrarian societies where everyone must harvest crops or starve, or arid climates where water is available from a single well, the process by which
groups compete for social control is quite different. Such areas are beyond the scope of this work.

Social Unraveling

Life in Baghdad was increasingly difficult and less secure from 2003 to 2005, but two events in quick succession triggered the devolution of the city into near anarchical conditions. The first was the outcome of the first national parliamentary elections on 15 December 2005. Though the Sunni population's fortunes fell with the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime, these elections were a particularly polarizing moment. First under the CPA, and then the Iraqi Interim Government, the Sunni population perceived itself to be unjustly persecuted by overzealous Shia who had ingratiated themselves to the coalition. The policy of de-Ba'athification, charges of corruption by politicians, and pursuit of terrorist networks were being used to punish and disenfranchise the entire Sunni sect in the formation of the new government of Iraq. In protest, Sunni political parties and their constituents boycotted transitional parliament elections in January 2005, hoping to secure leverage in continued negotiations with the US-led coalition and the newly empowered Shia political class. This decision did not work out as planned. Rather than triggering a reconsideration of the current path, boycotting the elections ensured political victory for the Shia parties. The Sunnis lost a considerable voice in the writing of the Iraqi Constitution and influence over the government's behavior in 2005.

Sunni turnout was high in December of 2005, but the results were staggering. A coalition of Shia parties, let by the Iranian-affiliated Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) and the Sadrist Movement, the political wing of the organization led by Muqtada al-Sadr won a controlling majority of seats. After boycotting the 2005 elections, the Sunnis found themselves formally locked out of the political process and under control of the extreme end of
the Shia political spectrum. With little access to power in the new regime, Sunnis anticipated a future of even greater persecution and disenfranchisement. The message was clear: if Sunnis were going to survive, they would have to do it on their own. Within the Sunni population, this had several impacts, but two in particular contributed to the violence of 2006. First, formerly moderate members of the population turned towards more militant behavior. As security for Sunnis would not come from the government, they must either provide it for themselves or find an ally who could do it for them. Secondly, the predominantly Sunni Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) saw an opportunity: they could now more aggressively to push their agenda – to discredit the United States and push the West out of Iraq – by encouraging discontent and fostering instability. By playing both sides – encouraging Shia violence against Sunnis while arming and supporting Sunni militias – they could hasten US withdrawal. AQI merely needed to light the fuse, and the country would explode.

The civil war was ignited on February 22, 2006 with the bombing of the Al-Askari Mosque. Though the bombing resulted in few injuries, it instigated attacks on Sunnis by spontaneously-generated Shia mobs. Though the amount of violence is difficult to quantify, clear patterns emerged. Initially, Shia took to the street in mobs and attacked Sunnis wherever they could find them. Improvised checkpoints were established, mobs pulled people from their homes, and numerous Sunnis were kidnapped, tortured, and executed. In addition to the random violence, a number of Sunni mosques around Baghdad were blown up within days of the attack, suggesting organization and intent beyond spontaneous rage. Sunnis responded in kind, moving

into mixed neighborhoods and counter attacking Shia, while simultaneously fortifying their own neighborhoods. Militia activity intensified as both sects found themselves in an ever-escalating security dilemma that continued throughout the year. 58

Absence of State

In most places in the world, when riots and violence occur, police typically restore order. If the police are unable to control unrest, then larger, more capable forces are called in, such as a gendarme, the National Guard, or the state’s military. Violence ends, investigations commence, responsible parties face justice, and life moves forward.

This did not happen in Baghdad. Following the destruction of the mosque, the shortcomings of the coalition’s state building efforts were laid bare. Despite hundreds of millions of dollars and man hours, Iraq’s security institutions – its security forces, judicial system, and governing bodies – were stunningly unwilling or unable to step in, halt the violence, and establish social control. Despite repeated efforts by both the government and US forces, the state had little control over Baghdad streets and citizens.

Local Police

The Iraqi Police did little to halt the violence in Baghdad, a performance that extended and increased the trends present in the organization of the last several years. Following the invasion, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) envisioned the Iraqi Police as the provider of social control and the premier Iraqi Security Force while they rebuilt the Army. Mass desertions of policemen in the face of widespread looting and violence made for an inauspicious start. Though many returned to work at the behest of the CPA, they found their stations to be

looted, their resources curtailed, and their support from the state to be nearly non-existent.\textsuperscript{59} This was problematic for a force that, under Saddam Hussain, sat at the bottom of the intelligence and security force pecking order, looking up at 19 other agencies that enjoyed greater funding, prestige, and support. Most members of Saddam’s Iraqi Police chose the job over conscription. The Iraqi Police that the coalition expected to act as the provider of social control was in fact a highly corrupt force that traditionally functioned off bribes, threats, and intimidation.\textsuperscript{60}

“In a totalitarian state, little law and order needed to be kept. The police were paid, on average, $20 a month, so bribery was endemic: A benign cop would expect a tip for recovering a stolen car; a bad one would heist it himself; then demand a $20 ransom; a truly honest one had a job on the side. Arrests were capricious: beatings, torture, and rape common. “Serve and Protect”, the generic motto of police everywhere, was a foreign concept.”\textsuperscript{61}

As veterans returned, they went through a three-week refresher course and returned to duty. For most of these, the old ways of operating lived on. New recruits completed an eight-week course on the basics of policing. However, the demand for more policeman and the scant resources devoted to the training mission meant that this training course was little more than a rubber stamp.\textsuperscript{62} Despite the police filling a pivotal role in the CPA’s security plan, scant resources were devoted to this effort. Advisors (the only body that could provide oversight and accountability for police units) for the newly reconstituted police force was sorely lacking. After a year, a US MP battalion was assigned to the training mission, but advisors in the field were limited, by some counts less than 30 field advisors to the 9000 police on the streets.

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{59} Nora Bensahel et al., \textit{After Saddam: Prewar Planning and the Occupation of Iraq} (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2008), 125.
\textsuperscript{62} Flynn.
\end{footnotesize}
Green recruits mixed with veterans faced a much different security situation than they had under Saddam. Militias saw these new police as a representation of the occupation, and during the first year, the police were targets for violence. Stations were attacked an bombed, and by the end of 2003, over 200 policemen had been killed. With mounting casualties, few resources, and little advisor support, the local police soon reverted to their pre-invasion habits. Even if a new recruit joined with the intention to “serve and protect”, he was literally on his own. Veteran police often had little inclination to change behavior and isolated those who did not go along. The typical recruit was massively underprepared to do police tasks in light of his training, and he risked the ire of militias if he intervened in their business. Even if he successfully apprehended a criminal or stopped an attack, there was no court system to administer justice. Consequently, the police mostly stopped policing.

As demand for policemen remained high and recruiting was conducted primarily in the cities and in the south, Shias came to dominate the police force. Whether by deliberate plan or simply by demographics, most Iraqi police forces were dominated by members of the Sadrist organization or their supporters. By 2006, their influence was pervasive. Combined with the trends above, this resulted in an Iraqi police force that was by and large, corrupt, unsupervised, and biased towards the Shia population. They lacked the skills necessary to provide basic police functions, let alone take on organized militias who were targeting members of the opposite

---

63 Moss, “How Iraq Police Reform Became Casualty of War.”
Senior officers who might have taken steps to curb violence were threatened with targeting themselves, sometimes by their new recruits who held loyalty to a militia. They were outgunned, outmanned, and had little incentive to participate in an increasingly sectarian fight. As violence increased, they – at best – abdicated their role as protector. At worst, the local police aided and abetted the JAM expansion.

National Police
The Iraqi National Police were the second institution of the state that had a responsibility for order and control. Yet, like the local police, their origins and evolution resulted in very different actions in 2006. In the CPA’s original plan for security forces, there was no National Police. In the security void left by the invasion, Iraqis began forming their own militias to secure themselves, their neighborhoods, and important infrastructure. Often the leaders of these militias were well connected within the new Iraqi political elite. Their soldiers (in some cases, numbering in the thousands) were handpicked and recruited through personal connections, and in the De-Baathification environment of 2003 and 2004, many, though not all, were Shia. The most prominent of these militias was the Wolf Brigade. Led by a former Iraqi general who plotted to overthrow Saddam Hussein in the 1990s, they were noted for their discipline, high morale, and effectiveness under fire. Deciding it was better to have such effective units under the control of the government rather than operating outside of it, the US sent teams out to find these militias and bring them under the auspices of the new government.

---

67 International Crisis Group, “Iraq’s Civil War, the Sadrist and the Surge,” 5.
From 2004 until spring of 2006, these brigades helped fill a desperately needed role in providing security in and around Baghdad and the country. Though they received funding from the coalition, they were fully under the operational control of the Ministry of the Interior. This meant they rested outside the training and development pipeline that the Ministry of Defense (in coordination with the US coalition) provided the Iraqi Army. As such, their performance, loyalties, and sectarian leanings varied widely. Following the election of the transitional government, SCIRI pushed hard for control over the Ministry of the Interior, and by extension, these independent units, now known as Special Police Commandos. Their efforts paid off, and in April 2005, Bayan Jabr, the former commander of SCIRI’s militant wing - the Badr Corps - was appointed as Minister of the Interior. For the next 12 months, Sunni officers and soldiers were systematically replaced or pushed out of their units and replaced by Shia Badr members. Though these replacements were well trained and disciplined, their loyalty and agenda were overtly sectarian. Rumors of unlawful arrests, interrogations in secret prisons, and extra judicial killings dogged these units throughout 2005, though they received few sanctions or restrictions. By 2006, the MOI had a full corps of these units - 2 divisions, 9 brigades, 28 battalions - with almost zero American oversight.

---

When the violence broke out, the Special Police Commandos stated they were taking to
the streets to provide security, but their actions were highly sectarian. There is little question that
Iraqi these brigades were involved in the killing of Sunnis immediately following the mosque
bombing and throughout 2006, though the extent of involvement varied by unit. As with the
local police, these units turned a blind eye to sectarian violence. They were known to establish
checkpoints to identify Sunnis, only to hand them over to Shia militias for detention,
interrogation, and torture. It was a common for small groups wearing police uniforms to conduct
kidnappings or attacks, though it is unclear if the attackers were actually policemen or militia
men wearing a borrowed uniform.73 Either way, both the population and coalition forces were
increasingly distrustful of these brigades. By the time American training teams were finally
assigned to provide supervision and oversight of the Commandos in late-spring 2006, these
units’ role in the systematic and unauthorized targeting of Sunnis was well established.74

Iraqi Army and the Coalition

Reconstituting the Iraqi Army as a professional, non-sectarian force, designed to target
terrorists and secure the country from military threats, was the main effort of the US-led
coalition’s training missing. Yet despite years of training and millions of dollars invested in their
development, the Iraqi Army was incapable of halting the violence in 2006. When the violence
broke out, it was far too small and underdeveloped to handle the rapidly-expanding country-wide
civil war. By 2006 most units were still untrained and heavily reliant on their US partners to
function effectively. The Iraqi Army’s rate of growth lagged well behind predictions, and even
at their projected endstate, were simply not large enough to independently secure the country.

73 Cordesman and Davies, Iraq’s Insurgency and the Road to Civil Conflict, 2008, 1:299; Ellen Knickmeyer,
dyn/content/article/2006/10/13/AR2006101301447.html.
74 Ellen Knickmeyer, “On Baghdad Patrol, a Vigilant Eye on Iraqi Police,” May 15, 2006,
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/14/AR2006051400707.html.
Furthermore, Iraq's Army had neither law enforcement capability nor community policing training, functions on which an effective counter-insurgency campaign often depends. Therefore, the Iraqi Army depended on its US partners to take the lead in countering the violence.

For its part, the United States never intended to be the provider of social control in Iraq. The strategic vision of the US government following the attacks of September 11, 2001 was to eliminate threats to the United States before they manifested themselves on US soil. To achieve this, the US military would leverage its strategic mobility and firepower, projecting small numbers of ground forces across the globe to control air and missile strikes from long distances and facilitate the rapid maneuver of ground forces. Once the threat was eliminated, a short period of transition to new democratic government would follow, US forces would leave, and the process would repeat itself against another threat. Overwhelming advantages in mobility, firepower, and communications – demonstrated during the first Gulf War and increased since then—would enable the US to achieve these kinds of “strategic raids” with fewer numbers of troops on the ground than ever before. Early success in Afghanistan by special operators on horseback, controlling airstrikes against the Taliban, seemed to confirm this approach. By 2002, there was consensus that the fight there would be over soon, and it was time to move to the next target, Iraq.

Despite warnings to the contrary, the invasion of Iraq followed the same operational and strategic logic. The details of the military and political decision making are well documented in other places and not the focus of this work, but one fact is worth mentioning that highlights this

75 These operations are strategic because they pursue national foreign policy objectives. They are raids because they are offensive operations that are not intended to take and hold ground, but rather to achieve discrete effects and then withdraw.
new approach. In the months prior to the first Gulf War, the US-led coalition built up forces for six months and invaded with 5 corps and 14 divisions. Though the 2003 invasion covered four times more ground and had almost no lead up time, the US invaded with 2 corps and 6 divisions, two of which were at 2/3’s strength. The invasion itself was a striking success. However, the US-led coalition quickly found itself bogged down in a country it intended to leave within 6 months.76

By mid-2005, the coalition faced an increasingly restive Iraqi population, one that became less and less enthusiastic about the continued presence of US forces as the occupation grew longer. The US-led coalition was poorly postured to respond, due to problems with both strategic approach and force posture. Believing that continued US presence among the population only increased discontent, the US began withdrawing its forces into large bases and out of populated areas. The focus of US intelligence and targeting remained on AQI and former Ba’athists, but increasingly moved away from the militias that were building capability in Baghdad.

This moved the Iraqi Army into the lead role of combating a growing militia problem and insecurity of the population. When the Samarrah mosque bombing triggered an explosion of violence in Baghdad, the costs of the previous year’s retrenchment became painfully obvious. The coalition had few eyes or ears which could provide them actionable intelligence on the various militias pursuing a wide variety of violent activities. Militias could come to an area, set

76 In 2003, though there was a planned rotation of forces into Afghanistan, there was no plan to rotate forces into Iraq. Deployment orders to US Army Divisions were sent out in 6 month increments for Afghanistan. For example, the 25th Infantry Division was ordered in the summer of 2003 to Afghanistan - 2nd Brigade from February to July, and 3rd Brigade from July to January. In November of 2003, those orders changed. 2nd was sent to Iraq in February, 3rd to Afghanistan in March, with deployments extended to a year. Timothy F. Wright, Interview with Author, May 2007.
up checkpoints, kidnap their targets, and leave before a US patrol could leave the gate of its base. Iraqi Army units, which were supposed to be in control of the ground, were so reliant on US support that they could not operate any faster or effectively than their US counterparts.

Acknowledging the Iraqi Army shortcomings, the US and the Iraqi Army responded with three major operations in 2006 to address militia-driven sectarian violence in Baghdad – Scales of Justice, Together Forward I, and Together Forward II. These operations were designed to sweep through neighborhoods, with US forces clearing them of militias and fighters while the Iraqi Army held the ground now cleared of enemy influence. Though a precursor of the US strategies of 2007, in 2006 there simply were not enough US or Iraqi Army forces to clear or hold the ground effectively. Any progress made during an operation would immediately collapse once US or Iraqi Army units left the area for the security of their bases, much like squeezing a balloon or driving through a muddy puddle. Pushed out by the pressure of the coalition, the enemy could easily return as soon as those forces left. The overstretched forces could not contain the amount of violence nor effectively compete for control.

Law and Order Institutions
The institutions that supported the security forces – laws, courts, judges – were also missing. Following the invasion and de-Ba’athification, Baghdad struggled along with little resembling a government or institutions. Though the organs of the newly established state were operating in the heart of the city, their reach did not extend past the walls of the Green Zone.

The CPA and the transitional government focused on building a national government, a new Iraqi Army, and courts to try war criminals, terrorists, and corrupt politicians. While these initiatives enjoyed popular support initially, daily life deteriorated within the city and gave rise to
significant popular unrest. Local police forces were considered ineffectual and corrupt, and simple functions of law and order – court houses, judges, due process, appeals, etc. – existed in name only. Power came on intermittently, sewage ran through the streets, and trash piled up for weeks without collection. Within this void, various militias grew. Some neighborhoods independently created watch systems. New government institutions hired security guards and gave them rifles to protect power stations, telephone towers, and water pump houses. Former military leaders built their own militias. The most effective of these militias became the Special Police Commandos and later, the National Police.

"It was all too clear that the focus on defeating active insurgents had not been matched by similar efforts to develop effective police forces and prison system. Eliminate corruption, create a working and efficient judicial system. Or create an effective system for prosecution. The end result was that day to day security [by late 2005], even in areas without active insurgent activity, was often poor to non-existent, dependent on local forces or militias, and/or dependent on bribes and protection money. This made it easy for insurgents to infiltrate, allowed them to become the de facto security force or intimidate the population in some Sunni areas, alienated some of the government's potential supporters, and led to widespread distrust of the police and criminal justice system."78

Most notably, the court system simply did not function for the average Iraqi. Criminal courts, designed to handle interpersonal disputes, did exist, but they retracted inside the walls of the Green Zone with the outbreak of violence. Already operating at minimal capacity, they soon became backlogged with thousands of cases against accused insurgents, terrorists, and militia men. Prisoners were at over double maximum capacity as coalition forces provided a steady stream of fighters who needed to be processed by the court. An average Iraqi with a civil or criminal complaint could go to the courts in the Green Zone, but unless the complaint was

---

78 Cordesman and Davies, Iraq’s Insurgency and the Road to Civil Conflict, 2008, 1:182.
connected to emplacing IEDs, shooting rockets, or attacking coalition forces, the case would languish (unless, of course, a bribe was paid). The citizen could take their issue to the local police, but they too were effectively disconnected from anything resembling a court function that could rule on offenses and met out punishment. When violence exploded in 2006, the system was effectively non-functional at the local level.

Competitors
Without state-provided order, multiple groups emerged and competed for control over Baghdad’s neighborhoods. Ethnically homogenous neighborhoods, such as Sadr City for Shia and Ghaziliyah and Amiriya for Sunnis, hardened into enclaved sanctuaries following the mosque bombing. Militias took up defensive positions. Streets inside and outside of these neighborhoods were barricaded. Armed groups patrolled the streets, while their fighters manned checkpoints. Personal identification was checked upon entry: non-residents were barred, and residents of the opposing sect were expelled, taken prisoner, or killed. Social control in these areas was quickly consolidated. These neighborhoods then became staging grounds for expanding offensive and retaliatory operations against rivals, as groups competed for control in mixed neighborhoods.

Sunni Groups
Sunnis, as the ethnic minority, had little ability to compete for control in Baghdad. They instead sought to control key terrain while preventing other groups’ expansion. By the end of 2005, Ba’athist elements, which had initially fought the coalition (and were the coalition’s

80 Inskeep, “Iraqi Police Struggle with Rule of Law.”
81 International Crisis Group, “Iraq’s Civil War, the Sadrist and the Surge,” 2–3.
primary Sunni target for the initial years of the occupation), were no longer a significant factor in the fight.\textsuperscript{82} Sunni resistance had three major components -- the neo-Salafist movements (e.g., AQI), non-Ba'athist political groups, and a mix of local and tribal leaders that varied by geographical area.\textsuperscript{83} Election results and the violence that followed the mosque bombing triggered significant changes in these dynamics. Shia electoral dominance reduced the legitimacy and effectiveness of non-Ba’athist political groups. Many Sunnis had little enthusiasm for the neo-Salafists. AQI, for example, was initially received poorly among Sunnis.\textsuperscript{84} When the violence began, local militias emerged in both homogenous and mixed areas in the Sunni community. These local militias, however, faced massive pressure from better organized and armed Shia militias, and Salafist tactics, financing, and support became somewhat more palatable. While AQI never established a strong presence in Baghdad (it’s strongest position was to the west in Anbar), its material support to the Sunni militias through Abu Gharib and Ghaziliyah enabled enclaves to defend themselves and conduct attacks against the Shia. Sunni militias benefitted immensely from this relationship, despite contested goals and values of these groups. Militias were the primary Sunni actors in Baghdad where social control was contested; not AQI or Ba’athist insurgents.

Shia Groups

Sadrist Movement and Jaysh al-Mahdi

Jaysh al Mahdi (JAM) quickly established itself as the dominant Shia militia in Baghdad in early 2006. JAM’s roots lay in the nationalist organization founded by Ayatollah Mohammed Sadeq al-Sadr. Following the 1991 Gulf War, Shia intifada, and subsequent suppression by

\textsuperscript{83} Cordesman and Davies, Iraq’s Insurgency and the Road to Civil Conflict, 2008, 1:163.
\textsuperscript{84} Cordesman and Davies, 1:155.
Saddam Hussein, many resistance leaders fled the country. Sadr stepped into this void, developing an organization that provided social services for the newly disenfranchised Shia population while publicly articulating the plight of his people under the current regime. His son, Muqtada, took control of the organization following the Ayatollah’s assassination in 1999. Muqtada was young and lacked the gravitas of his father. For the next four years, the organization atrophied while he maintained a low profile and presence.85

Following the collapse of the Saddam Hussein regime, the Sadrists quickly re-established themselves as a political force within the country. They formed an armed wing of the organization – Jaysh al-Mahdi – to provide security for Shia communities in the midst of the chaos and looting that followed the government’s collapse. In southern cities and Baghdad’s segregated districts, JAM took control of key infrastructure and secured schools, hospitals, water works, and electrical substations. Though the men providing security were little more than guys holding guns, JAM’s presence sent a clear message that the Sadrists were in charge. The organization’s core members re-established social functions, opening offices known as Makatib al-Sayyid al Shahid, literally, the Office of the Martyr Sadr. They followed a Hamas-style blueprint, making their offices centers for social support and assistance for the Shia population in the absence of the central government.86 During the next year, grassroots recruiting in new areas swelled the organization’s ranks by tens of thousands of people.87

Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq and the Badr Corps

The Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) followed a similar path, but it differed in significant ways that would impact its competition for control of Baghdad.

Founded in Iran by exiles from the 1991 revolt, SCIRI and its militant wing, the Badr Organization, flooded across the border as the regime fell. SCIRI was an effective political and military organization trained and funded by Iran. But, what SCIRI had in capability they lacked in popular support. Though they sought to control similar areas, SCIRI had little natural support from the population. Unlike the Sadrists, SCIRI was often perceived as an organization of traitors who had abandoned their country and were now puppets of the Iranian government.

SCIRI was, however, a shrewd political actor, and its members quickly positioned themselves as leaders within the newly forming government.88

These two groups, the Sadrists and SCIRI, both desired control over the new Iraq, but they pursued different strategic approaches. SCIRI sought control from the top down. Within weeks of the invasion, SCIRI presented themselves to the coalition as the most viable partner in Iraq. They were politically capable and organized, their anti-Ba’athist credentials were strong, and they enjoyed greater popularity and legitimacy than the American alternative (Ahmed Chalibi and his diaspora party). From the beginnings of the political process, SCIRI politicians were woven into the new Iraqi government. As time wore on, SCIRI systematically emplaced their chosen representatives into appointed positions that were necessary to consolidate control of government. The first Minister of the Interior (which controlled the Iraqi Police) was Bayan Jabr, a Badr Commander. SCIRI intended to control key institutions of the state, if not the government itself, by the end of the US occupation.

88 Ali A. Allawi, The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace (Yale University Press, 2008), 139; Cockburn, Muqtada Al-Sadr and the Battle for the Future of Iraq, 133.
Sadr, by contrast, sought control from the ground up. By immediately moving into Shia-dominated cities, towns, and neighborhoods, the Sadrists built grassroots followings amongst the lower-class Shia, the people with whom the Sadrists enjoyed their greatest legitimacy. They positioned themselves as the protector of the people while simultaneously calling for the withdrawal of the coalition. The Sadrists established themselves as an opposition party to the government. While this made interactions with the coalition troublesome, it provided them with an increasingly powerful message and popular appeal as disaffection with country conditions grew. Despite badly overplaying his hand in Najaf in 2004 by attacking coalition forces (they were decisively defeated, but not disbanded), the Sadr Organization and JAM remained an omnipresent force in Shia areas. As previously detailed, the Sadrists successfully infiltrated the local police, continued to attract followers, and expanded their power base. By December 2005, their popular support translated into votes. Sadrist candidates outperformed expectations: other Shia parties, including their primary rival, SCIRI, could not form a government without them. This victory opened a new avenue to power previously blocked to Sadr: take over the government from within rather than opposing it from the outside.

Shia Violence and Sunni Response

After the mosque bombing, both groups launched deliberate campaigns to eliminate the Sunni threat. The SCIRI-affiliated Special Police Commando Brigades immediately began targeting Ba’athists and Sunni militias, thus living up to their reputation for both effectiveness and brutality. During March and April of 2006, their operational tempo and their target sets expanded. Rather than homing in on suspected militia members or terrorists, simply being Sunni was enough to trigger an arrest or interrogation by one of these units. This trend continued

---

throughout the 2006, as these Ministry of the Interior forces evolved into a highly sectarian force conducting, in effect, “ethnic cleansing”. Indicative of Special Police Commando operations in 2006, US forces discovered a detention center run by their most notorious unit, the Wolf Brigade. Under their control, a place known as Site 4 held over 1400 prisoners, many hung by their arms, beaten, and bound, including more than 30 teenagers and children. Less than a month later, a different brigade raided a food factory, arrested 37 Sunni workers, and executed 7 of them. The Ministry of Interior repeatedly denied that these activities were sanctioned or centrally controlled by the government, claiming they were the independent and inexcusable behavior of a few bad leaders or soldiers. In spite of these denials, organized units wearing Commando uniforms were consistently reported throughout 2006 by the UN Assistance Mission to Iraq to be conducting kidnapping, torture, and killings. The SCIRI/Badr-dominated Special Police Commandos were removing Sunnis from Baghdad. SCIRI’s strategic calculus was straightforward. After embedding themselves in the nation-building process, they had successfully infiltrated much of the government. Collapse of the government in the face of widespread violence and civil war would threaten their power position. Therefore, any group that threatened the government had to be eliminated. Since the Sunnis were the source of conflict and violence (in their mind), then it was best to remove them from Baghdad, establish social control, and end the civil war. Success will increase support for SCIRI from the Shia and translate into political victory.

93 Human Rights Office, “Human Rights Report, 1 January - 28 February 2006,” 2-3. See also the reports that cover the period between March and December. All contain similar references.
JAM concurrently launched a deliberate campaign to take control of Baghdad and expel the Sunni population. Like SCIRI, JAM sought to eliminate the perceived threat posed by the Sunni militias, but that was only one of their objectives. The Sadr Organization saw this violence as an opportunity to seize control of Baghdad's neighborhoods and secure a political base that would enable Sadr to take control of the Iraqi government and the newly forming state. As the December 2005 elections showed, neighborhoods under Sadrist control voted for Sadrist politicians. If the Sadrists could take over Baghdad, then they could win control of the government in the next election. To do so, the Sadr Organization would attack Sunnis and their militias, drive them from the city, and reduce violence. The Sadrists would then provide social services for the population and build a loyal political base. By establishing social control neighborhood by neighborhood, the Sadrists would eventually gain political support throughout the city. This strategy reprised Sadr's initial, 2003 rise to popularity in specific neighborhoods. This time, Sadr would secure victory with a larger, better trained, and more violent militia under his control.

The Sadrist initial forays into Baghdad following the 2003 invasion had given them control only over Sadr City and a handful of surrounding neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{94} Few other areas with OMS buildings were consolidated under their control. Following the mosque bombing, these offices became the first step in the Sadrist's order of battle. In mixed neighborhoods, if no OMS existed, it was quickly and overtly established: a public declaration of Shia primacy and intention to remain in the neighborhood for an extended period. Fighters from other areas soon followed, often in bands of 5 to 10 men, from JAM. They would recruit local followers and fighters, generating logistical, intelligence, and manpower support for their efforts. They would take over

\textsuperscript{94} Cockburn, \textit{Muqtada Al-Sadr and the Battle for the Future of Iraq}, 138.
check points, identify Sunnis by identification card, name, or occupation, and expel, kidnap, or kill them. Sunni families and houses, once identified, would receive a warning – in some places, a red “X” on the door, or a note, wrapped around a bullet, telling the residents they had hours to leave the neighborhood. Those that did not comply were kidnapped and held for days. Grisly torture followed, often involving beatings with electrical cords, bones broken, and knees drilled out. After a few days, Sunnis were returned to their neighborhoods and shot in the back of the head on the street, an example to those who might resist. Sunni public symbols were removed and replaced by Shia flags and pictures of martyrs. Empty houses were filled by migrants from Sunni-dominated neighborhoods, or from outside Baghdad. Retaliation by Sunni militias was met with greater violence, and the competition continued until one side won. Such an exchange between militias in Na’iriya, Baghdad, was described by an observer as follows:

“The Mahdi Army put up a huge portrait of Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr which Sunni militants repeatedly blew up. The Sadrista then decided to reinforce it with concrete, and senior Mahdi Army leaders were present at the inaugural ceremony, when a Sunni armed group shot at them. Eight well-known Sadrist leaders were killed. It was a true catastrophe for the Mahdi Army. The Mahdi Army mobilised its units in Sadr City, Shia’a and Fudhayliya in order to track down the perpetrators. The following day they killed tens of Sunnis and dropped their bodies near the portrait. After this incident, a large number of Sunnis were expelled from the neighbourhood” – Interview with Mahdi Army Critic, February 2007

The Sadrist expansion began in earnest during the spring of 2006 directly following the bombing. After the initial wave of spontaneous violence, JAM executed a highly methodical, organized campaign to establish social control over Baghdad. The immediate priority was to

---

95 International Crisis Group, “Iraq’s Civil War, the Sadrista and the Surge,” 3.
97 International Crisis Group, “Iraq’s Civil War, the Sadrists and the Surge,” n. 3.
expand and solidify control of Baghdad east of the Tigris by taking full control over the neighborhoods northwest (Adahmiya) and southeast (Tisa Nissan) of Sadr City. From there, JAM pushed their operations across the Tigris River to western Baghdad, by focusing first on Karkh and Khadamiyah, then moving south and west into Mansour. The campaign’s final phase was to advance south across the Airport Road into the district of Rasheed, moving from west to east.

This expansion began within days of the bombing and had early success in the east. JAM met stiff resistance from Sunnis in the sub-district of Adhamiyah, south Ghaziliyah, and Mansour. These were traditionally Sunni-dominated areas, key terrain for Sunni fighters moving into the area (and therefore warranted heavy Sunni resistance), and, in the case of Ghaziliyah, populated nearly entirely by former military officers. While fighting continued in these areas, operations in West Rasheed opened in earnest on 9 July 2006, when JAM established roadblocks around the Sunni-dominated neighborhood of Jihad and executed dozens of Sunnis on the side of the road. Sunni retaliation followed in the form of a complex attack on a local Shia mosque and a series of car bombs in Sadr City that totaled over 100 casualties. More JAM attacks followed. During the next 6 months, violence migrated east, moving across Rasheed back towards the Tigris.99

Late 2006 – Organizational Changes
During late 2006, there were significant changes to three of the groups competing for control of Baghdad that would have a profound impact on their activities during 2007. The first occurred in the Special Police Commandos. In May, under pressure from the coalition, Bayan

Jabr was removed as the Minister of Interior and assigned as Minister of Finance. His successor, Jawad al-Boulani, was a former air force engineer with strong administrative skills and no ties to any political entity. His three deputies were Dawa, Badr, and Kurdish loyalists, but the balance deadened senior Ministry support for an exclusively SCIRI/Badr agenda. Simultaneously, the Special Police Commandos – the brigades that had so effectively implemented SCIRI’s ethnic cleansing campaign – were re-designated National Police and assigned US advisor teams similar to those advising the Iraqi Army. The Iraqi government, at the behest of the coalition, implemented a three-phase reform program that took effect immediately. Phase I was an oversight inspection and reporting program executed as the advising teams joined their units. Phase II was a three-week “Re-Bluing”, a reference to the process by which military rifles are refurbished. During this phase, units were pulled to the headquarters for reassessment and reassignment of personnel as necessary. Phase III was defined as “Gendarme” training, to take place from mid-2007 through 2008.

Phase I ran through the summer, and the grim reports from the advising teams gave the coalition data to leverage the Iraqi government to acknowledge the behavior of the police. Phase II began in November of 2006, with the worst-performing units going through first. Immediately, the two National Police Division Commanders were relieved. The first three brigades that were Re-Blued had personnel replacement rates of 30%, 40%, and 25% of their ranks. During the next six months, 7 of the 9 brigade commanders were relieved, and 14 of 25 battalion commanders lost their jobs. The impact was profound. After a few short months, National Police brigades went from being feared militias to a shell of their former selves. Their

---

individual skills, equipment, and sectarian leanings remained, but their leadership, unit cohesion, and morale had dissipated. What were once proud, idealistic fighting units were now broken pieces cobbled together and assigned to areas they knew little of or cared about. Their officers were new, inexperienced, and fully aware of their coalition advisors' ability to curtail whatever sectarian agendas they may have harbored. Their capability was reduced to less than that of the Iraqi Army.

The second organizational change occurred within the Sadrist Organization. Jaysh al-Mahdi had always dealt with internal tensions, but during late 2006, two elements within the organization began to chafe under the elder, more politically astute elements of the organization. Sadr’s populist message and sectarian fervor had many benefits. It attracted followers, preserved the organization under stress, and motivated its young followers to take great risks and make sacrifices for the cause. But Sadr also attracted those who would pursue more extreme measures than the group’s senior members would condone. During 2006, some elements of JAM established a relationship with the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard – Quods Force (IRGC-QF), Iran’s organization that runs external operations in support of Islamic Revolution. The IRGC-QF welcomed these splinter groups into Iran for training, then supplied them with money and advanced weapons, including advanced RPG-23s, 107mm rockets, and IEDs know as explosively formed penetrators (EFPs). Though these groups, known first as Special Groups, and later, as Asaib Ahl al-Haq (League of the Righteous), returned under the umbrella of JAM, their independent financing and logistics provided them autonomy that complicated unity of

\[102\] Their primary and long-standing patron is Hezbollah. See Cochrane, “The Fragmentation of the Sadrist Movement,” 15. The IRGC-QF had extensive dealings with many of the militia groups in Iraq, seeming to employ a strategy of betting on all horses to insure their victory no matter who won.
command within the organization. These Special Groups worked for JAM only as long as JAM was doing what the Special Groups wanted to do.

During 2006, JAM’s ranks swelled with young, enterprising leaders and fighters who sought revenge against the Sunnis. While motivated, these JAM leaders were difficult to control. They often failed to calibrate their violence, caused great damage with their attacks, and encouraged reprisals against innocent civilians. With the rapid expansion of the organization, funding could be difficult, which incentivized some JAM sub-cells to engage in rent seeking and security taxation. Others simply engaged in predatory behavior. The behavior of these younger members ran counter to the larger mission of the Sadr Organization: to generate popular support that would eventually carry them to political victory. This long-term goal was clearly understood and pursued by the elder members of the party, but the vision was often lost on the younger members of JAM.

These three camps created a tension that manifested into problems for the group during 2007. On one hand, the older, more experienced Sadrists saw themselves as political and social leaders, schooled in the resistance to Saddam Hussein, and educated in the Hamas-style of resistance. They were playing a long game: establish the group as the provider of social needs, build popular support, and eventually achieve political victory. On the other, the young, brash fighters saw Baghdad as a prize, at best an objective to be won under a banner of righteous freedom fighting, at worst, treasure to be plundered. These young fighters had little inclination to establish relationships or develop social services. They wanted money, prestige, and power. The third option, the Special Groups, saw their priority as taking the fight to the enemy, be they

---

103 Cochrane, 19–21.
104 Cochrane, 22.
Sunni militias or coalition forces. Either way, victory would come only through active warfare. Compromise, discussion, and politics were all subordinate to inflicting as much damage on the enemy as possible. At times the groups' goals and methods aligned, at others they did not. The result was variable performance by JAM from neighborhood to neighborhood. Regardless of how successful they were at fighting, JAM achieving social control was by no means guaranteed during 2007.

The final significant change in late 2006 was the announcement of the Surge, the United States’ new theory of victory in Iraq. As the violence continued to increase through 2006 and US-Iraqi Operations having little effect, the United States elected to change strategies. The increased violence of 2006 highlighted that the government did not have enough combat capable units to effectively establish social control. In what would become known as the Surge, the United States deployed 5 additional brigades to Iraq, starting in February 2007. The first two brigades would deploy to Baghdad itself, and along with the 3 brigades already there, would deploy its forces off its large bases to live in the neighborhoods consumed by violence. The remaining three Surge brigades would be deployed to what was known as the belts, or the areas surrounding the city. These three brigades would also live amongst the population and cut the militia supply lines running into the city. The Iraqi government would match this effort with Iraqi Army and National Police brigades, partnering their forces with American units, working together to halt sectarian violence. The intent, using nearly double the total force, was to clear the militias from the neighborhoods, then hold that ground to prevent them from returning. The US and Iraqi units would then help rebuild the neighborhoods – their economies, essential services, and governing institutions – to help the government establish social control.
By the end of 2006, conditions in many neighborhoods were approaching anarchy. Outside of strictly homogenous Sunni or Shia neighborhoods, civil society was fragmented, violence was rampant, and there was little the Iraqi government could do to stop it. In mixed neighborhoods, Sunni and Shia groups actively competed for social control in pursuit of their political agendas. Despite significant strengths and capabilities, however, success for any one of these groups was far from pre-determined. Each had weaknesses that resulted in variable outcomes in each neighborhood. As the city entered 2007, the US Surge hit, introducing another group that sought to establish social control in Baghdad.
Chapter 4 – Battle for Baya’a

The wave of sectarian violence that began in early 2006 and gradually engulfed the entire city of Baghdad hit the small, residential neighborhood of Bayaa in early 2007. This relatively peaceful, middle-class neighborhood of mixed ethnicity exploded as Jaysh al Mahdi (JAM), the militia of Muqtada al-Sadr, expanded its campaign into the neighborhood at the start of the year. Despite the presence of a well-established local police force, and later, elements of an Iraqi National Police Brigade, Sunnis found themselves increasingly fighting for their lives. As the violence increased, US forces moved an infantry company into the neighborhood with a goal of halting the violence and curbing the expansion of JAM. By March of 2007, there were six groups competing for social control. After three months of fighting, the Sadrists and the Americans established were the only credible competitors remaining. These two groups battled each other for control throughout the summer. They employed different strategies that offered the population different incentives in exchange for their support against the other group.

By November, the population was firmly under the Sadrists’ control. During the final months of the competition, Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry (D/1-28 IN, also referred to as D Co) improved the execution of its strategy and outperformed its opposition in many ways, but the American approach was fundamentally flawed. The American approach failed to provide what the population needed most: security – not just from outside threats, but also from the internal slights, wrongs, and conflicts that naturally exist anywhere people live in close quarters with one another. Only the Sadrists were able to provide the rules, enforcement, and adjudication necessary to control behavior and regulate life in Bayaa. By maintaining their ability to adjudicate, the Sadrists established and maintained social control.
This chapter will explain how the combined Sadrist Organization, which includes the Organization of the Martyr Sadr (OMS) and Jaysh al Mahdi (JAM), seized and maintained social control. This chapter begins with a brief history of the neighborhood, which documents how Baghdad's modernization in the second half of the 20th Century contributed to the atomization of its mixed neighborhoods when sectarian violence hit. It will then evaluate the competition for social control in three distinct phases. In each phase, the latent capacity and investment of each group at the start of the phase will be evaluated to determine which groups have organization, tools, proximity, and investment to compete for social control. Next, the strategic approach and interaction of the groups will be described over the course of the phase. At the end of each phase, the collective activities of each group will be compared to the behavior of the population to determine which group, if any, has established social control. By tracing each group's capacities, their actions, and the response of the population, this chapter will show what is both necessary and sufficient to establish social control.

The battle for Bayaa unfolded over three general phases. Phase I, which lasted from mid-March to mid-June 2007, explores the period where there were many potential competitors for control. By the end of the phase, either by a loss of capacity or by choice, most competitors fell out of the competition. Only two groups established themselves as credible competitors for social control: OMS/JAM and D Co. Phase II, which lasted from mid-June to the end of October, covers the period of competition between the two remaining groups. During this period, both groups employed different strategies and behaved differently, but both pursued similar goals and generated similar outcomes. The key difference, however, was that OMS/JAM provided something that D Co did not: adjudication. Phase III, from November 2007 to March of 2008, D Co experienced success with its strategy, outperforming OMS/JAM in significant and
tangible ways, emerging as a more credible protector of the population and a more useful provider of goods, and according to their strategic logic, the population ought to have abandoned the Sadrists. They did not, due primarily to the fact that OMS/JAM was the only group that could maintain order amongst the population. Despite a loss of capacity and successes by D Co, adjudication allowed OMS/JAM to retain social control.\textsuperscript{105}

Bayaa

Bayaa, during 2006, was a mostly residential, middle class neighborhood, like many others in Baghdad. It was a small section of al-Rasheed, one of nine Baghdad districts. Al-Rasheed occupied a large territory on the south side of the city and stretched from the banks of the Tigris in the east to Baghdad International Airport in the west. The district is bisected by a large highway known as the Baghdad Road, which terminates on the northern edge of the district at a massive interchange, referred to by the coalition as Checkpoint 543. From that interchange, a short highway leads northeast to the Green Zone. The Airport Road leads west, forming the northern edge of Western Rashid and terminating at Baghdad International Airport. Al-Bayaa

sat immediately south of that interchange, bordered on the west by the neighborhood of A’amel and the southeast by the neighborhood of Saydiyah.

Bayaa, and many Baghdad neighborhoods like it, was built in the 1950s as part of a massive modernization effort. The streets were laid out on previously undeveloped land in a grid. Most streets were narrow by modern standards, at just over a car-width wide, but all had generous sidewalks to facilitate a pedestrian lifestyle. Along the central market street, concrete buildings stood four-to-five stories tall, with shops on the street level and apartments above. Homes were two-to-three stories tall, shared walls with their neighbors, and featured courtyards and entry gates. Schools were built on the eastern edge of the grid, as were administrative and

---

106 Video of the market street, known as 20th Street Market, taken in mid-2008 can be seen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwReSMLEHtA.
government buildings, recreation areas, and public works. Mosques were spread throughout the neighborhood, and families had all that they needed to survive and prosper.

Baghdad’s modernization was more than just new buildings – it broke from thousands of years of traditional urban settlement. Rather than renovating or rebuilding the ancient neighborhoods, this modernization effort sought to massively expand the city from its traditional core to new areas, previously unsettled or occupied by squatters. These new sections were designated for specific purposes, such as industrial production, farming, recreation, or education, which were then supported by residential areas nearby. These new neighborhoods were designated for specific professions, such as workers, physicians, farmers, professors, or even current and retired military officers. Though some classes were dominated by certain sects or tribes, many of these neighborhoods mixed Sunni and Shia, and foreigners and Arabs. Sub-populations had their own mosques and churches, but in these new mixed areas, markets, schools, and leisure activities were integrated.107 Despite the urge to remain within homogenous neighborhoods in the old part of the city, the attractiveness of these newly constructed areas and the pressure of overcrowding effectively broke thousands of years of traditional settlement and reorganized and resettled large sections of the city based on class and profession.108

107 John Gulick, “Baghdad: Portrait of a City II: Physical and Cultural Change,” *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 33, no. 4 (1967): 253. To be clear, this reorganization was not universal for the entirety of the city, as the old portions of the city remained relatively segregated. Furthermore, there were clearly some professions that were available to certain sects more than others, which encouraged continued segregation. In many places, including Bayaa, this pattern did lead to a relatively heterogenous mix that was previously unthinkable in an ancient city like Baghdad.

108 Gulick, 251–52.
This reordering accelerated exponentially in the 1970s under the Ba‘athists. As part of their deliberate effort to build a socialist state in Iraq, the Ba‘athist regime systematically broke apart vast swaths of traditional society in favor of a modern, state-centric institutions. As they disenfranchised tribal leadership, redistributed land, and expanded the state apparatus, the economic centers of gravity moved from the rural areas to the cities, most greatly to Baghdad.\footnote{Amatzia Baram, “Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Hussein’s Tribal Policies 1991–96,” \textit{International Journal of Middle East Studies} 29, no. 01 (1997): 1–31; Phebe Marr, \textit{The Modern History of Iraq} (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004), 139.}
The emergence of state institutions – the military, intelligence services, party bureaucracy, civil service – as the primary employer of the Iraqi people, compounded the urban migration trend. Thirdly, the Ba’athist regime enfranchised not just Sunnis, but Shia as well. Shia converged on the cities in droves.\textsuperscript{10} By 1988, the urban population of Iraq had grown by 206.1\% while the rural population by just 18.6\%.\textsuperscript{11} Baghdad neighborhoods that had been a part of the periphery in the 1960s (such as Bayaa) were now fully integrated sections of the city proper and were populated by increasingly prosperous families. They were diverse, secular, and thriving.\textsuperscript{112}

From the late 1980s and early 1990s, a series of catastrophic events halted economic and social progress in Baghdad but did not fundamentally change the direction of the city. Massive debt from the Iran-Iraq War, combined with a heavily depressed oil market, cratered Iraq’s economy. In an attempt to rapidly change his fortunes, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait and seized its oil fields. The international community condemned this action and created an international coalition that in less than a year reversed his gains, destroyed his army, and crippled his regime. Facing civil unrest and devastating economic sanctions, Saddam reenergized a dormant tribal system and sectarian identities to maintain his grip on power. Within a few years, unable to maintain the massive state institutions that during previous decades had controlled the country, Saddam systematically devolved power to tribal leaders in peripheral areas in exchange for political support. He simultaneously promoted religious piety by sponsoring both Sunni and

\textsuperscript{11} Baram, “Neo-Tribalism in Iraq,” 3,6.
\textsuperscript{112} Nicholas Krohley, \textit{The Death of the Mehdi Army: The Rise, Fall, and Revival of Iraq’s Most Powerful Militia} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 28–34.
Shia religious leaders to assume greater rolls in civil society (as long as they supported the regime).  

While these steps were effective in the periphery, Baghdad was less swayed by such actions. First, the modernization efforts of the previous decades had been most effective in the urban areas. Tribes held little salience for most residents of Baghdad, and religion, while more important, was still not central to peoples’ lives in the city. As tribal leaders were reintroduced, they were derisively referred to as “Taiwanese Sheihks”, in reference to the origin of cheap goods in the markets. The long roots of tradition that worked in the rural areas were gone in the city, but as these nominally tribal leaders became resources for regime resources, they gained some traction. Second, Baghdad felt the sting of sanctions less than any other area. Civil service jobs that were cut in the rural areas remained viable in the city. Essential services – gas, electricity, water, trash removal – were better supplied in Baghdad than elsewhere. Privation in rural areas encouraged people to seek solace in their faith or seek out their tribe for support, while urban residents were able to continue their lives much as they had before. Though some of the segregated areas, especially the lower-class Shia district of Thawra (Sadr) City, connected with the re-energized identities, the mixed areas remained mostly secular, state-supporting places.

Bayaa followed these broader trends. Though its geography remained much the same over this period, the neighborhood experienced an increase in population and fortunes between

---

113 The concept of a weak central state devolving power to societal groups and its impact on institutions is well examined in Migdal, Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World, and Waldner, State Building and Late Development.


1965 to 2006. Originally designated as an area for workers, by 2003 it was firmly middle to upper middle class with professionals from a wide variety of backgrounds living there. Bayaa’s southeastern edge was home to large estates of rich families, and many of the traditional homes were replaced or renovated by more modern structures. The sanctions era created lags in infrastructure development, so the most common connection to the electrical grid was by pilfered wire. Poles looked like electrified Gordian knots and streets were crisscrossed with webs of wires. The market street spilled out of its traditional boundaries and occupied several blocks to the east, west, and south. The primary place to buy cars in Baghdad developed just south of Bayaa, as did a major bus exchange that serviced the entire city. Most importantly, it remained a highly diverse neighborhood. Sect mattered little and Sunni and Shia families lived side by side. Large mosques of both sects were well supported, as was the Coptic Christian Church. Even through the worst periods of the sanctions area, Bayaa was considered a “nice place to live”.

Following the 2003 invasion, Bayaa generally remained peaceful within an otherwise turbulent city. Sadr City was an epicenter of Shia power and quickly infiltrated by JAM, while

---

116 Wright, Interview with Author.
places like Ghaziliyah and Amiriyah became areas of focus for de-Ba‘athification and targeting AQI. By contrast, Bayaa maintained its reputation as being nice, quiet neighborhood. Early attempts to re-establish Iraqi institutions were made in Bayaa. There was an Iraqi Criminal Court, a police station with a jailhouse, ministry of education offices, and numerous schools. All were re-established quickly, giving a sense of a return to normalcy. The car market thrived without sanctions, and the markets were packed with people, stalls, and businesses.

People in Bayaa had a variety of backgrounds and professions. There were doctors, professors, and professional politicians that lived in the neighborhood and commuted to work in other places. Within the neighborhood, there were a variety of economic engines. In addition to the schools (that all required teachers, administrators, and staff), the Ministry of Education building employed a range of offices and bureaucrats. A university on the eastern corner of the neighborhood employed a large number of people on its relatively cloistered campus. Some of Baghdad’s institutional infrastructure was located in Bayaa, including sewer pump stations, an electricity transformer station, and a telephone tower with switchboard known as “the operator”. Bayaa was also home to individual enterprise. Residents shopped for food in the open-air markets that ran through the center of the car market and along the street that divided the car market from the rest of the neighborhood. There were individual farmers selling vegetables and herders selling live goats that, for a few more dinars, they would slaughter and butcher on the side of the road. The “shurja” (wholesale) market on the western side of the neighborhood sold bulk goods to small shops, everything from cases of Zam Zam (an Iranian Coke/Pepsi alternative) to bushels of rice. The retail market ran from one end of 20th Street to the other, where residents and visitors from the surrounding areas bought shoes, rugs, clothes, and phones.
Social life in Bayaa was vibrant and busy. Especially in the summer, the day started early, with people going to work and school by car and foot. By mid-day, activity slowed in the heat, only to pick back up as the sun went down. Small restaurants and cafes were ubiquitous across the neighborhood, at which men and boys would congregate and socialize well into the evening. Sports centered around soccer, from the well-maintained sports club to the make-shift goals and fields in the car market and on the eastern edge of the mulhālah. There was even a small amusement park to the south of the car market. Mosques were active as well, with adhan broadcast daily across the neighborhood. On Fridays, neighborhood life centered around the mosques and family – all shops were closed as people rested. The Coptic Christian church even had a small, dedicated following.

By the end of 2006 and into 2007, much had changed. The markets were mostly closed. Food was still sold in the car market, but pedestrians rarely lingered. Shops on 20th Street opened only for a few hours a day then closed for lack of business, if they opened at all. The car market was barren – security was so bad that owners moved their inventory out of the city for fear of theft or loss due to fighting. In the absence of business, it was soon rumored to be a place where militias interrogated and tortured people. Women began dressing more conservatively, wearing full abayas and niqabs, and people stayed in their homes after dark as a city-wide curfew was implemented. Schools were open, but many families feared sending their kids. It was heavily rumored that the guards at the schools were loyal to JAM, identifying Sunni children for capture. Public buildings were believed to be cache locations for JAM fighters.

Foreshadowing what was to come, the courthouse in the southeastern corner of the neighborhood was no longer the criminal court. It was now the headquarters of the Organization of the Martyr Sadr.
Phase I – Establishing Credibility (March to June 2007)

Latent Capacity – March 2007

As violence escalated in Bayaa, six groups possessed the latent capacity to compete for social control. The Iraqi state was represented by the local police stationed in the neighborhood and the Iraqi National Police – elements of the 1st and 3rd Battalions, 1st Mechanized National Police Brigade – who had been assigned to the area for approximately six months. Sunni residents, supported by organizations outside of Bayaa, attempted to defend themselves and
formed a loose coalition that sought to keep JAM from taking over. The Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq had a long-standing presence in the neighborhood, headquartered in a husseniyah. It maintained a connection with Badr-aligned National Police brigades.

OMS/JAM came to the neighborhood expressly to establish social control. The last group to enter the competition was D Company, 1-28 Infantry, working with the Iraqi Government, to halt the violence and establish social control themselves. During March of 2007, each had the latent capacity to compete for social control, but by the end of the phase, only two groups would remain.

Local Police

The local police in Bayaa, commonly referred to as Iraqi Police or IPs, were similar in many ways to the local police throughout Baghdad. As previously detailed, by 2007, the Iraqi Police were a mix of veterans and new recruits, almost entirely Shia. Upon joining the force, new recruits went through an eight-week training program which relied heavily on learning how to police while on the job. In Bayaa, there had been two police stations, but repeated attacks reduced these stations to one, which was located at the north end of the market street. Located in a three-story building on a corner of the widest street in the neighborhood, the police station had a bunker-like feel. Access to station was blocked by a mix of chains, barricades, and concrete walls guarding against bombs, RPGs, and small arms attacks. Inside there were offices, an arms room, and a detention facility: little more than a large concrete room with a barred door where people were held indefinitely. One D Co soldier described it as “hellish”.

---

117 A husseniyah is a Shia religious center where people come to mourn the Third Imam, Husayn ibn Ali, and perform other ceremonies throughout the year. Husseniyahs are not mosques, however they are considered religious sites and, in some places, serve as religious community centers. There were two in Bayaa, the Mustafa Husseniyah, and the Mosa al Baqir Husseniyah.
The station had approximately 40 police officers assigned, and these officers were evenly split between patrol police and facilities protection services, or FPS. The police rotated between guarding the station, patrolling the neighborhood, occupying checkpoints, and directing traffic. These officers—a mix of veterans and new recruits—had completed the centralized training course. There was an established chain of command, and officers were capable of providing basic law and order functions. The FPS provided fixed-site security at government infrastructure locations, such as the schools, the telephone tower-switchboard, and the sewage pump station, among others. There was no police training team assigned to the Bayaa station, so they operated independently of the coalition. There were few relationships between Delta Company and the local police, as the primary partnership was with the National Police. Despite their challenges, the local Iraqi Police had the organization to use violence effectively.

By March of 2007, however, the Iraqi government’s law and order functions effectively halted at the police level. There were no courts or judges left in Bayaa. The former Iraqi Criminal Court building at the opposite end of the neighborhood was now operated by the OMS. Though there were facilities in the police station for judges to work, none were present. If someone was arrested in Bayaa, the case was placed in a queue for the courts in the Green Zone. There they fell into the bottom of the priority of a court system that was already overwhelmed with detainees from coalition operations, trials against former Ba’athists, and anti-corruption investigations. At the height of violence, cases against coalition detainees were backlogged from weeks to months, while a case for someone accused of petty theft took longer. This circumstance severely limited the organizational capacity of the local police.

The local police were sufficiently equipped to have a distinct force advantage over the population. As with all the local police at the time, they were armed with Glock sidearms around
the clock, even off duty. Local police maintained AK-47s for patrols, though these weapons were used primarily for guarding the station. The police operated several patrol vehicles, including motorcycles, cruisers, and SUVs that they could use for checkpoints or roving patrols. They maintained a radio network to coordinate activity and assist each other as necessary. All local police wore uniforms, and many had body armor. The FPS were not as well equipped, with simple uniforms, AK-47s, and limited radios.

Despite their limitations, the Iraqi Police were an established organization in Bayaa. The station was always manned, and cruisers were parked at the end of the market street and at the corners of the main street that ran across the southern section of the neighborhood. The FPS generally manned their posts. Overall, though, the investment of the police was low. Their primary priority was survival, followed by making money. Stopping crime and maintaining order was significantly less important. While showing up for work meant one got paid, incentives were low to do anything that might risk one’s life. Similarly, the local police were Shia-dominated and had strong sectarian leanings. As D Co assumed responsibility for Bayaa, it was briefed that the local police were both Shia and JAM supporters. During meetings between D Co and informants, the FPS guards were consistently reported as “JAM”. Despite their potential, the local police were an organization simply seeking to survive.

National Police

The National Police in Bayaa in March were from the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 1st Mechanized Brigade. This brigade was originally designed as a unique element within the Special Police Commandos. The 1st Mech Brigade was designed to provide rapid response, fixed site security, and cordon and search capability in support of counter-insurgency operations.\textsuperscript{118}

\textsuperscript{118} Stuart W. Bowen, "Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience" (United States Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, 2009), 196.
The 1st Mech Brigade was stationed on the northern edge of A’amel at FOB Metal, a base that gave it direct access to the Baghdad Airport Road and to Bayaa. As with the other Special Police units organized under the MOI, this unit experienced heavy Badr infiltration in 2005 and gained a sectarian reputation through 2006.

In November of that year, just months after they were re-flagged as National Police, 1st Battalion was sent to Numeniyah, the National Police headquarters, for “re-bluing”. Highly sectarian units were first priority, and 1st Battalion attended with one of the most sectarian elements within the National Police, the 8th Brigade. 1st Battalion returned in December, purged of much of its Badr affiliation but retaining some of its sectarian leanings. Though 1st Battalion was nominally a more professional force, motivation and morale was low. This purge also impacted its ability to operate effectively, as breaking up trained and cohesive small units forced the battalion to rebuild almost from scratch. The 3rd Battalion had yet to re-blue, but the addition of American advisors severely curtailed its ability to act independently as a sectarian militia. The goal of re-bluing was to create a professional security force, committed to the central government and people of Iraq, and not to independent leaders or a sectarian agenda. In service of this long-term goal, re-bluing was a positive development. The short-term impact on unit effectiveness was significant and negative. The National Police were a shell of their former selves, still sectarian, and less capable of providing security in their assigned neighborhood.  

120 The irony of this decision is that by 2007, the central government was dominated both by SCIRI and sectarian agendas. Had the Ministry of Interior backed off its cleansing campaign in 2006, they theoretically could have avoided rebluing and retained a highly capable fighting force under the government they controlled. Wright, Interview with Author.
They were a weak partner for the US forces, and a poor extension of the central government to the neighborhood.

The Bayaa elements of 1-1 and 3-1 Mech, as they were commonly known, could fight effectively as an organization, albeit with limitations. They could conduct small unit operations, like running checkpoints and patrolling major roads to prevent IEDs, without supervision. To conduct mounted or dismounted patrols in Bayaa, they required US presence, partly to keep them on task and partly to prevent sectarian behavior. These units had taken up relatively permanent outposts on the edge of Bayaa – one in the north west, one in the south east. These checkpoints were continuously manned by ten soldiers and one officer and rotated personnel every 10-15 days. They also conducted joint patrols with Delta Company as requested, and at times conducted independent patrols, though these were rare in March. The assessment of the National Police Training Team assigned to them was that out of any group of 100, they had 25-30 quality soldiers. While their organizational capacity was higher than the local police, they were at least a year behind the Iraqi Army in their development.

The National Police were significantly better equipped than the local police. Every soldier carried an AK-47, multiple magazines, and body armor. Most wore helmets. In addition to their small arms, they carried RPGs as well as PKMs, RPKs (machine guns). Those guns were often mounted on the backs of their armored pickups, which, in the case of neighborhood patrols, were their primary mobility platforms. They also had a smattering of SUVs, usually reserved for their officers. Their force advantage over the population was significant.

In conjunction with the new coalition strategy, 1-1 and 3-1 Mech were charged with moving out of their bases to live with the population. The checkpoints, though on the periphery, did give them greater responsiveness to the population if they chose to respond and influence the
neighborhood. Yet, in almost every circumstance, they chose not to respond. Though their recent affiliation with Badr could have led to competition between the National Police and OMS/JAM, there was no apparent conflict between the two organizations. In Bayaa, the National Police appeared at least sympathetic, if not outright supportive, of JAM and the Shia expansion. It was also clear that there was little enthusiasm on the part of either battalion to challenge any militias, Shia or Sunni, head on. Fighting of any kind, except for self-preservation, seemed to be off the National Police’s agenda. They were outsiders, with little local knowledge, few local connections, and no hard incentives to protect Sunnis. They also lacked the sense of duty and commitment to principle that often accompanies professional militaries. These characteristics contributed to a low investment and risk averse behavior.

Sunnis
In March of 2007, Sunnis were under attack in Bayaa. One of their greatest challenges lay in the demographics of their community. As with most of the residents of the neighborhood, the Sunni population was generally well off: middle class professionals who commuted to work, prayed in the neighborhood mosques, and sent their children to the local schools. What Sunnis did not have, however, were strong community organizations, familial networks (i.e. tribes or clans), or collective skills around which they quickly coalesce and resist the Sadrist expansion. There was no trade union that could provide an existing chain of command and trust between members. There was no history of military service or relationships built in earlier wars. There was no social safety net for rapid communication and resourcing. Neighborhoods that successfully resisted Shia expansion had groups like this, but the Sunnis in Bayaa did not. In Bayaa, Sunnis were friendly, but they had no prior foundation for collective action.
The limited organization the Sunnis did have centered around their mosques. The communal ties that existed through these religious sites facilitated basic communication and coordination. Intelligence was passed to the leaders of the mosques, who then compiled and forwarded the information to others for action. Bayaa’s Sunnis’ ability to fight or conduct offensive operations was limited, so they sought help from others. One of the places that displaced Sunnis found refuge was the nearby neighborhood of Dora. Though home to some of the worst fighting in Baghdad at the time, Bayaa’s Sunnis established an enclave in Dora where they could organize themselves to counter the expansion from afar. They first organized themselves politically. Many were well educated English speakers, which allowed them to make fast inroads with newly arrived United States battalion and brigade commanders. They made a strong impression on US leadership, portraying themselves as community focused and supportive of the mission of the Surge. This gave the Sunnis influence over these units’ approach to JAM and the OMS and preferred the information and intelligence they passed along. Simultaneously, they reached out to Sunni militias, and in unconfirmed reporting, Al Qaeda themselves. By reaching out to these organizations, Bayaa’s Sunnis hoped to assemble the necessary tools to push back on the Sadrists themselves, maintaining their foothold in the neighborhood. This coordination gave the Sunni’s increased military capacity that they previously lacked.

External support was limited, but it was enough to give Bayaa’s Sunnis the tools to compete with JAM. Sunnis were able to get limited small arms into the neighborhood for defense. When a Sunni mosque was attacked, reporting indicated that the Sunnis effectively

---

121 Wright To be clear, intelligence reports were rarely exacting in their detail about the enemy’s organizational affiliation. In most cases, if they were reporting about Shia doing bad things, then they were JAM. If the report was about a Sunni, then he was Al Qaeda. In this case, regardless of the external group’s identity, they were getting help from a much more capable fighting group than what they could do on their own.
fought of their attackers using AK47s from the top of the building. Sunnis’ greatest tool to combat Shia expansion was the car bomb. On multiple occasions, Sunnis used car bombs in areas of Shia concentration in retaliation for the forced migration of Sunnis out of the neighborhood. Cars were driven in from outside the neighborhood and parked where JAM was known to congregate. Though suicide bombers were never used (a clear indicator of AQI), car bombs were common in the first phase.

The proximity of the Sunnis to the neighborhood in March was still close, as many families remained in the area. Certainly, the investment in the area was high, as Sunnis owned their houses and had lived in the area for some time, but the pressure from JAM was intense. Sunnis’ limited organizational capacity, tools, and eventually, lack of proximity outweighed their investment in the area, making it plausible but difficult for the Sunnis to effectively compete for social control.

SCIRI/Badr
SCIRI and their militant wing, Badr, had long standing ties to the neighborhood, but during March of 2007, their operations were at a standstill. Inside of Bayaa, there was one SCIRI-affiliated husseniyah (al Mustafa Husseniyyah) that seemed to be the organization’s headquarters. Though there were few reports of violence coming out of that location, the ties between Badr and the National Police indicate a significant organizational capacity. By March, the overt connection and sectarian operations of the National Police in support of Badr had been heavily curtailed. As previously mentioned, half of the 1st Mechanized Brigade had gone through rebluing (a process that seemed to constrain Badr’s influence) and the entire organization now had constant oversight by American National Police Training Teams (NPTTs). Though Badr previously had access to the organization and tools of the National Police, in
March this seemed to be waning. However, their continued proximity and long-standing investment in the neighborhood indicated they had the potential to be a competitor for social control.

OMS/JAM
The Sadrist expansion reached Bayaa at the first of the year, and by March, the organization’s operations were in full force. The Sadr Organization that migrated to the neighborhood was remarkably well-organized, with a clear hierarchy, chain of command, and distinct purposes for various subgroups within the organization.\(^{122}\) No other Iraqi group was so well-organized. The group was divided into two separate but equal parts. The first was the OMS. They first established an office in the neighborhood in the former criminal court house, declaring its arrival in Bayaa. Though the dates are fuzzy as to exactly when it became the headquarters of OMS, by March no one in the neighborhood called it anything else.\(^{123}\) The head of the OMS was the senior member of the group, and at this time, the senior authority in the neighborhood. The OMS leader was an established Shia, approximately 45-55 years old, and well respected within the organization and the neighborhood. Bayaa’s social services were under his direct control.

The second sub-group was JAM, and their structure was a bit more complex. The militia operations reflected the fragmented nature of the larger Sadrist organization at the time. There was a single JAM Commander assigned to run operations in Bayaa and A’amel, the neighborhood that bordered Bayaa to the west. Like the OMS leader, the JAM Commander was

---

\(^{122}\) Wright The organization as explained here was not known until much later in the year, but the information gathering process began immediately. Reports of this level of organization came in March and April, but confirmation of their accuracy did not happen until much later.

\(^{123}\) Wright The expression OMS described both the Organization and the Office of the Martyr Sadr, and OMS was used to describe both.
in his 40s, and though he was originally from Bayaa, he was now much more connected to the larger JAM enterprise than his local area. OMS/JAM had three primary objectives in the neighborhood, and each objective had its assigned OMS/JAM subgroup. The first objective was to force Sunnis to leave Bayaa. To achieve this, JAM put skilled fighters into the neighborhood who had participated in the expansion across the city. As they began operations in Bayaa, they recruited local young men, created mixed cells of external leaders and local foot soldiers to assist with the expulsion of Sunnis. They were generally armed with AK47s, pistols, and grenades, which were common tools in the intimidation and forced migration of families. In March, there were at least three separate cells working this agenda.

The second group consisted of external fighters who had specific skills to keep US forces generally, and D Co specifically, out of the neighborhood. Like the death squads, this group included multiple cells, all of which were led by an expert who recruited local men and then trained local men in the technical skills they needed to attack the coalition. Each cell was associated with a specific skill. In Bayaa, there was at least one cell that specialized in IEDs, or more specifically, explosively formed penetrators (EFPs), one cell that specialized in indirect fire (mortars and rockets), and a third loose group that seemed to specialize in RPGs and sniper operations.

The third group was responsible for logistics; specifically, bringing in the specialized weapons and ammunition necessary for the second group to conduct their operations.

---

124 Wright He had been captured by US forces approximately a year or two earlier, but subsequently released. Though it is unclear if he was a militant before he was captured, he definitely was when he was released.

125 Wright It never became clear if these were separate groups or the same. It was believed that there were one or two highly skilled snipers who were eventually caught. RPGs are not difficult to fire once shown how to do it, and Delta Company was hit with a lot of RPGs. The best estimate is that one or two specialists showed local fighters how to use them, and they then showed others.
specialist was brought in, and it's believed he coordinated weapons resupply, cache locations, and safe houses. Though rifles and pistols were ubiquitous in Iraq, mortars, RPGs, and EFPs were not readily available. The plates on a EFP were made of thick copper that was either milled from a block or cut and pressed to create the concave shape necessary to form the penetrator on detonation. The expert machining and the fact that EFPs and rockets were the hallmark weapons of Hezbollah were a clear connection to Iran. One Delta Company patrol was hit with an RPG-23 – a modern weapon designed to pierce tank armor from long distance. These weapons required external support to acquire. Furthermore, reporting indicated that this line of communication ran both ways. Fighters from Bayaa who demonstrated enthusiasm and capability were moved to Iran for training by this cell and eventual matriculation into similar specialized cells that moved across Baghdad, known as Special Groups.

Although the organization at this time was bifurcated between the OMS and JAM Special Groups, with no central authority controlling them, but they collaborated to achieve their goals. Both were embedded in Bayaa, making them highly proximate to the population. Both parts of the organization were executing the Sadrist agenda – expanding the social control of the organization – but their investment in the neighborhood was very different. The OMS was organized to expand Sadrist social control in Bayaa. Once established, the OMS’s goals were undoubtedly local, their goals long term, and their investment high. JAM Special Groups, on the other hand, were organized to advance the Sadrist expansion, moving from neighborhood to neighborhood across Baghdad. Their goals were more global, their time horizon in Bayaa was short, and their investment low. This distinction would drive evolution and change within the organization later, but in March these two separate units were aligned, working towards the same goal.
The final competitor for social control in Bayaa was Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry (D/1-28 IN). As part of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team of the 1st Infantry Division, Delta Company was responsible for implementing the new Surge strategy. This was a significant shift for the area. In the months leading up to the Surge, there had been US forces assigned to Bayaa. These forces were, however, inadequate to establish social control. A single infantry battalion was responsible for all of Rasheed District, which put a mechanized company (approximately 150 soldiers) responsible for all of West Rasheed. Though a small geographic area, only approximately 26 km², there were more than 300,000 Iraqis living there. This pre-Surge force took over in the fall of 2006, and immediately focused their efforts on the worst parts of their area of operations, Jihad, and then A’amel, where JAM was actively cleansing the neighborhoods. The cleansing in Bayaa had not yet begun, so the company spent little time there. When 4/1 ID deployed, it took over Rasheed, and 1-28 IN took over the Western half of the district. When this occurred, the number of boots on the ground rose tripled from 150 to 550 overnight.

Delta Company was assigned to Bayaa. As the smallest company in the battalion, it had 91 soldiers assigned, which were organized into a company headquarters and 4 platoons of 20 men each. Led by a lieutenant and a mix of noncommissioned officers and soldiers, the platoon was the primary maneuver unit of the company. Each platoon had 4 armored HMMWV gun trucks with medium or heavy machine guns mounted on top, which gave each platoon full mobility to conduct mounted or dismounted patrols in the neighborhood. Soldiers in the company were armed with a mix of M4 rifles, grenade launchers, light machine guns, shotguns, and pistols. They wore full body armor, carried communications packages, and had ready access to UAVs, attack helicopters, and indirect fire. The company also had access to the full
intelligence collection and analysis enterprise within the battalion and higher echelons. Every patrol had at least one interpreter with whom they could communicate with the population, and the company commander had one assigned exclusively to him. The company had access to funds to pay sources for intelligence, pay families for damaged property, and execute small and large emergency relief projects to improve the quality of life in Bayaa.

D Co made some deliberate decisions about the weapons it carried and how it employed them in the neighborhood to ensure discriminate use of force. First, the company went through extensive rules of engagement (ROE) training throughout its year-long preparation for deployment, and the training emphasized several key points. While nothing in the ROE limited D Co soldiers from defending themselves, defining and understanding what constituted a hostile act and hostile intent (the thresholds for such defense) was included in every training event. Target discrimination (telling the difference between hostile targets and civilians) was commonly included in training. Escalation of force – how to move from non-lethal to lethal means and when to do it – was routinely practiced, as was using the least amount of force necessary to reduce the threat. Bayaa, with its large and dense population, made all of these concepts difficult to execute. To increase their ability to apply force only where and when necessary, D Co made choices to avoid imprecise weapons. Though the company was equipped with MK19 Grenade Launchers (a weapon that fired 40mm high explosive grenades at the same rate and range of a machine gun), D Co replaced them with M240 machine guns. Similarly, D Co did not carry explosive munitions (like hand grenades), nor did they employ mortars or artillery. Though they were available, Hellfire Missiles from UAVs or helicopters were never employed. By choosing weapons that provided significant but discriminate effects, D Co avoided pushing the limits of the ROE to accomplish its objectives.
Unlike many units that had a long lineage, years of experience, and a stable of experienced leaders, D Co had only existed for a year prior to deployment. Its parent unit, the 4th Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division, activated in January 2006. All of the soldiers – the privates and specialists – were on their first assignment in the Army and had no prior combat experience. The non-commissioned officers had years of experience, but few had been to combat. The lieutenants were all on their first assignment as well, and none had deployed. The Company Commander and First Sergeant, the senior officer and non-commissioned officer in the company, were both combat veterans, but neither had experience with irregular warfare in a dense urban environment. Despite these deficiencies, the company was confident in its ability to fight and win. It had trained for one year on the vehicles, weapons systems, and tactics that they would use during the deployment, and the company members were looking forward to the test of combat. Though many company members were either approaching retirement or intended to stay in the Army for only a single enlistment, they viewed this deployment as their obligation as citizens to serve their country in time of war. This mindset contributed significantly to the morale, confidence, and cohesion of the unit.

The success or failure of D Co in Bayaa was not measured in tactical wins and losses, but in terms of benefits to the Iraqi population provided by the Iraqi government and its security forces. Guidance given to company commanders in March from each level of command reflected this long-term orientation. The Commanding General of Multi-National Force, Iraq, General David Petraeus, told D Co to “Establish security for the population; know the population in your AO.” The Corps stated that “we are buying time for the government until they can get on their feet”, and “we take a 15-inch step every day in this theater; leaders must provide perspective.” The Multi-National Division, Baghdad’s mission was to “significantly reduce
sectarian violence while standing up Iraqi Security Forces to allow the government of Iraq to succeed.” The 4th Brigade’s mission was to, among other goals, “facilitate the local government’s ability to deliver essential services to the population.” Finally, the decisive point for 1-28 IN was to “Win the support of the Iraqi citizens.”

The problem was that in March of 2007, there was no government in Bayaa with whom D Co could partner. The court building was taken over by the OMS, and the spaces for judges at the police station were empty. Citizens could get their ration cards for gasoline and oil from the government building known as the belladiyah, but JAM controlled access to and distribution of the cards. There were no elected officials or ministries providing governance, administration, or conflict resolution. Except for its security forces, the central government’s reach extended to the walls of the Green Zone, and not beyond, and in the case of Bayaa, those partners were weak. At least initially, if D Co was to achieve their commanders’ intent, it would do it on its own.26

Assessment

During March of 2007, there were six potential competitors for social control: the local police, the National Police, the Sunnis, SCIRI/Badr, OMS/JAM, and Delta Company. Each of these groups met the necessary conditions to compete for social control, but none so overmatched the others that it could seize social control outright. All six had the organization to impose violence at their discretion, to start it and stop it when they chose, and perform the complex tasks necessary to do the first two. Though these capabilities were enough to compete,

126 FM 3-24 calls for a force ratio of 1 counter-insurgent for every 10 people in a given area, but those numbers are widely considered to be poorly conceived and based on false assumptions. The best work on this topic is in James T. Quinlivan, “Force Requirements in Stability Operations,” Parameters 25, no. 4 (1995): 59. He assesses that during the post-World War II occupation of Germany, the United States sector had a ratio of 2.2:1000. The combined British-Malay forces in the Malayan Emergency numbered approximately 20:1000, well short of the FM 3-24 equivalent of 100:1000. It is worth noting that the total number of security forces – Iraqi National Police, local police, facilities protection services, and US forces – never exceeded 500 men for between 15,000-20,000 people in Bayaa. That makes for a respectable ratio of 25-33:1000. Take away the marginally competent Iraqi forces, and that ratio drops to 5-6.6:1000.
there was clear organizational stratification. The Sunnis were the least organized of the six
groups. They lacked a formal structure, a clear chain of command, and there was little organic
training within the population for these kinds of tasks. The local police were more organized
than the Sunnis, but their relative inexperience and lack of training at more than standard
policing tasks put them well behind the others regarding the competition for social control.
SCIRI’s organization for violence came through the National Police. Since they had no
independent militia at their disposal, successful competition for social control would be
contingent on that group adhering to a SCIRI agenda. Though the National Police had a highly
formalized structure, their re-bluing trip to Numaniyah reduced their organizational capacity
substantially from their mid-2006 apex. OMS/JAM and D Co demonstrated the highest levels of
organizational capability of any of the groups. Though they had very different structures, both
were optimized, at least in this phase, for applying violence in the neighborhood.

Each group possessed the tools to give them a marked advantage over the population of
Bayaa. All could bring lethal force to bear as they chose. SCIRI was the least capable, again
due to their dependence on the National Police. All of their lethal force was controlled by that
group. The Sunnis and the local police were equipped differently, but they both had more than
enough to influence not only the population, but other groups if they chose. The National Police,
OMS/JAM, and D Co all had enough firepower to apply lethal force to both the population and
other groups.

All six groups were proximate. Though by March the Sunnis were under pressure and
starting to leave, they were still in the neighborhood in substantial numbers. The local police,
the National Police, SCIRI, and OMS/JAM had both headquarters and units operating within the
neighborhood and could respond to any situation at their discretion. D Co did not have a
headquarters in the neighborhood, but with their patrol schedule, they had a continuous,
responsive presence just outside the neighborhood at CP 543 and a near continuous operational
patrol within the neighborhood.

Finally, all groups were invested in the neighborhood, but to varying degrees. The local
and National Police were least invested. They were ostensibly compelled by professional
responsibility to provide security for the population, but in practice they demonstrated a much
stronger inclination to self-preservation. The Sunnis and SCIRI were well established in the
neighborhood and enjoyed long-standing ties as residents and members of the community. As
relative newcomers, OMS/JAM and D Co demonstrated their investment with their long-term
orientation for the neighborhood: OMS/JAM sought to expand the social control of their
organization across Baghdad permanently, while D Co’s objectives were squarely focused on

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIRI/BADR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMS/JAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D/1-28 IN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: Initial Assessment, 15 March 2007*

From this initial assessment, OMS/JAM and D Co were the primary competitors for
social control, but neither held an outright advantage over the other. Both held other advantages
in important, but not deterministic, ways. Though OMS/JAM was relatively new to the area,
they successfully recruited from Bayaa's young male population to increase their ranks. By
doing so, they tapped into the existing family networks that are common in any city
neighborhood, but especially so in Bayaa. It was notably common for operational cells to
employ brothers and cousins from the same family in Iraqi culture. Family ties are strong, and
by recruiting locally, a group's appeal and potential supporters was significantly higher than if
their fighters were all outsiders. Furthermore, the leadership of the OMS was local as well.
Though the operational cells were the primary actors in the first phase, the leadership of the
social services wing of the OMS enjoyed a strong reputation within the community. Finally, this
local composition gave OMS/JAM much greater local knowledge of the geography,
demographics, sympathies, and needs of the population than D Co. Though this disparity would
evolve over time, initially OMS/JAM held a significant information and intelligence advantage
in Bayaa.

Though D Co did not enjoy any such ties, they did have significantly greater resources
than OMS/JAM. While OMS/JAM had to generate income, D Co had hundreds of thousands of
dollars at their disposal to spend in Bayaa. D Co soldiers were much better paid, fed, and
supported (logistics, medical care, etc) than their JAM counterparts. If a vehicle was blown up, a
replacement was usually available within 24 hours. If a soldier was evacuated from theater,
replacements were quickly found. If fighting exploded in the neighborhood, quick reaction
forces could be sent, UAVs could fly overhead, or helicopters could come on station within
minutes. Over time, these other advantages would contribute to both the successes and
shortcomings of both groups.

Furthermore, D Co’s resources were independent of the local population. Other groups
who wished to establish social control needed to generate income from the area to support their
operations. They had to immediately implement some form of extraction, whereas D Co did not. As a third-party intervener, the benefits offered to the population came with lower demands from the group, giving D Co a marked advantage in the exchange. Entering into a reciprocal relationship with OMS/JAM required an exchange, not only of information, but also of taxes and, in some cases, logistical support. D Co asked only for information and intelligence in return, giving them a significant advantage over OMS/JAM.

Other groups that may have competed in other places simply did not meet the threshold to be competitive in Bayaa. Religious leaders in Bayaa, either by force or by will, aligned themselves to one of these groups and filled a supporting role. Over the next year, a mosque’s leadership or supported population never attempted to challenge one or all of these groups for social control. Tribes did not hold sway in Bayaa either. Though there were individuals who were known as sheiks, they followed other groups’ dictates. Finally, there were no social organizations or professional ties that, in other areas, served as a basis for collective action.

Bayaa’s history and demographics meant there were few ties with traditional structures that existed in other places. From its incorporation in the 1950s, Bayaa had always been a place organized around socio-economic factors, rather than those of tribe or religion. Similarly, Bayaa was never designated as a retirement community for a specific profession: there was little shared history or set of skills that could have formed the basis of a militia. Finally, the heterogeneous makeup of the neighborhood and relatively comfortable financial standing of its residents made it unnecessary for communities to develop organic social service networks during the 1990s and

127 Wright, Interview with Author. For example, in Ghaziliyah, the neighborhood was populated almost entirely by retired Army officers. Unsurprisingly, they quickly formed militias and fought effectively against JAM expansion.
after the invasion. When the violence hit, civil society fragmented and atomized down to the family level. This enabled other groups to compete for social control over the population.

Collective Activities – 15 March to 15 June
Phase I was a period of intense competition for social control in Bayaa. This period was not decisive – social control was not fully established by the end – but it was the period where each groups’ ability to credibly commit to the neighborhood was tested and resolved. By the end of this phase, OMS/JAM and D/1-28 IN were the only viable groups from which the population could choose a provider of social control.

OMS/JAM
By March, JAM had the initiative and was fully implementing its strategy to take control of Bayaa. Their actions followed a broad tactical plan that OMS/JAM had successfully used in other places: establish an OMS, bring experienced fighters in, recruit local fighters, expel the Sunnis, and move in new residents. They had four distinct but supporting lines of operation – eliminate the Sunni community, deny US forces access, resettle the neighborhood with Shia, and establish the OMS/JAM as the sole provider of the population’s needs. Successfully executing this plan would lock in OMS/JAM control over Bayaa that would translate into political support in the future.

JAM’s primary focus was the elimination of the Sunni community. To do this, JAM employed a combination of threats, targeted killing, and demonstrations that clearly communicated to the Sunni community that they were not only unwelcome, but if they stayed, they would be eliminated. There were at least three JAM units in Bayaa responsible for the forced migration.28 These groups had caches of pistols, rifles, and grenades distributed amongst the population.28

128 Wright. To be clear, these were not hard distinctions. As time went on, members of these groups expanded their skill sets and targets, attacking US forces and Sunnis alike, but their primary focus at this time was evictions.
the neighborhood’s mosques and public buildings. Units would gather at specific places (e.g.,
the al Kawthar mosque, the martyr sign, at the south end of 20th street) to begin their work. They
would then load into cars and patrol the streets, overtly demonstrating their freedom of
movement and lack of fear of any other group. Once a family or house was identified as Sunni,
they used either spray paint to mark the house with an X, or left a note wrapped around a bullet.
This meant the family had 48 hours to leave. If the JAM unit returned, any Sunnis they found
would be kidnapped and tortured. Sometimes victims were brought back to Bayaa and executed
in the street with a bullet in the back of the head. At other times they were executed away from
the neighborhood, only to be returned to the neighborhood and dumped in a prominent place.
The torture was brutal, and the spectacle was intentional. Bodies were heavily bruised, evidence
of electrical shocks and burns were common, bones were broken, and knees were drilled out with
power tools. The message was clear: JAM meant what it said and would follow through on its
threats.

The second line of operation was to deny US access to the neighborhood. If JAM could
keep US forces out of the neighborhood, or at least limit their access, they could more quickly
achieve their goal and consolidate their gains. JAM incorporated a variety of tactics with their
specialized cells. They established and maintained limited points of access into the
neighborhood. When the violence broke out in 2006, most populations attempted to harden their
neighborhoods by emplacing barriers and obstacles at the ends of streets leading in and out.
Bayaa’s grid-pattern streets meant there were over 70 vehicle access points. In March, less than
10 were open, the rest blocked by piles of dirt, cinder blocks, concrete barriers, or wire. These
obstacles were assiduously maintained, and JAM benefited from this arrangement. Not only did
this keep out other militias, but it also meant that there were only a handful of places Delta
Company could enter on patrol. JAM established a network of people who would overwatch the entrances and alert the area when they came, either by “flipping pigeons” (releasing or scaring off birds from the rooftops), calling key leaders, or having Shia mosques play certain types of music. If they could not physically deny access, they could at least control it enough to know (most of the time) exactly where D Co was and what they were doing.

JAM made strategic decisions about where, when, and how it attacked D Co, employing specific weapons to gain maximum effect on both D Co and the population. Broadly speaking, JAM used precise weapons and tactics inside the neighborhood and imprecise or explosive weapons and tactics outside. JAM’s most dangerous and casualty producing weapon was the EFP, used it extensively during this phase on the routes that bordered Bayaa. The logic of this combination of weapon and tactics had multiple conceptual advantages. First, if Delta Company took serious casualties from EFPs, it might stop coming in the neighborhood. Though it seems unlikely that a US unit would just quit, it did happen. For example, a company commander in another battalion was relieved of command it was discovered that he stopped patrolling his neighborhood after a series of especially brutal attacks. 129 Secondly, detonating multiple IEDs along the same route caused US forces to restrict use of the route. This would give D Co access points to the neighborhood and JAM greater freedom of movement. Third, setting EFPs off near local police or National Police checkpoints or positions would sow distrust between US and their nominal partners. Finally, striking an IED often caused units to wildly overreact, especially if soldiers were wounded, maimed, or killed. Untrained units (such as supply convoys) would often fire indiscriminately into the neighborhoods surrounding the detonation. Trained units

129 Wright. For weeks, he had his platoons pull off to the side of the road and falsely call in checkpoints inside their area of responsibility. When found out, he was promptly relieved.
might sweep through the area to try and catch the trigger man, kicking in doors and searching houses. Units of both types who lacked discipline allowed themselves to be overcome by emotion might start questioning and detaining anyone they could get their hands on. Any of these reactions reinforced JAM’s narrative of the United States being the enemy and pushed the population closer to the OMS/JAM.

Inside Bayaa, JAM used more precise techniques, a variety of sniper or sniper-like attacks, to gain similar effects as the EFP. As a Delta Company patrol moved into the neighborhood, early warning networks alerted fighters, who would pay attention to the patrol’s movements and location. If the patrol stopped in one location for an extended period, fighters converged on the location and took positions to take a shot at a D Co soldier. Once they made their shot, they either hid or quickly left the area. As trained snipers in an urban environment are nearly impossible to counter, capture, or kill, they can have a demoralizing effect on soldiers. If this line of operation was successful, it might cause D Co to make fewer patrols, avoid areas where snipers were active in the past, and over react to future attacks. Just as with successful EFP attacks, the risks were low and the potential payoffs high for JAM. If they could keep D Co on the defensive, worried about EFPs and snipers, JAM could to continue to evict Sunnis, increase the antipathy of the population towards US forces, and lock in the OMS as the provider of social control.

The other two lines of operation – provision of services and resettling Shia – fell under the OMS. As mentioned previously, the increased violence effectively shut down most normal

---

130 Wright. On multiple occasions, JAM attempted to use RPGs in the neighborhood, but with only limited success. Early on, D Co successfully engaged and killed two RPG gunners before they got their shots off. They adapted, hiding until a patrol passed them and then popping out to shoot, but limited engagement distances and unpredictable patterns of movement made this technique similarly unsuccessful. They eventually reserved RPGs for external attacks.
activity in Bayaa as the population atomized. Aside from schools, little was open in the
neighborhood. The market was barely functional as most stores were closed. Food was
available, but electricity and sewage were intermittent at best. Trash piled up on the streets.
Rationed items, like cooking oil and fuel, were intermittently available. The OMS quickly set
about taking control of these key resources. By March, they fully controlled the Bayaa gas
station and black-market fuel sales. They repaired and fueled generators to make up for the lack
of power from the Baghdad grid. They secured and guarded key infrastructure to insure it
remained as functional as possible. They even paid people to pick up trash.

The most important resource provided by the OMS was housing. Though the program
would not get into full force until months later, starting sometime in March, Shia began
migrating into the neighborhood. Enticed by nice homes and a Shia-friendly militia, families
from across Baghdad began coming Bayaa. They simply had to go to the OMS to receive a
house and a small amount of cash. At this time, it was unclear whether the OMS charged rent,
but there was no doubt that the OMS was perceived as a benefactor by the new residents of
Bayaa.

Local Police

While OMS/JAM was executing this complex and deliberate strategy to establish social
control, the local police pursued a strategy of survival and apathy during this first phase. Despite
their latent capacity to be a challenger for social control, the local police chose to align
themselves with JAM, perform their required duties, and maintain a low profile in the
neighborhood. Though the local police occupied check points at the southern end of the
mulhallah (neighborhood) and occasionally conducted patrols, they did not challenge JAM.

131 As far as D Co could determine, there were no conditions attached to receiving a home. The only qualification
was to be Shia.
From their station at the north end of 20th Street, they maintained security on their station and avoided confrontation with JAM. Local police controlled traffic at major intersections, kept cruisers at the south end of 20th Street, and generally did the things that the police were notorious for in Baghdad: taking bribes and payoffs. More importantly, they took no action to prevent or hinder JAM’s strategy for Bayaa. According to some reports, they helped it succeed. Early on, when JAM attacked a D Co patrol, a local police vehicle was observed by helicopters evacuating JAM fighters. In one video clip, watched well after the fight, a local policeman was seen handing a rifle out of the vehicle to another fighter as wounded JAM fighters were loaded in.

Questioning of the police yielded little, but they were not seen actively supporting JAM in a fight with D Co again.

The facilities protection service was more heavily implicated in JAM operations, but it is not clear that they were active participants as opposed to passive observers. Informants claimed that the guards at the bus station, the phone company switch board, the public works building, the sports club, and the schools were all “JAM”: they supported JAM operations, and they guarded their caches. Despite these reports and repeated searches and questioning, Delta Company was never able to establish that any of the FPS guards had participated in fighting or otherwise actively supported JAM. In total, the local police and FPS were clearly sympathetic to JAM’s agenda. Whether they were active participants or passive observers mattered little: they sidelined themselves as an independent group in the competition for social control of the neighborhood.

132 Of course, all claimed ignorance when questioned.
National Police

The National Police had greater latent capacity than the local police to compete for social control, but they were plagued by even greater conflicts of interest within their organization. 1-1 and 3-1 Mech had significant history with the Badr Organization, but, as previously mentioned, much of that loyalty was broken during re-bluing. This left a more generalized sympathy for the Shia cause, which manifested itself in Bayaa as support for JAM. The National Police also faced increasing pressure from their training team and from Delta Company to act on behalf of the Iraqi government, which required them to push back against a movement and organization (JAM) that much of the unit, at least on an ideological level, still supported.

These conflicting pressures caused the National Police in Bayaa to effectively opt out of competition. Though in early February there were reports of the National Police attacking a Sunni mosque on their own, this type of behavior did not occur once Delta Company began operating in the neighborhood. No longer penetrated by Badr, there were no indications or reports of the Bayaa’s National Police acting as a unit against the Sunnis. There were isolated reports of individual NPs and NP vehicles supporting JAM intimidation of Sunnis, but nothing on the scale of the previous year. While they occupied two checkpoints in the neighborhood, they concerned themselves mostly with looking for car bombs, rather than using them as a staging base for operations against the Shia expansion. The only time when the National Police conducted patrols within the neighborhood was when Delta Company accompanied them.

Trust between the National Police and D Co was low. The National Police were worried about getting attacked by JAM when they were with D Co, and D Co soldiers worried about NPs calling JAM snipers onto their location. Before every patrol, D Co collected cell phones and made NP soldiers ride in US vehicles to increase the costs for JAM-aligned NPs calling in an
ambush. At night, when National Police vehicles saw a coalition vehicle, they switched on their flashing lights. Despite claims that they were doing it simply to let US forces know they were there, it was interpreted as an early warning device to let everyone in the area, including JAM, know that D Co was on patrol. Despite the antipathy between the two groups, the National Police appeared to be content taking the minimum necessary actions to avoid open conflict with either D Co or JAM.

SCIRI/Badr

SCIRI and Badr’s strategy in Bayaa reflected a rational recognition of their limitations. With the loss of the National Police as the operational arm of their agenda, the Badr Organization was stranded without a way to compete for social control. Though they did not abandon the neighborhood entirely, they chose a strategy of patience and observation. They maintained the Mustafa Husseeniyah and secured themselves there, challenging neither JAM nor D Co as those groups pursued their strategies. In the end, they effectively chose to wait and see who won, then pursue a political alignment to maintain their influence. In this phase, they did not compete for social control.

Sunnis

Isolated and under pressure, the Sunnis of Bayaa attempted to fight back against their eviction, but without much success. Their strategy had three lines of operation: resist eviction, get outside help to weaken JAM by attacking it, and collaborate with US forces to gain sympathy and improve the coalition’s chances of halting the JAM expansion. Early on in JAM’s operations, Sunni mosques were both JAM targets and rallying points for the Sunni resistance. On more than one occasion, groups of Sunnis fought off JAM units that attacked Sunni mosques. As the evictions and attacks increased in numbers, successful defense was more difficult. The Sunnis then looked to outside organizations for help.
The first place they looked was to the US forces in al-Rasheed. In mid-March, a doctor from Bayaa approached the new US Brigade and Battalion Commanders with information regarding the threat posed by JAM and the plight of the Sunnis in Rasheed. His intelligence and command of English gave him immediate credibility with these leaders. In little time, he rose to become a defacto advisor to both commanders and a spokesperson for those who had been displaced from West Rasheed generally, and Bayaa specifically.

Delta Company had a similar encounter within the first few days of operations in Bayaa. While on patrol, the company commander for D Co was flagged down by a man outside of the largest Sunni mosque in the neighborhood. After some back and forth discussion, the man revealed himself to be the senior leader of the mosque, and that he had information about the bad things going on in Bayaa. Over a series of meetings, he provided detailed information on JAM – names, vehicles, license plate numbers, homes, cache locations, and activities of JAM forces in Bayaa. Though not all of it was accurate, it was a vast amount of information that was unlikely collected by one person working in a mosque. Over time, D Co came to believe this man was part of a larger network of people who were attempting to help the US forces fight JAM.

They pursued assistance from other groups as well. They also reached out to networks in Baghdad that were fighting JAM on their own. Homemade explosives and car bombs made their way into Bayaa, targeting the OMS, JAM, and locations where JAM fighters congregated. Not all were of high quality, but one cell was reported to have attacked three IA/IP checkpoints, and five more bombs were on their way. As more pressure was applied, the Sunnis pushed back on their own. They could not wait for D Co to help them.

---

133 It was never clear if these other groups were pure AQI cells or just affiliated Sunni militias, but the effect was the same.
Delta Company, the last group to join the competition, attempted to establish itself as a credible competitor for social control from the start. While the overarching strategy prescribed clear, hold, and build, the first step was for Delta Company to establish proximity inside the neighborhood. In their first weeks in Bayaa, D Co maintained a near-continuous presence in the neighborhood, building a basic understanding of the environment – its terrain, its people, the threats, the way the enemy was operating, and the issues it was facing. It had five primary areas of emphasis – securing the population, assisting Iraqi security forces, establishing neighborhood governance, restarting essential services (electricity, sewage, trash, etc), and encouraging economic development.

Initially, D Co focused most heavily on the security line of effort, attempting to put themselves between Sunni and Shia and stop the violence. Unlike most companies, Delta Company did not establish a combat outpost. Tasked with maintaining security 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on the highway interchange at Checkpoint 543, establishing and securing a combat outpost would have left little combat power available to the company to conduct operations inside the neighborhood. Though they had no place to “live” inside the neighborhood, they created a similar effect through constant patrolling. D Co established a near-continuous patrol schedule, maintaining at least one platoon on patrol inside the neighborhood while a second secured CP 543 on the northern corner of Bayaa, able to react in an emergency inside the neighborhood if necessary. This approach satisfied the intent of the Surge strategy, and it sent a clear message to both the population and to OMS/JAM that Delta Company intended to compete for control of the neighborhood.
D Co attempted to counter JAM’s expansion in three ways. The first was deterring attacks by the presence of overwhelming firepower and forces. Though mounted and dismounted patrolling in the neighborhood took many forms – talking with people in the market, meeting with sources, mapping religious sites, meeting with the local council – at its core it sought to deter JAM from attacking Sunnis by demonstrating strength. The company was sending a message that it was now costly to do bad things, and JAM was no longer free to do as it wished. If deterrence failed, then the company used its second approach, response. If attacked, or if JAM attempted to attack others, D Co reacted aggressively to capture or kill those responsible. In concept, there were many benefits to this approach. By successfully fighting back when attacked, it escalated the costs for JAM and discouraged future attacks. It demonstrated to the population that D Co was a credible user of violence and capable of taking on the strongest group in the area. Lastly, by minimizing collateral damage when responding to an attack, it demonstrated that the company was willing to take risks to protect the population from the violence caused by JAM. The third and final approach was targeting. With enough information about specific individuals, groups, or locations, D Co could conduct targeted raids to capture fighters or clear locations of their weapons, explosives, and ammunition used to attack US forces and other groups. Often such operations would yield intelligence that led to follow on targets.

Though initial results from all three approaches – deter, respond, target – were difficult to assess, but they were at best mixed. While it is nearly impossible to determine how many planned attacks against Sunnis did not occur due to US presence, it is safe to say that JAM no longer had full autonomy in the neighborhood. Their intelligence network and early warning system did, however, give them fidelity on the location of D Co patrols at any given time.
Though it may have made them more cautious, it certainly did not shut down their operations. Attacks against Sunnis continued, sometimes while a patrol was in a different part of the neighborhood. Though there were instances of patrols responding to an eviction in progress, those were rare. They had no effect on the most common type of eviction, instances where Sunnis left of their own accord after receiving a night letter or red x on their door.

When JAM attacked D Co patrols, their use of precision fire within the neighborhood made it difficult to close with the attacker and capture him. Initial attacks were less precise (in March and early April, machine guns and RPGs were used on more than one occasion), and D Co effectively engaged the perpetrators. Within a month, however, JAM abandoned those tactics for the more effective precision attacks. Finally, though a relatively clear picture of JAM at the start of competition is presented here, D Co’s understanding of this structure was extremely limited through most of this phase. Raids conducted against fixed sites looking for caches (homes or public buildings) yielded little. Tips given on the street about locations of “IED factories” and JAM fighters turned into wild goose chases. Though the company received several detailed reports very quickly, they needed corroboration of the intelligence before they could target an individual. Even with corroboration, determining exactly where the individual was, and therefore determining where and when the raid would take place, was difficult at best.

The other four lines of effort (Iraqi Security Forces, governance, essential services, economics) were received increasing attention in other phases as security improved, but during this phase, efforts and effects were limited. As mentioned previously, the National Police were the primary Iraqi security force in the neighborhood. During this phase, they were a severely

\[\text{\cite{Wright, Interview with Author. After a period of time, it was clear that some members of the population were accusing others in the neighborhood of bad behavior to entice a D Co raid against someone with whom they had a feud.}}\]
limited partner. Their sectarian background, their limited operational capability, and the lack of trust with D Co made partnered operations problematic at best. They were effective at fixed site security, but they added little value to any other operation. While conducting patrols in Bayaa, D Co platoons would routinely pick up two to three NP vehicles to join them, but they proved to be both operational and intelligence liabilities on more sensitive operations, such as raids.

D Co quickly determined that economic and essential services improvement was correlated with improvement in the security situation. Most shops in Bayaa were either closed entirely or open only on a limited basis. They faced a variety of threats. JAM could exploit their business for security payments or use as a cache site for their weapons. Sunni car bombs could destroy their merchandise or kill them. Gun battles between Sunnis, JAM, D Co, or any combination of the three might have the same effect. The largest car market in Baghdad occupied the southern end of Bayaa, but by March most of the cars were gone and dealerships closed. 20th Street Market, the widest street in Bayaa and home to over 100 business was mostly shuttered. The shurja market operated on a limited basis. When asked why, owners of the shops responded to D Co's questions with the same general answer: until security improved, shops would stay closed.

Essential services were under similar strain. Baghdad's electric grid had been barely functional for years, but large industrial generators had taken on some of the burden. As JAM moved into the neighborhood, they quickly took control of the generators and the substation that controlled electricity, limiting access to the Sunni population. Trash piled up on streets and sewage breaks went unrepaired because workers feared going into the neighborhood. Gas was controlled by JAM. Poor security meant little could be done along this line.
D Co did invest significant effort into the governance line of effort in this phase, but it proved to have minimal effect. When it first took over, D Co was introduced to the Bayaa Neighborhood Advisory Council. This 8-person body had a chairman, assistant chairman, and committees for education, youth services, widows and orphans, women’s issues, and economics. One of the members was a sheik, another was a professor of political science, and all were residents of the neighborhood. D Co initially understood this council to be the elected leadership of Bayaa and part of the government of Iraq. After the first few meetings, it became clear that this was not true. This council, like similar ones across Baghdad, had been assembled US forces in the years prior to the Surge as local advisors to whichever US company or battalion was responsible for the neighborhood. They were not popularly elected, nor were they connected in any way to the actual government of Iraq. In the case of Bayaa, they had little influence or sway with the population, and they rightly feared for their own safety from the JAM expansion. Though they did act with good intention, their initial requests included a generator for the NAC building, identification cards and pistols for NAC members, and control over all contracts executed in Bayaa. Though NACs in other neighborhoods had become effective city councils, the NAC in Bayaa had little potential to become such a body, at least in the short term.

In summary, the collective activities of each group varied, and none adopted a strategy that could lead to social control. The local police were pursuing a strategy of predation and not competing. The National Police were coercive but only minimally protective, only doing so to stay in the favor of stronger groups. SCIRI recognized that without the National Police, they could not challenge the other groups in the neighborhood and abstained from competition, while

---

Sunnis attempted to protect themselves from cleansing. OMS/JAM and D Co employed the most ambitious strategies. OMS/JAM attempted to establish social control, while D Co sought the support of the population against their rivals. Both sought to both coerce and protect the population, as well as distribute goods and services for their benefit. Since neither attempted adjudication, success for either group was unlikely.

**Group Interaction – March to June**

JAM’s attacks had begun in February, but they were intermittent, mostly in the form of drive-by shootings and intimidation. By March, they had become much more organized, coming to Bayaa from Aamel, moving from west to east. They increased their numbers through local recruiting, started moving at night in larger groups, and distributing eviction notices against specific locations. As D Co began operations, the Sunnis were still actively resisting the expansion, though they were under increasing pressure. Reports and sightings of eviction and migration were increasingly common, and D Co started to find dead bodies – six in the last two weeks of the month – in the neighborhood. While the Sunnis passed intelligence to D Co through their mosque leader, they also fought back on their own. Two car bombs detonated on the southern border of the neighborhood with few casualties, but they left no doubt as to who sent them and why.\(^{136}\)

Delta Company began with a high volume of patrols, focusing efforts on understanding its area of operations and establishing a security footprint in the neighborhood. Building on intelligence from both its higher headquarters and from informants (the Sunni intelligence in particular), D Co also began targeted operations. After just a few days in the neighborhood, D Co raided the house of the suspected leader of JAM in Bayaa. Though he was not there that

\(^{136}\) The aftermath of one such car bomb can be seen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-F0YwvY6ET8.
night, the company was engaged in an extended direct fire fight with JAM. Cordon and search 
operations of the reported cache sites (the gas station, schools, the NAC building) came up 
empty. On patrol, D Co platoons began receiving sporadic, though ineffective, gunfire. In the 
last two weeks in March, D Co received 11 separate direct fire contacts from JAM, and 7 IEDs 
detonated around the neighborhood.

Violence escalated in April. JAM operations increased dramatically in boldness, scope, 
and effectiveness. Firefights occurred between Sunni and Shia mosques. Sunni houses were 
attacked more often, night letters increased, and kidnapping started occurring in daylight. Sunni 
car bombs continued to hit Shia parts of town.\(^{137}\) In one instance, two police trucks and three 
civilian vehicles moved together, carrying AK47s and RPGs, chanting anti-Sunni slogans as they 
drove in the neighborhood. In another, armed JAM fighters went to one of the neighborhood 
middle schools, walked past the FPS guards, and pulled the son of a prominent Sunni out of 
class. The boy’s father found out almost immediately and quickly flagged down a US patrol. 
After he relayed what happened, the platoon went to the school and questioned guards and 
administrators but received little useful information. Another platoon canvased the 
neighborhood, looking for the vehicles reported to be involved. After an hour or so of searching, 
the platoon found the boy, stripped to the waist, running down a street. He had been beaten and 
his hands burned with a clothes iron. His father was overjoyed to see him, and they quickly 
returned to their home. That afternoon, the family was seen in a car full of their possessions 
leaving the neighborhood, never to return. They were lucky. 30 bodies were dumped in Bayaa 
that month.

\(^{137}\) Mustafa Mohammed, “Truck Bomb Kills 12, U.S. Rushes Troops to Iraq,” \textit{Reuters}. April 2, 2007, 
Fighting with D Co increased as well. Direct fire attacks in the neighborhood became a common occurrence, and a trained sniper began targeting D Co gunners in their turrets. EFPs increased, triggering multiple raids to hunt the cells responsible. D Co began taking casualties on a regular basis, but also inflicting damage on JAM fighters who directly engaged or maneuvered on D Co patrols. When able to identify the attackers, D Co usually succeeded in eliminating the threat. Though JAM remained highly active, D Co patrols did disrupt their operations. Reporting indicated that JAM gathered in public less and often dispersed when alerted to the presence of a D Co patrol. JAM members, both from the neighborhood and from other areas, slept in different houses every night, often outside of Bayaa. In total, there were 55 discrete attacks in Bayaa in April.

A series of events occurred at the beginning of May that precipitated the end of the Sunni resistance in Bayaa. On 6 May, in an attempt to push back hard against the forced migration and killing of Sunnis, a car bomb detonated at the southern entrance of the 20th Street market, a fully Shia area of the neighborhood that was busy with people shopping for food and groceries. 33 people were killed and over 70 wounded, a massive loss of life. JAM did not immediately respond, however. The bombing occurred while the formal “clearing” of the clear-hold-build strategy was underway in West Rasheed. An entire brigade combat team was sent to the district to systematically move street by street, actioning all available intelligence about anti-coalition activity and clearing neighborhoods of weapons and fighters. Unfortunately, the western part of the district could not be cleared all at once. As such, many JAM members slipped out of West Rasheed before the clearing operation reached their areas. When the operation began on 02 May

in Furat, the westernmost neighborhood in the district, most of JAM was gone from Bayaa by the
time the bomb went off. As a result, the chances that the car bomb killed anyone other than
civilians is highly unlikely.

Despite the significant amount of combat power injected into West Rasheed, JAM in
Bayaa was largely unaffected by this operation. After spending two days clearing Bayaa street
by street, little was found. A few AK47s were scattered across the neighborhood, and someone
had left behind three firebombs (grenades strapped to bottles of diesel). Even the OMS was
mostly empty, with little more than a Glock pistol, some Sadrist propaganda, and an assortment
of Iraqi Police uniforms. The operation did not one significant find. The clearing unit had recent
intelligence on Al-Qaeda in Iraq, Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (AQIZ VBIED)
cell expanding their operations into Bayaa. As the US unit began clearing, they pinpointed the
IED cell’s location and raided the premises. They detained 5 individuals with plenty of
incriminating evidence. One of the detainees was the Sunni mosque leader, the one who sought
out D Co in March and provided the intelligence that jumpstarted their targeting. He was taken
to the detention facility for his role in the car bombings, never to return. From that time forward,
there were no more major Sunni attacks in Bayaa.

Following the clearing operation, JAM returned to the area and D Co resumed its
operations, with neither side gaining or losing much from where they stood before.140 D Co
continued to conduct raids, disrupt operations, and fight through sniper attacks and IED
ambushes. Sunnis, on the other hand, mostly abandoned the neighborhood. Killings continued
but tapered off by the end of the month. Two abandoned Sunni mosques were filled with

140 David S. Cloud and Damien Cave, “Commanders Say Push in Baghdad Is Short of Goal,” The New York Times,
explosives and imploded. To protect the last two Sunni mosques from the same fate, the National Police were directed to put continuous security on them. They did this by establishing a checkpoint outside the Al Rahaman mosque (where the recently-arrested Sunni had been the leader), and by patrolling down the street to the Fatah Basha on a regular basis. On 8 June, the Fatah Basha mosque was blown up as well, with JAM capturing the collapse of the minaret on video from a rooftop. The National Police on guard were not at the mosque when it exploded, and again, they did not see who conducted the attack. A few days later, D Co patrols noticed significantly increased numbers of Shia flags, banners, and propaganda. Cars were driving up and down the streets playing distinctly Shia songs, and people seemed to be in a good mood. When asked why, they responded, “This is our neighborhood, and we are celebrating.”

Assessment: End of Phase I.

The period between mid-March and mid-June sorted which groups were credible competitors for social control in Bayaa. Of the six groups who had the latent capacity to compete, only two – OMS/JAM and Delta Company – used this capacity to compete for social control. The others, despite their potential, did not.

Local Police, National Police, SCIRI/Badr, Sunnis

The local police’s collective activities never progressed past predation. Despite their relatively large numbers, training, and weapons, they chose not to compete, instead using their ability to control violence for their own gain. They maintained their position and capability to use force, but they never used it for anything else beyond taking bribes and extorting people. Though some local police were sympathetic to JAM, and there were certainly members of the police who supported their operations, the data does not seem to indicate that the local police

---

141 Schemm, “US Struggles with Baghdad Sectarian Turf Wars.”
142 Schemm.
were a subordinate element of the Sadrist organization. They retained their independence as an organization, but they did not challenge JAM or D Co for social control.

Though much more capable than the local police, the transition to National Police from sectarian Special Police Commandos made them a weak competitor for social control. Had the violence begun in Bayaa immediately following the Samarrah Mosque bombing, it is more likely that they would have competed for social control. At that time, their organizational capabilities were high, and they were invested in the security of Baghdad. From their inception, these brigades used their control of violence to both coerce behavior and provide protection for their constituencies. By March of 2007, however, the reorganization and reassignment of these units had hobbled their combat effectiveness. The process was undoubtedly necessary for long term reform, but in the short term it resulted in less organizationally capable, less-invested units. As such, the National Police in Bayaa maintained their coercive capabilities but only marginally progressed to protection. Their checkpoints were effective – Sunnis generally feared the National Police and avoided interacting with them. Their reputation from 2006 certainly contributed to the population complying with their orders whenever they were given. Though it is reasonable to assume that the National Police checkpoints did have some impact on the Sunni VBIED and car bomb cells, it is impossible to determine how many planned attacks were deterred by their security. Like the local police, the National Police clearly held sympathies for the Shia cause generally and for JAM specifically, but during this phase there is little evidence that suggests there was support of JAM or SCIRI/Badr at the organizational level. The combination of NPTT advisors, new leadership, and partnership with D/1-28 IN kept the National Police an independent organization, but one that only provided a marginal level of protection and no social control.
SCIRI highlights the importance of latent capacity, specifically, the organization and tools to perform violence, in the competition for social control. The organization was well established in Bayaa, and had existed as an organization for much longer than the OMS/JAM. They controlled one *husseniyah* and, depending on the reporting, up to two mosques. Their leadership was well known and respected in the area, and their message seemed to better align with the demographics of the neighborhood. The Shia in Bayaa were not lower-class outsiders and migrants from the country where Sadr’s message resonated the strongest. They were firmly middle-class professionals, where Sistani’s message and agenda enjoyed much greater support. Yet, SCIRI/Badr did not compete. With the deconstruction of the Badr-aligned Special Police Commandos and their transformation into National Police, SCIRI lost its ability to perform the collective activities necessary to compete against the Sadrist and the US for social control. At the beginning of the phase, it seemed that since the entire brigade had not been re-blued, it might support a SCIRI/Badr play for social control. This quickly proved to not be the case. Despite their strong political organization, proximity, and investment in the neighborhood, without an arm that could credibly control violence, SCIRI was forced to stay on the sidelines in Bayaa.

As with SCIRI, Bayaa’s Sunnis quickly lost the latent capacity to perform the collective activities they desired. As a result, they were forced out of the competition for social control. Despite their high initial proximity and investment in their neighborhood, they were unable to develop the organizational capabilities and acquire tools fast enough to compete when JAM arrived in Bayaa. They were never able to effectively perform the collective activities necessary.

to protect themselves as a population. It is possible that if an organized Sunni militia had existed prior to the establishment of the OMS and the expansion of JAM operations into Bayaa, March and April would have been much more competitive. Rasheed neighborhoods to the south (Saydiyah) and east (Dora) had such organizations that successfully stalled JAM expansion into those areas. The Sunnis in Bayaa had no such capacity. By the time the Sunnis were capable of mounting some resistance in the late April and early May timeframe, they had lost their proximity. They were no longer competing, just retaliating from a distance. The elimination of their remaining access to the neighborhood, the mosque leader in the north, effectively ended their fight.

OMS/JAM and D/1-28 IN

By the end of the phase, the OMS/JAM and D/1-28 IN had established themselves as credible competitors for social control. Each demonstrated their latent capacities to use violence and the investment to pursue social control. They both successfully demonstrated their ability to both coerce and protect. Both also engaged in distribution in the phase, though neither saw it as the primary focus of their operations. It is unclear whether JAM engaged in adjudication, but D/1-28 IN did not. By mid-June, popular choice was leaning towards the OMS/JAM, but they had not fully established social control.

The OMS/JAM demonstrated its coercive capabilities most clearly through its cleansing and forced migration of the Sunni population. The message to the population was simple – do what we say, or we will kill you – and they demonstrated the will and capacity to use violence to achieve their objectives. These compellent demands changed people’s behavior and established JAM’s coercive power in the neighborhood. It is worth noting that these demands were neither indiscriminate nor false. They were targeted at a certain kind of person, and if that individual
complied with demands (i.e. they left the neighborhood), then that person could live. If JAM was merely predatory, or if they lacked organizational control, then mass executions would have satisfied their desire to remove Sunnis from the neighborhood. Rather than marking houses or sending notes, they could have simply entered the houses, executed everyone, and taken their things. They were not, instead employing coercion to change behavior. Though 30 Sunni bodies in Bayaa is a large number, it is useful to consider it against the entire Sunni population. By best estimates, Bayaa was approximately 70% Shia and 30% Sunni (with a small Christian population as well). If the total population of the neighborhood was estimated to be between 15,000-20,000, then the total Sunni population was somewhere between 4,500-6,000. 30 dead bodies, though terrible, is still a miniscule percentage of the population that had to be killed to convince the rest of the Sunnis to leave.

The OMS/JAM also protected the population – according to their propaganda – from both the Sunni terrorists and the coalition bent on exploiting the people of Iraq, Baghdad, and Bayaa. JAM helped the population harden the neighborhood against outsiders, building and maintaining the improvised barricades that blocked almost every street in and out of the mulhallah. Access control which they co-opted was a visible demonstration of their claim of protection against car bombs and US forces, while also providing the added benefit of early warning and monitoring. Their decision to generally limit their use of explosive weapons outside the mulhallah and precision systems inside also contributed to the protection narrative. Not only did it limit potential collateral damage on their part but encouraged over-reaction and indiscriminate violence on the part of whichever US forces were attacked.

Their provision of protection was not nearly as successful as their coercion. Though it is safe to claim they were able to deter some Sunni attacks, there were a steady stream of car
bombs that detonated in and around Bayaa during this phase. While it is doubtful that the population blamed anyone other than the Sunnis for the attacks, it did not help JAM's case as the provider of protection for Bayaa. Second, JAM was not always able to limit the methods used by its fighters. Though IEDs were not used inside the neighborhood, RPGs and mortars were, causing several civilian casualties. D Co responded with first aid for civilians on multiple occasions, making sure there was no doubt in the people's minds that JAM was responsible.

Finally, JAM failed to goad D Co into major over-reactions to contact and casualties, and they never were able to create a major incident of collateral damage at the hands of D Co. Of the reputations that people ascribed to JAM, protector was not at the top of the list.

It is difficult to determine just how much distribution and adjudication occurred during this phase. It was clear that JAM had control over the Bayaa gas station and the fuel black market, electricity distribution, and the vacant homes in the neighborhood, but how much of these resources were being directed towards Bayaa residents as opposed to restricted from Sunnis is unclear. Most reporting indicated that the purpose of JAM's control over the gas station was to target Sunnis. JAM fighters walked up and down the lines of cars and checked IDs, looking for specific names. Sunnis on their list were kidnapped, or, according to other reports, killed inside the gas station. The black-market sellers in the neighborhood operated under JAM's license, but for most of this phase there was so much violence that these sellers appeared only intermittently. Secondly, though JAM controlled many of the generators and the distribution switches for power, reporting indicated they were using that control to limit power to Sunnis rather than to power Shia houses that would otherwise be dark. Third, migration of new families into the now vacant homes did not begin in earnest until the end of the phase. Again, violence between Sunni and Shia during this period made Bayaa a difficult place to be, no matter
one’s sect. As the Sunni population dwindled, however, more and more Shia arrived. Finally, there was no evidence or reporting of the OMS conducting adjudication or settling disputes between members of the population during this phase. Under the conditions of heavy violence, it seemed that the population was more concerned about avoiding the groups battling for control altogether, rather than looking to one to adjudicate interpersonal disputes.

One final note about the OMS/JAM in this phase: despite being relatively new to the area, this phase undoubtedly demonstrated the organization’s investment in Bayaa. First, they expended significant resources throughout the phase in the neighborhood, both in terms of organizational energy, lives lost, and resources consumed. Second, they did not simply expel the Sunnis, they attempted to eradicate their presence in the neighborhood. Three of the four Sunni mosques were destroyed by explosives, and the fourth only survived by the entirely Shia National Police taking up residence inside it. These mosques, or what was left of them, were draped with Shia flags and banners, as was the rest of the neighborhood. All remnants of a diverse population were replaced with that of the Shia. Finally, the OMS began actively moving Shia into Sunni homes, attempting to lock in the sectarian advantage they enjoyed. This was not a temporary conflict – the OMS intended for the change to be permanent, and for the neighborhood to belong to Sadr. They had no intention of leaving.

As with the Sadrist, D/1-28 IN established itself as a credible competitor for social control. Its coercive power was not nearly so violently displayed as the OMS/JAM, but it was there nonetheless. When D Co soldiers or leaders directed the population to do something, the population complied. When told to disperse, they dispersed. When told to get down, they got

---

144 Burns and Elsen, “Several Mosques Attacked, but Iraq Is Mostly Calm.” Notably, after the second Samarrah mosque bombing in June, the Al Kawthar mosque was burned again, despite being rubbled in May.
D Co entered homes, conducted searches, and detained members of the population as necessary, and the population had little ability to resist. In one instance, a man came out of his home, clearly upset with D Co conducting a search nearby, brandishing an AK 47. Despite numerous orders to get down and to drop his weapon (in both English and Arabic) he kept coming, eventually firing two rounds at D Co's senior non-commissioned officer. D Co returned fire, and the man lost his argument. It was the only time D Co's coercive power was directly challenged.

D Co put significantly more emphasis on providing protection for the population. In fact, it was their primary objective. Ingrained not only in the new counterinsurgency doctrine, but also stated as a primary task at every level of command from the theater to the company. D Co got out on the streets, walked amongst the people, and exposed themselves to significant threats in hopes of establishing a relationship of trust with the people of Bayaa. When given the chance, D Co patrols moved to the sound of gunfire, gained and maintained contact with fighters, and gradually found some success targeting those that participated in violence. The company also displayed restraint in accordance with the ROE, avoiding indiscriminate fire and large caliber weapons systems, attempting to reduce threats with the least amount of force necessary. They built barricades, checked cars for explosives, and arrested those that threatened the population. After a few weeks, Bayaa was blanketed with tip cards – mass produced business cards with the name and phone number of the company commander, offering rewards for information that led to the capture of people who threatened the safety of the population.
Despite its best efforts, D Co was unable to protect the Sunni population well enough to prevent their departure. Though the company had some success targeting JAM in the first phase, their intelligence network was still developing, and their tactics were in the process of evolving to more effective targeting techniques. If D Co had arrived two months earlier, or if the Sunnis could have held on for another 60 days, perhaps D Co could have stabilized the neighborhood and retained some of the Sunni population. Unfortunately, the Sunnis could not wait that long. At the end of the phase, and in the transition to the next one, the population D Co needed to protect was Shia, which they did increasingly well.

D Co did not engage in adjudication, but distribution was beginning to occur. D Co conducted a few humanitarian distributions, and initiated contracts for generators, trash clean up, and electrical grid refurbishment. The Company Commander carried $2000 on his person at all times: $1000 to pay informants on the spot for information, and $1000 to pay for damages done in the course of an operation. As stated before, the primary focus was improving the security situation, so progress in these areas was limited during this phase, but there were efforts underway to improve it during the next phase.

Perhaps most importantly, D Co demonstrated their investment and commitment to Bayaa during this phase. Simple actions made a difference. The previous unit responsible for
Bayaa was a mechanized infantry company. For security and force protection reasons, they operated with at least two Bradley Fighting Vehicles on every patrol. These tracked vehicles carried a lot of firepower and were resilient against RPGs and IEDs, but they were tall, wide, and destructive. Their turrets pulled down electrical wires. Their tracks tore up streets and, at best, dented car doors and broke windows. They were restricted to the major streets, which limited the reach of their operations. D Co, operating out of HMMWVs, was able to mitigate many of these issues. Though it put D Co at greater risk, getting out of the vehicles and walking, clearing wires rather than pulling them down, and avoiding damage demonstrated a commitment to the neighborhood. The company’s willingness to fight was not lost on the population, nor were the casualties the company sustained. In this phase, there were 149 discrete attacks in the neighborhood. The company had lost 10% of its men, wounded and evacuated out of theater or killed. 2nd Platoon took so many casualties that it had to be reconstituted with men from other companies. At least one vehicle in every platoon had been destroyed. Yet, D Co remained in Bayaa and continued to compete for social control.

Popular Choice: End of Phase I

By the end of Phase I, none of the groups had performed the collective activities sufficient for social control. Of the six, D Co and OMS/JAM had progressed the furthest up the hierarchy, but neither performed adjudication. As a result, the population made no definitive choice between the two groups. Given the level of violence and the lack of behaviors that establish a reciprocal relationship, there are no indicators that the population was willingly supporting JAM. While it was clear that they were not supporting D Co, they were not actively resisting the company either.
In fact, there were instances in this phase where members of the population came to D Co for help. Most frequently, it was Sunnis coming to D Co patrols to protect them as they went back into the neighborhood to retrieve belongings or check on their homes. In other circumstances, it was for more routine problems. Part of D Co’s initial message on patrol was that the company was there to protect the population and help the neighborhood. In both chance meetings and in more formal settings, people complained about things being stolen from their houses, businesses taken over by other people, and the streets not being safe from robbers and criminals. In each case, D Co would listen to the problems, promise to fight against JAM, and direct them to the local police for help with crime. By the end of the phase, these requests stopped coming.

Support was flowing to JAM, but it was difficult to say if the support was coerced or not. JAM was caching weapons and equipment in the neighborhood in a variety of locations. When they fought with D Co, no one on the street was pointing out where the fighters had run or where they were hiding. Though both Sunni and Shia began using the tip cards and developing as sources, their information was relatively limited. D Co’s information and intelligence lagged significantly behind OMS/JAM, regarding the population as well as their adversaries. JAM certainly benefited from an extensive early warning system. It is difficult to determine if lookouts were JAM members watching the entrances or civilians voluntarily providing the intelligence due to a reciprocal relationship. Regardless, the information asymmetry between D Co and OMS/JAM had a significant impact on group effectiveness, in both directions. OMS/JAM was certainly in the lead, but social control was not established.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Proximity</th>
<th>Investment</th>
<th>Collective Activities</th>
<th>Popular Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Police</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Predation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Police</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Coercion, min protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnis</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIRI/BADR</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMS/JAM</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Coercion, Protection, Distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D/1-28 IN</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Coercion, Protection, Distribution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Phase I Assessment, 15 June 2007**

### Phase II – Competition (June to October 2007)

By 15 June, there remained only two groups who could credibly compete for social control: OMS/JAM and D/1-28 IN. For the next four and a half months, these two groups fought for social control. As the focus of JAM Special Groups started to migrate towards other districts, the OMS took the lead in directing operations in Bayaa. Though attacks against D Co remained important, they invested heavily in social service provision during this phase, using JAM to support social services rather than the other way around. D Co focused their efforts on protection of the population, believing that an improved security situation would lead to social control. Distribution of resources was a secondary, yet still important, effort. By the end of October, despite severely weakening Special Groups’ capabilities, effectively targeting JAM fighters, and improving overall quality of life in Bayaa, D Co had lost the competition for social control to OMS/JAM. Their provision of social services, specifically their control over the rule...
making, enforcement, and adjudication within the population proved to be decisive in the 
OMS/JAM success.

Latent Capacities and Investment – 15 June

In just three months, only OMS/JAM and D Co retained the latent capacity and 
investment to compete for social control. Once they were forced to migrate out of Bayaa, the 
Sunnis lost the proximity necessary to credibly compete. SCIRI, despite its natural strength in 
the area, lost its tools and much of its organizational capacity to control violence when the 
National Police were broken up and purged of their old leadership. Without control over its de 
facto militias, SCIRI lacked the ability to challenge JAM or D Co. By choice, it moved to the 
sidelines of the competition. The status and goals of the local police remained much as it was in 
the first phase. They remained a fixture in the neighborhood, but their investment was limited to 
individual members’ survival. They chose to limit their activities to predation. The National 
Police unit changed from the Mechanized Brigade to the 5th Brigade of the 2nd Division, but there 
was little appreciable change in their capacity. As with the previous unit, they were well armed 
and could execute collective security activities from the multiple checkpoints and outposts they 
occupied around the neighborhood, but their investment in the neighborhood was low. Though 
their collective activities were more beneficial than their predecessors, their overall effect on 
security was small in this phase.

OMS/JAM

The OMS/JAM underwent several changes to its latent capacities between June and July 
of 2007. These changes supported the organization’s adjustment of their strategic approach 
during this phase. First, the focus of the larger JAM Special Groups enterprise shifted to 
Saydiyah, the neighborhood to the immediate southwest. As a result, many of the Special 
Groups leaders began using Bayaa not as an operational area but as a staging base, an
intermediate stop on their way southwest. Most of Special Groups’ operations in Bayaa ceased. In their place, the local JAM members who filled a supporting role over the last three months transitioned into leadership roles. As JAM in Bayaa took on a more local identity, targeted killings dropped considerably, while advanced attacks on US forces – RPGs, EFPs, and mortars – remained relatively constant. Special Groups had effectively trained their replacements and supplied them with the tools necessary for the local JAM units to continue the fight against D Co. Finally, and most importantly, as Special Groups moved on, the OMS and its lines of operation moved to the forefront of the Sadrist Organization in Bayaa. While JAM retained its autonomy to attack US forces broadly and D Co specifically, the OMS in Bayaa increasingly directed JAM’s behavior within the neighborhood. Local objectives and functions moved to the forefront of Sadrist activities in this phase.

With the OMS in ascension, a more structured organization emerged. The OMS leader, Mohammed, was now at the head of the organization. His office and staff were at the OMS, and he effectively managed and controlled Sadrist business in the neighborhood. There were four sub-departments: administration, logistics, money collection, and operations. Administration and logistics controlled the management of the OMS’s civil service functions. Money collection and operations were local JAM members who now implemented the OMS’s policies, decisions, and directives. Unlike the Special Groups, these new JAM leaders were younger, less skilled, and less experienced. Though capable, they were less organized and less

---

145 Wright, Interview with Author. The primary signal for this was intelligence reporting. Though there was a significant increase in the informant network, sightings of key leaders of the IED, EJK, and indirect fire cells dwindled to almost nothing. Intelligence collection from the battalion level and higher indicated that the former targets were no longer in the area as well.

146 Wright. The structure outlined here was pieced together by D Co throughout the phase, but the changes were effective as of the June/July timeframe.

147 Wright. All the names have been changed.
professional than previous JAM leaders. Money collection was run by Fadhil “Dauria”, or Fadhil “patrol”, a nickname given to him as the leader of the group that patrolled the neighborhood, collected money, and enforced the OMS’s rules. The Operations group was led by Mustafa, a local JAM member who had proved himself an effective fighter over the last three months under Special Groups. He was in his twenties, brash, and cocky. The group he led was comprised of family members local to Bayaa and of similar age and personality. He had two other lieutenants who ran their own cells, and between the three of them, they were the primary JAM presence in Bayaa. They served two purposes. First, and along with Fadhil, they patrolled the neighborhood and acted as JAM muscle and enforcement. Second, they retained the responsibility and authority to attack D Co to weaken their ability to challenge the OMS for control. Based on reporting, however, it was never entirely clear if the specific orders to attack D Co came from Mohammed or were the operations group’s desire to continue their Special Groups mission. Whether operating at the behest of Mohammed or tolerated by him as they pursued their own agenda, the effects of JAM operations benefited both the OMS and JAM’s anti-American sentiments.

OMS/JAM’s investment in this phase remained high. Despite the departure of Special Groups, the remaining organization was intent on establishing long term social control. The restructuring of their organization, their application of violence to regulate the behavior of the population, and their continued expenditure of resources demonstrated a willingness to bear costs. During the early weeks of Phase II, all remnants of Sunni culture were removed, and the migration of Shia families into the neighborhood was at full pace. By the end of the phase, few Sunni houses were empty. Nearly all had been filled by Shia families new to the area.
D/1-28 IN

D/1-28 IN remained much the same in Phase II as in Phase I, but there was one adjustment to the company’s task organization that impacted their proximity in Bayaa. In the first phase, D Co had exclusive responsibility for CP 543, which meant that at any given time a platoon was occupied with security in that area. Though that platoon was initially utilized as a quick reaction force for Bayaa, after two IEDs detonated when the platoon was away, it became a fixed site security mission. Factoring in the effects of the rotation, D Co effectively had only one platoon free at any given time; two if it surged forces.¹⁴⁸ By Phase II, those requirements were now less onerous and distributed across the battalion, increasing both forces available to the company and flexibility of employment. This gave D Co a greater presence in the neighborhood and enabled an increased rate of deliberate and targeted operations against JAM in Bayaa.

Though this tactical reallocation of requirements freed up greater combat power, D Co still lacked a viable Iraqi partner with whom they could address governance and administrative issues within Bayaa. By the start of Phase II, the NAC’s weakness was apparent to D Co. The violence in Phase I clearly discouraged them from asserting themselves as leaders, but there was no indication that the group possessed the necessary skills and authority to influence the population and do productive things on their behalf even if the violence ceased. The Iraqi government and its nascent institutions remained absent as well. Their most obvious, and perhaps only function was the distribution of ration cards, yet this action was co-opted and directed by OMS/JAM. The local police and National police remained at least sympathetic to

¹⁴⁸ Wright. Platoons were on CP 543 for 8 hours a day, which created three shifts. 2 additional hours were added prior to the shift for prep, inspections, and orders. 2 hours were added at the end for maintenance and prep for the next day. If D Co did nothing else, that resulted in 12 hours on, 16 hours off BEFORE any operations were conducted in Bayaa. Patrols in Bayaa were conducted before, after, and in between rotations on CP 543, extending platoons to 16-22 hour days, with no days off. This put severe constraints on the operational capacity of the company, and in the long term, proved unsustainable.
JAM and were wildly perceived as sectarian rather than impartial representatives of the state. Finally, courts and judges remained absent from the neighborhood, meaning that any state-run dispute resolution was relegated to the courts in the Green Zone.

In Phase II, D Co did begin to realize the benefits of establishing itself as a credible competitor for control. After three months of fighting, the company had a much better understanding of both the population and OMS/JAM. It began to comprehend the vast challenges facing the population and their daily struggle to survive. As such, D Co was able to better direct its efforts across all its lines of operation, and it began to tailor its behavior to better address the needs of the population. The behavior, strengths, and vulnerabilities of OMS/JAM started to come into focus for D Co as well, not only through their repeated interactions, but also through technical intelligence and the emergence of local sources. Technical and human intelligence allowed D Co to more effectively target OMS/JAM leadership, fighters, and supply lines, while interaction allowed D Co to modify its tactics to reduce the effectiveness of JAM’s attacks. Perhaps most importantly, D Co developed relationships with local leaders who began to provide the company commander with an outline of the history, dynamics, and politics of the neighborhood. These relationships provided a wealth of knowledge that drove more learning and adaptation than any other source of information. Though D Co’s information and intelligence still lagged that of OMS/JAM, the gap shrank in this phase.

D Co’s investment in Bayaa remained high, though many had lost the cautious optimism that permeated the company in March. In Phase I, D Co had taken more casualties than any other company in the brigade. This took its toll on the men. Many advocated for a more muscular approach in the neighborhood, such as responding to any attack with overwhelming violence, aggressively searching houses, and increasing detentions of people with little cause.
Some wanted to “send a message” to the neighborhood that if D Co was attacked, the company would counterattack against anyone who was near. They felt that the company ought to push the rules of engagement to their limit.\footnote{149 Despite the popular perception of a highly restrictive ROE in Iraq, there were few unnecessary constraints on D Co’s ability to use discriminate force during its deployment. Wright; Wright.} Though these approaches were rejected, the possibility of D Co shifting to a more coercive, rather than protective, approach in Bayaa was nearer than many expected it to ever be. As the phase continued, tactical adaptation and effective targeting led to fewer casualties. Though morale improved, fatigue from continuous operations remained.

At the start of Phase II, while there were four groups with the latent capacity to compete, only two also had the necessary investment to pursue social control. In Phase I, SCIRI lost control over the National Police, and with it their ability to use violence. Without it, they self-selected out of the competition. When the Sunnis lost their proximity, they fell below the minimum latent capacity to credibly compete. Both the local police and National Police had the organization, tools, and proximity to compete, but their lack of investment, manifested by their strategic choices during Phase I, demonstrated their unwillingness to bear the costs of competition. D Co’s increase in combat power at the end of Phase I increased its organizational flexibility and proximity, placing it well above the threshold to compete. However, D Co still lacked an adequate Iraqi partner with whom they could address basic governance and administrative issues. OMS/JAM’s reorganization enabled it to broaden its activity to encompass more than violence, increasing its latent capacity as well. Finally, in Phase I, both D Co and OMS/JAM demonstrated their high investment in the neighborhood: D Co by its willingness to take casualties in pursuit of its long-term goals, and OMS/JAM by its eradication...
of all things Sunni in the neighborhood and the resettlement of Shia. Therefore, only OMS/JAM and D Co met both necessary conditions to compete in Phase II.

Collective Activities – 15 June to 31 October

With the OMS in control of Sadr’s operations in Bayaa, the strategic approach shifted from establishing dominance over the neighborhood through violence to establishing control over the neighborhood by providing necessary services for the population. In the first months of the phase, there was a clear shift in the use of violence by JAM. First, murders decreased dramatically from 30 in April and 19 in May to 7 in June and 9 in July. They dropped below five a month for the remainder of the phase. Attacks on US forces, specifically IEDs, RPGs, and small arms fire, remained relatively constant throughout the phase. As Saydiyah became Special Groups’ primary focus, there was a spike in attacks originating from Bayaa in August and September, though by the end of the phase, that threat was eliminated.

OMS operations expanded well beyond violence in this phase. Though social service provision was always a part of the Sadrist strategy, it moved to the fore in June and July. The OMS became the manager of formerly Sunni property in the neighborhood. As families migrated into the neighborhood, they went to the OMS to find a house. One was issued to them, along with some money to help with the transition. After a month or two to get established, the family was responsible for paying rent to the OMS for the home. If someone wanted to open a shop, one could be rented from the OMS in a similar fashion. Those with existing shops paid a protection tax every month to the OMS, collected by Fadhil on his patrols. At the beginning of the phase, control of the gas station became less about identifying Sunnis and more about

---

150 Wright, Interview with Author. Again, D Co did not achieve this level of clarity until later in the phase, but these operations were underway at the beginning of July.
generating revenue. Despite gas subsidies, JAM members at the station charged cash for gas at the station. They also skimmed profits off the black-market sales of gas on the streets.

Neighborhood improvement was controlled by the OMS as well. In addition to the taxation system above, the OMS controlled contracting in Bayaa. Any contractor who wished to do work on coalition projects in the neighborhood had to get approval from the OMS to submit a bid. This insured that local work fell under the OMS purview, and the OMS received a kickback. When NGOs or the coalition independently contracted workers and sent them into the neighborhood to do work, such as street cleaning, trash removal, or painting, these workers were compelled to give up a portion of their salary to the OMS or be kicked out. As a result, the OMS could either take credit for improvements to the neighborhood made by the coalition or profit from coalition contracts on the side.

Most importantly, the OMS established a system for rule making and enforcement. First, by establishing their patrol and collection operations, the OMS established a monitoring mechanism on the population. Fadhil and his group were effectively the OMS’s beat cops, moving throughout the neighborhood and insuring the people were acting in accordance with the OMS’s rules. Mustafa and his cells provided similar functions when not attacking D Co. Violators were either dealt with on the spot or brought to the OMS for questioning. Secondly, the OMS provided this enforcement mechanism to people in Bayaa for interpersonal dispute resolution. By July, the OMS established a court system within the neighborhood. If any member of the population had a problem with another, they could go to the OMS to get it solved. Starting at four in the afternoon, OMS leadership would hear claims from individuals. The person with the complaint made arguments and presented evidence against the perpetrator. As necessary, the operations division would bring the accused to the OMS to defend themselves.
After hearing the evidence, the OMS would make a ruling for punishment and/or recompense. The operations division would insure each party met their requirements to satisfy the ruling. Given their well-earned reputation for application of violence, the system was remarkably effective in maintaining order.

D/1-28 IN continued to focus on protecting the population during this phase. As security for the population improved, they began increasing the distribution of goods and services to Bayaa. After three months of hard fighting, D Co adapted its tactics – its daily patrolling, deliberate operations, and targeting – to more effectively counter JAM operations in the neighborhood. Patrols focused their efforts on expanding the company’s understanding of what went on day to day in the neighborhood. With less overall violence, D Co could focus operations on developing relationships with various influential people in Bayaa (religious leaders, local political figures), mapping essential information (migration patterns, electrical systems, nascent Iraqi government structures), and conducting reconnaissance of JAM associated buildings and targets. These operations enabled D Co to more effectively direct its collective activities for the benefit of the population.

Intelligence collection increased during this period as well. Through the tip card program, D Co began to build a stable of neighborhood informants that could provide a variety of human intelligence. Usually meeting in the Green Zone or talking over the phone, D Co began to build a picture of how the OMS and JAM operated, their patterns of life, and the effect that D Co operations were having. Some of it led to raids (and when successful, informants were well paid), but most filled out information about the organization and the nature of life in Bayaa
beyond those doing violence. This provided invaluable to D Co as it looked to expand its influence beyond the use of force to establish social control.\textsuperscript{151}

Deliberate operations centered around disrupting the OMS/JAM operations in the neighborhood. Sometimes there were searches of buildings reported to contain caches, other times they sought to catch JAM members conducting illegal operations in the open. For example, JAM’s use of the gas station to generate revenue was well known, so D Co started showing up at the gas station at random times and searching the workers for guns and connections to JAM. Though D Co never caught JAM members in the act, reporting indicated a decrease in extortion. By September, JAM’s presence there had waned to negligible levels.

Targeting increased during Phase II as well. As D Co’s human intelligence network expanded, the company was able to feed the battalion with ground level information that drove higher level collection across a wider spectrum of intelligence assets. Battalion level analysts helped D Co refine the structure of the OMS/JAM organization, pull in additional sources that corroborated ground level reporting, and open new leads for striking JAM. These assets helped D Co find and fix members of JAM in Bayaa, leading to an increasingly successful cycle of raids in the neighborhood. Over time, D Co became less reactive to JAM. Though the company was still periodically attacked, the opportunity to kill or capture the perpetrator was no longer limited to the attack itself. If D Co was unable to catch or kill the attacker at the point of contact, it combed its source network, monitored reporting, and eventually put together the information necessary to capture the person who carried out the attack at a later time.

\textsuperscript{151} The identity of these tipsters varied. Some were Sunnis in hiding, others were Shia disaffected by JAM’s violence and behavior. Others were cultivated by the personality of the company commander’s interpreter. Though it is possible that informants were at least sympathetic, if not working directly for SCIRI, none of the tipsters presented the level of coherent and pooled intelligence presented by the Sunnis earlier in the year.
Over this phase, D Co spent considerable effort on two additional initiatives. The first was a series of projects to improve quality of life for the population of Bayaa. The brigade funded a $74 million contract to support reconstruction efforts across West Rasheed, including Bayaa, to clear trash, build fences, install power generators, and fix sewage pipes. The company also began an initiative to fix broken power transformers within the neighborhood to insure more even distribution of power across the grid. Barriers were brought in to better control traffic on the southern end of the neighborhood where Sunni car bombs had attacked the market and on the northern end where IED cells had triggered over-reactions by passing convoys.

The second was a deliberate effort by D Co to find new leadership within the neighborhood who could serve the interests of the population. After months of working with the Neighborhood Advisory Council, D Co concluded that the NAC was an isolated entity, one that could neither provide useful information about the neighborhood nor speak for its needs. Therefore, the company sought to broaden its engagement to others who might have more influence over what went in in Bayaa. At various times, the company met with local politicians, business leaders, tribal sheiks, and even the leader of the SCIRI husseiniyah. The goal was to find those who had real power and influence in Bayaa and establish a working relationship that cooperatively reduced violence and focused reconstruction efforts where they were most needed.

Even though both groups sought to expand their service provision during this phase, OMS/JAM was the only group offering adjudication, the essential resource the population cannot generate on its own. Despite the adaptations in tactics, the improvement in intelligence, and the

152 Partlow, “Mahdi Army, Not Al-Qaeda, Is Enemy No. 1 in Western Baghdad.”
increase in distribution, D Co’s failure to also provide adjudication made an easy choice for the population.

Group Interaction – 15 June to 31 October

From mid-June to the end of July, JAM underwent its strategic transition. Special Groups focused their operations south and west in Saydiyah while the local JAM cells took over day-to-day operations in Bayaa. As the OMS became more central to the organization’s operations, D Co’s operational focus shifted towards the OMS as well. Though the company had yet to fully develop an understanding of its internal structure and functions, it was clear that OMS/JAM intended to do more than just attack D Co. It had long-term intentions of controlling Bayaa. As such, targeting just its fighters and cells was not enough. Using its rapidly expanding human intelligence network, D Co began gathering names and addresses of leaders within the OMS. It also sought to weaken the organization’s access to funds and logistics. Finally, the company began its push for alternative leadership in the neighborhood.

In early July, D Co conducted a series of raids against suspected OMS leadership, including Mohammed himself. Though they failed to capture Mohammed, they did arrest his brother and detained him for his connection to OMS operations. Operations against fighters continued, with some significant progress. After weeks of EFPs along the northern edge of the neighborhood, a tip was called in about two men emplacing an EFP in the area. A quick reaction force responded, and though the trigger men got away, the vehicle they left behind yielded a stock of EFPs, initiation systems, and a Dragonov sniper rifle. For the next month, IEDs dropped off significantly. Later in the month, the sniper who had caused multiple casualties across the task force, including D Co, was captured by another company. These operations,

---

153 Wright, Interview with Author. At the time, his centrality to the organization was unknown, other than he was described as a “leader.”
combined with changes to daily tactics and patrolling, led to a significant drop in D Co casualties. Multiple clearing operations in the car market yielded some minor caches and disrupted JAM operations in the area.

Though area improvement contracts began across West Rasheed, including Bayaa, it was difficult to assess how much credit D Co and the coalition received from the population for the work. As previously stated, the OMS positioned itself to take credit for any projects executed in Bayaa. D Co also initiated its meetings with potential community leaders in Bayaa. The first effort was to find and evaluate the sheiks, hoping that they could be a source of alternative leadership. Though all agreed that the NAC was not a useful organization and that the tribes ought to work together with the coalition to improve Bayaa, there was little forward progress. In the regular meetings that followed, only about half of the people who claimed to be sheiks showed up, and of those that did, few had ideas about how they ought to move forward. The group seemed paralyzed by the threat of JAM retaliation. Finally, though reporting indicated that the population was cautiously optimistic about things improving, and that D Co was at least partially responsible for improving the security situation, things remained tense in the neighborhood.

By August, the transition between JAM Special Groups and local JAM was complete. As Saydiyah’s security situation deteriorated, Special Groups activity in Bayaa dropped dramatically. Bayaa was, however, increasingly viewed as a staging area for attacks into that neighborhood. After a few months of little activity, the car market was again reported as the site of indirect fire attacks, caches, and interrogations. While raids continued against the operational cells and Special Groups, D Co conducted a series of operations in the car market to clear caches and discourage its use as a sanctuary. Special Groups remained a targeting priority, but as their
operations decreased in Bayaa, D Co began deliberate operations against sources of OMS revenue and support. Throughout the month of August, D Co conducted deliberate operations to search and clear the gas station, as well as random checks and inspections during routine patrolling. Though it took time, conditions eventually improved as JAM became a smaller and smaller presence at the station.

On August 29th, Sadr decreed a ceasefire in Baghdad and Iraq to last for six months, yet there was little change in West Rasheed. The expansion into Saydiyah continued, as did fighting between JAM and D Co in Bayaa. There were 14 small arms attacks in September and 13 IED attacks in October, numbers which exceeded levels of both types reported in April and May. Indirect fire attacks into Saydiyah started in earnest at the beginning of September, and the push for JAM dominance did not halt with Sadr’s call for peace. On the contrary, total attacks in Bayaa increased from 31 in August to 37 in September. These attacks seemed to be independent of Sadr’s directives, and local commanders and leaders appeared to be using violence for local, not strategic, effects.

By mid-September, two significant events occurred that impacted the operations of both OMS/JAM and D Co. First, JAM expansion into Saydiyah increased to its full intensity. Repeating the same operational plan as they used in Bayaa, cells moved into Saydiyah, recruited local fighters, and started forced migration. Special Groups employed IEDs against coalition forces, and rockets and mortars were launched from Bayaa into areas of Sunni concentration. In late September, a team of Apache gunships were in the area during just such an attack. They identified the place from where the mortars were firing, tracked a vehicle that departed the area to multiple locations, and guided a D Co patrol onto each. These impromptu raids yielded a massive store of mortars, rockets, and launchers, but more importantly, eliminated an entire
Special Groups cell. Though that action alone was not the proximate cause for the JAM expansion failing to take over Saydiyah, it did push a significant element of special groups activity out of Bayaa.

Secondly, D Co had finally developed a clear picture of the scope of OMS/JAM operations in the neighborhood. While the significance of the OMS becoming the provider of law and order functions in Bayaa was not fully understood at the time, it was a significant indication that the organization D Co faced was highly capable and enjoyed significant influence in the neighborhood. If the reporting was true, however, it also provided the company with an opportunity to strike the OMS and potentially capture its leadership all at once.

For the last two weeks in September and the first week in October, the company devoted numerous collection assets to confirming the pattern of life described in reporting. If indeed the OMS held court proceedings and dispute resolution from 4 PM to 6 PM every day, then a raid at that time could yield not only JAM operational cells, but OMS leadership as well. Using UAVs, signal intelligence, and ground intelligence collection, D Co confirmed the pattern: activity increased dramatically at the OMS at 4 PM, with significant traffic going in and out. By 6 PM the office closed, and people dispersed. This confirmation was significant in two ways. First, it seemed to confirm that the OMS was not only providing adjudication, but this service was being used extensively by the population. To the untrained eye, it appeared like any other community building, with lots of foot traffic from all types of people. When combined with reporting, it was another indicator the population was involved in a reciprocal relationship with OMS/JAM. Second, it provided D Co the necessary assurance that its targets were present. This made a highly dangerous daylight raid worth the risk, as it could net a significant number of targets at once and cripple the OMS. If successful, it would be a major victory for D Co.
On 11 October at approximately 5 PM, D Co raided the OMS. Jamming cell phone signals and approaching from multiple avenues of approach, three platoons converged on the OMS at high speed. They managed to get close, but not all the way to the building, before word went out that a raid was coming. UAVs observed “squirters” (people running in multiple directions like leaks out of a water balloon) off the objective just before the company arrived. Though several detainees were taken, none of the senior leadership was caught. The mission was a success – the OMS’s activities were confirmed and their operations disrupted – but the results fell far short of expectations. After approximately 90 minutes on the objective, platoons began to exfil the area, choosing to maneuver through Bayaa to discourage the use of RPGs or EFPs. After a strike on their headquarters, JAM decided their standard operating procedures did not apply. They hit 2nd Platoon’s trail vehicle with an EFP, taking the driver’s leg and destroying the vehicle. Despite many people on the streets, no one saw anything.

Over the next week, D Co conducted nightly raids against all its known targets in Bayaa. It pushed its sources for any intelligence regarding the IED strike and scoured other intelligence resources for information. While this pressure only yielded one detainee, it provided a strong response to the IED strike. While this was occurring, by chance a detainee that D Co had pushed to get released a month early was processed for return. The detainee was Mohammed’s brother, detained back in July. Despite the recent increase in fighting between the two groups, the D Co commander released Mohammed’s brother with a message: everyone wants peace. I want to work with you and your brother to reduce the violence in Bayaa. Reporting indicated new fighters were moving into the area, both in response to the dismantling of the Special Groups cell attacking Saydiyah and D Co’s offensive operations, but a week later Mohammed and D Co opened a dialogue.
Assessment: End of Phase II

Both OMS/JAM and D Co sought to establish social control in this phase. OMS/JAM began with the advantage coming out of Phase I, but both were viable competitors, having met the necessary conditions – latent capacity and investment – to establish social control. Though their strategies and tactics varied, both attempted to use their ability to control violence in productive ways, retaining their ability to both coerce and protect from Phase I. Similarly, both OMS/JAM and D Co increased their distribution in this phase, providing a variety of goods and services. The essential difference between these two groups was that OMS/JAM provided adjudication, while D Co did not.

Both maintained a strong coercive capability. Even as the makeup of JAM in Bayaa changed, Phase I established that they were willing and able to use force to compel behavior. This effect carried over into Phase II. D Co also reinforced their coercive abilities in this phase. As D Co’s success rate on raids and deliberate operations increased, and the success of JAM’s attacks decreased, D Co’s reputation improved.

OMS/JAM and D Co also successfully demonstrated their ability to protect the population. First, JAM ran a classic protection racket, requiring payment for the “security” they provided. Yet, they backed up their claims by not only patrolling the markets and in the neighborhood, but also by continuing to attack coalition forces inside and outside of Bayaa. For the segment of the population with negative feelings about the coalition and the occupation, this protection was necessary. D Co continued to believe that providing protection of the population would lead to social control. In their assessment, JAM’s presence in the neighborhood constituted a threat to security, and that they were only there to exploit the population. Despite
this misperception, D Co, just as JAM, showed itself to be using its capacities to protect the population with its operations.

Where OMS/JAM and D Co diverged was at the next step in the hierarchy of social control: adjudication. During Phase II, the OMS invested heavily in redirecting the actions of local JAM toward regulating the behavior of the population inside of Bayaa. By designating specific cells to do nothing but collect payments and monitor the population (augmented by other operational cells), the OMS invested in the mechanisms sufficient for social control. Then, by establishing their de-facto court system, the OMS provided a significant resource back to the population. Conversely, D Co had no ability to regulate behavior in this way. During this phase, D Co lacked the authorities, resources, and organizational capacity to expand their operations to provide this resource to the population. The best the company could do was redirect people who needed help to the corrupt local police and the overwhelmed Iraqi court system. OMS/JAM organization provided a resource the population needed but could not provide for themselves. D Co did not.

Though both groups distributed goods and services, the OMS/JAM held an advantage. D Co focused on providing broad based, collective benefits to the neighborhood. New contracts were executed at the district level and applied broadly across each neighborhood. Trash was picked up, barriers were put in place, and signs were painted, but these benefits had a relatively small impact on individual citizens, despite their high cost. As a result, few people gave credit to D Co for their execution. In a similar fashion, despite significant investment of time and effort into the governance of Bayaa, progress was slow, with little attributable benefit to individuals in the neighborhood. OMS/JAM, on the other hand, provided selective benefits at the individual level, such as access to housing, business rentals, and dispute resolution. They also used their
coercive power to control the contracting process and the behavior of individual workers, allowing them to take credit for work contracted by the coalition. Unfortunately for D Co, since they could not regulate the behavior of individuals inside the neighborhood and punish the OMS for breaking these rules, there was little D Co could do to stop it.

**Popular Choice: End of Phase II**

By the end of this phase, the population had fully selected the OMS/JAM as the provider of social control. Two key behaviors indicate this selection. First, despite a significant increase in intelligence coming to D Co from source reporting and anonymous tips, these contacts were a miniscule fraction of the population. OMS/JAM enjoyed significantly greater intelligence support from the population. Not once did a member of the community volunteer information about the OMS/JAM unless it was non-attributional. Every time a platoon moved into the neighborhood, it was under observation, despite the lower numbers of JAM operators in the area. Though the general population’s relationship with D Co was mostly positive – there were no demonstrations, angry mobs, or popular unrest at any point during this phase – no information of substance was given following an attack on D Co. As D Co sought out new leadership from Bayaa who had respect amongst the population, they found no one would act against the OMS/JAM.

Second, the population did not come to D Co with their problems. Instead, they went to the OMS to resolve their disputes. During the court’s hours of operation, there was a steady stream of citizens in and out of the OMS building. D Co never observed people coming or going under duress. The population was choosing to go there. These observations were clear indicators that the OMS, not D Co, was providing sufficient resources for the population to
establish a reciprocal relationship with them. These observations indicate that OMS/JAM established social control in Phase II.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bayaa Groups – 31 October 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIRI/BADR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMS/JAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D/1-28 IN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3: Phase II Assessment, 31 October 2007*

**Phase III – Accommodation (November 2007 to March 2008)**

By November 2007, OMS/JAM had social control over Bayaa, but the competition with D/1-28 IN continued throughout Phase III. D Co modified its operations in four significant ways in this phase. First, the company opened a dialogue with Mohammed, the head of the OMS, to reduce violence in the neighborhood. Second, D Co made three significant arrests that reduced
the OMS’s operational and collection capabilities and gave D Co a marked advantage over OMS/JAM in their capacity to protect the population. Third, and relatedly, D Co embarked on a reconciliation campaign, bringing Bayaa’s Shia leaders together with the leaders of the displaced Sunni population to resolve underlying issues between the sects and reduce the threat of renewed violence. Finally, D Co shifted its distribution strategy from large, community focused projects to small, individual grants to fund new small business, out-spending JAM in the neighborhood and giving the US a superior distribution strategy.

As a result of these changes, D Co effectively outperformed OMS/JAM in both protection and distribution. If these collective activities were sufficient for social control, then D Co ought to have observed at least some migration of popular support away from OMS/JAM and towards them. Yet, this did not happen. Despite D Co’s successful coercion, protection, and distribution, and because OMS/JAM retained enough latent capacity maintain these collective activities and adjudication, the population did not abandon their nascent social order. The population chose to remain in a reciprocal relationship with OMS/JAM, reinforcing the sufficiency of adjudication for maintaining social control.

Latent Capacities and Investment – 01 November

The latent capacities of each of the groups remaining in Bayaa – the local police, the national police, OMS/JAM, and D/1-28 IN – remained much the same in Phase III as in Phase II. Reporting continued to indicate the Iraqi police were a corrupt body that used whatever power they had to benefit themselves. The National Police had improved. Changing out leadership and training with D Co increased their performance, but not enough to have an appreciable impact on the National Police’s ability to provide social control. Though D Co had targeted both OMS and JAM leadership in mid-October, those operations mostly failed to hit their intended targets, and
the ability for the organization to conduct attacks and use force remained high. Attacks in Bayaa dropped in October, but JAM remained quite active. D Co’s operations, organization, and capability remained constant, and the Iraqi government remained absent; courts and judges remained ensconced in the Green Zone. Investment remained low for the local and National Police, despite the latter’s increased proficiency. Investment in the neighborhood remained high for both for OMS/JAM and D Co. Despite the improvement of the National Police, only the OMS/JAM and D Co met the conditions necessary for social control.

Collective Activities and Group Interaction – 01 November to 15 March
D Co pursued four primary lines of effort during this phase: communication and negotiation with the OMS leadership, increasingly effective targeting, reconciliation between Bayaa’s Shia and displaced Sunnis, and a micro-grant program. If these lines of effort achieved some level of success, then D Co could outperform OMS/JAM in the collective activities of protection and distribution. By D Co’s strategic logic of counterinsurgency – protect the population to gain their support – this improvement should have been sufficient for the people to choose D Co over the OMS.

Communication with Mohammed began within days of his brother’s release and continued throughout the phase. Since July, D Co became aware that if they were going to succeed in reducing violence in the neighborhood, fighting the OMS/JAM directly would only lead to more violence, not less. It was necessary, therefore, to find people within the neighborhood who had influence and respect who could convince those fighting in defense of their neighborhood that they and D Co wanted the same thing: safety and security for the population. D Co was willing to find alternative ways to influence OMS/JAM other than fighting. D Co’s commander met with sheiks, business leaders, and local politicians, but none
seemed to have enough power or influence to openly challenge the OMS. In September, prisoner releases of low-level fighters were used to ease the strain on detention facilities. D Co requested Mohammed’s brother, hoping to use his release as an opportunity to open dialogue with the one person who seemed to have the power to control JAM – the leader of the OMS.

Mohammed was released on Tuesday, 13 October, four days after the raid on the OMS. Mohammed called the D Co Commander on Saturday the 18th, just 5 days later. Though the initial conversation was short and cautious, a series of phone conversations over the next two weeks established a working relationship between the two leaders. The pitch to Mohammed was relatively straightforward. Everyone wants the same thing: peace in Bayaa. Therefore, it makes more sense for the two groups to work together, rather than against each other. If we do, then there is a chance that life can return to normal for everyone.

Once both men agreed that they shared the same goal, it was simply a matter of working out how to get it done. D Co’s Commander established three non-negotiable points. First, the company was not leaving the area. The company would continue to patrol, conduct deliberate operations, and work with the National Police to improve its capabilities. Second, if D Co was attacked, retaliation against the guilty parties would follow, just as it had over the last year. Third, D Co would continue to pursue those who had been violent in the past but would consider detention on a case by case basis.

Mohammed expected D Co to respect the people of Bayaa, entering houses and arresting people only when necessary and with evidence. Second, Mohammed would not meet publicly with D Co, and if any word of his communication got out to the neighborhood, the relationship would be over. Meeting with and appearing to work with US forces would undercut his status and legitimacy within his own organization and the population, potentially putting his safety at
risk. Finally, he made it clear that he had no control over Special Groups. He had
communication with their cells and relationships with their leaders, but he held no sway over
their actions or their decisions to target US forces.

As these terms were acceptable to both parties, the two men began conversing regularly
by mid-November. Shortly after the dialogue began, a D Co patrol with the company
commander identified an individual “flipping pigeons” to alert the neighborhood that D Co was
present. The patrol halted, entered his house, and brought him downstairs for questioning.
Within minutes, Mohammed called the company commander, demanding to know why D Co
had violated its agreement. The commander diffused the situation, the man was released after
questioning, and the relationship survived the test. Eventually the relationship evolved to the
point where Mohammed requested that certain members of his organization not be targeted in
exchange for their commitment not to conduct violence in the future. Though D Co was wary of
such a commitment, two members of the OMS leadership joined Mohammed on the Corps-level
“No Target” list, meaning that no element of the coalition – conventional forces, Iraqi Special
Forces, or US special operations units – could strike or detain these people. As promised, Bayaa
OMS/JAM members who Mohammed vouched for did not conduct violence. This type of
dialogue continued throughout the phase.

Though communication was important, D Co continued to conduct targeted operations to
capture members of JAM in Bayaa. In the month of November, three significant targets were
eliminated. First, Fadhil, the cell leader who collected payments and patrolled Bayaa, was
involved in an argument with an Iraqi Army checkpoint outside the neighborhood over a traffic
violation. After a member of his group slapped the Iraqi Soldier, the checkpoint responded with
their machine gun fire. Fadhil suffered a critical stomach wound and did not return to the area.
Second, D Co conducted a targeted operation that netted Mustafa, the long-standing leader of the operations division within Bayaa, and most of his cell. Five days later, a second raid netted another operations cell leader and all of his men. By the end of the month, most of JAM’s long-standing operations cells were dismantled. Despite Mohammed’s willingness to vouch for Mustafa, the cells remained in detention. Though others took their place, the offensive capability of JAM was significantly reduced and remained so throughout the phase.

Reconciliation between Shia and Sunni was the third primary line of effort during this phase. Though sold as a version of the peacekeeping strategy of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), Reconciliation was closer to an opening of a long running negotiation between Bayaa’s Shia and displaced Sunnis to deal with the effects of the previous years’ violence. Over a series of meetings from December to March, D Co mediated negotiations between appointed leaders from both Shia and Sunni groups. On the Sunni side, they were mostly professionals and businessmen who had formerly lived in the neighborhood. The Shia were more diverse, including many of the tribal leaders from earlier in the summer, a local politician and Bayaa resident who held significant sway within the Iraqi government, and the well-respected SCIRI leader who had been on the sidelines since the beginning of the conflict. Most significantly, Mohammed’s brother was appointed to the Reconciliation Council. While it was impossible for Mohammed himself to attend, the presence of his brother was an unambiguous signal of the OMS’s tacit approval of the process.

The opening offer from the Sunnis was to create a citizen security force like the ones created in Anbar during what came to be known as the Awakening. They claimed that they could go into Bayaa, clean up all the bad guys, and solve the problem themselves. This thinly veiled attempt at revenge was quickly rejected. After much debate, D Co offered an incentive-
based plan to be implemented in March. First, neither side could attack each other. Sunnis would be allowed back in the neighborhood to evaluate their homes and businesses. If their house or business was empty, they could petition to move back in immediately. If occupied, they could submit claims for rent to be paid to the council. No one would be evicted. D Co would focus their efforts on developing the National Police so that they could take over security operations independent of coalition forces. If there was no violence, D Co would spend thousands of contracting dollars on reconstruction and economic development in the neighborhood. Violators of the agreement would be arrested and punished. After much discussion and negotiation, the final agreement was signed on 08 March 2008.
Figure 8 - Bayaa Reconciliation Agreement, 8 March 2008

D Co’s final operational adaptation was its distribution of goods and services. After spending months pushing large contracts through a slow bureaucratic process that had limited impact on the neighborhood, a new program became available that had a significant impact on Bayaa. The microgrant program enabled company commanders to collect business plans from individual members of the community and nominate them for funding. If approved, the initial payment varied from $1000-$2500, followed by a second payment of similar value after confirmation that their business was running and funds were being properly used. Most
importantly, these were not loans, but grants that did not need to be repaid. D Co piloted the program at the beginning of November. In just 4 hours, 230 proposals were submitted. Within a month, over $35,000 was distributed to new business in the neighborhood. The program continued iteratively throughout the phase.

In response to this adjusted strategy, the OMS/JAM modified its approach as well. Most notably, attacks by JAM dropped precipitously. After averaging 43 attacks per month in Phase I, 29 per month in Phase II, attacks dropped to an average of 6 per month in Phase III. Though attacks were down, the OMS/JAM had not disappeared. Reporting, both from local sources and from higher level collection assets, indicated that JAM continued to operate in Bayaa. They replaced their old cell leadership with new fighters, but their focus shifted away from coalition forces, instead directing most of their efforts towards patrolling and enforcement of OMS directives. Through Mohammed, the OMS leadership renounced violence and avoided targeting by the coalition, but they continued to provide services in Bayaa. Special Groups sporadically attacked, but their activities were far less effective or frequent. With a few minor exceptions, OMS/JAM’s operational focus shifted almost entirely away from D Co during this phase.

Assessment: End of Phase III

In Phase III, D Co outperformed the OMS/JAM at each level of collective activity. D Co continued to demonstrate its coercive capability through by successfully targeting JAM cell leaders during this phase. Furthermore, by taking them into custody, D Co proved that reconciliation did not mean criminals would not be punished. By opening lines of communication, D Co made the neighborhood safer by reducing chances for miscalculation and inadvertent escalation. Situations that might have turned violent were now managed over the phone between the groups’ leaders. The Reconciliation process, spearheaded by D Co, began to
reduce a source of violence in Bayaa: enmity between the Shia and Sunni communities. Violence was down to a fraction of its previous levels, and among the population, D Co had a substantial and widely acknowledged role in the process. Finally, the microgrant program was wildly successful. It became the number one topic of conversation between D Co patrols and the community. Word of free money spread quickly, and many in the neighborhood benefited from the program.

The only area where the OMS/JAM organization outperformed D Co was in adjudication. Though targeting had reduced overall capability, the OMS quickly replenished their cells’ ranks with new fighters. Through dialogue with D Co, they achieved a level of security for both the OMS itself and its key leadership. Mohammed, his deputy, and his primary administrator were all added to the No Target list, giving them confidence to continue the social service functions of the OMS, including its court system. Without strong leaders of the cells, it was assessed the OMS had greater control over its local JAM elements. Rather than wasting energy, resources, and fighters in conflict with D Co, they focused them on maintaining order. Even though effectively attacking D Co was less of an option now, OMS/JAM certainly maintained the ability to influence the population’s behavior, enforce their rules, and punish those that violated them.

Furthermore, by establishing legitimacy with D Co, the OMS was able to place a member of their inner circle, Mohammed’s brother, on the Reconciliation Council. In doing so, they ensured their influence over this newly legitimized ruling body. If they had been excluded, perhaps the collective body of sheiks, emboldened by their new solidarity and backed up by D Co and the National Police, could have challenged the OMS for social control. By participating, the OMS insured that they maintained their influence, and by extension, veto power over the proceedings. If any individual sheik thought about acting against the OMS’s interest on the
council, the threat of JAM punishment sat across the table to dissuade him. Though they had lost their qualitative advantage to D Co in coercion, protection, and distribution, the OMS/JAM retained enough to insure their vital resource – adjudication – still functioned for the population of Bayaa.

**Popular Choice: End of Phase III**

Throughout the phase, D Co enjoyed an agnostic, if not outright positive, relationship with the population. Security was improving, shops were thriving, and threats were significantly lower than that had been in well over a year. Though life had hardly returned to normal, it was markedly better than six months prior. D Co was finally providing useful benefits to the population, of which the population gladly took advantage. Of the microgrants distributed, only a small percentage failed or disappeared. Most were successful. While not always happy with D Co’s operations (returning automobile vendors in the car market were unhappy with the barrier plan that blocked the public’s view of their merchandise), the population was willing to engage with D Co on issues large and small in the neighborhood.

Despite all this, popular support remained with the OMS and JAM. If protecting the population was enough, then the population should have switched its support to D Co. JAM’s capabilities were JAM reduced, violence dropped, and the threat of Sunni/Shia conflict was receding. If distribution mattered most, then the change in tactics in Phase III ought to have made a difference. Rather than charging rent for protection, housing, or a place to run a business, D Co was literally giving money away if a member of the population had a good idea.

Clearly, a shift in popular support would take time to occur, and if the population did switch its support to D Co, it would not happen all at once. Given that security improved dramatically in November and remained consistently low for months, and microgrants had been
underway since January, some indicators of a shift in popular support should have appeared by March if there was a change in social control. They did not.

The population still refused to report on JAM. As Special Groups moved IEDs and RPGs through Bayaa (as they did in February) no one reported it. When the house next door was used as a prison and torture chamber, no one reported it. When Special Groups shot RPGs at a D Co platoon putting barriers in place in January, none of the surrounding houses saw anything. It took participation from the OMS in the reconciliation process for the sheiks to move past the rhetoric of the previous six months and finally act. Throughout this period, intelligence reporting to the US and popular usage of the OMS as a resource remained constant, and in favor of the OMS. As long as the OMS regulated behavior, punished those who violated rules, and managed interaction between people, they maintained social control and retained the support of the population.

The logic behind the population’s decision making is sound. No matter how much D Co was offering, they were not offering the essential need that the population could not provide on their own: dispute resolution. If they came to D Co with a problem, there was little that the company could do other than to direct them back to the Iraqi system, one that remained glaringly absent from the neighborhood. After a year’s worth of work, little had changed. The IPs were undoubtedly corrupt. The National Police, though improving, had no law and order function. The courts were still behind the walls of the Green Zone and hopelessly clogged. If the population turned on JAM, they would have lost the one body that provided protection not just from external threats, but from internal threats as well. Without it, the population would have been left to their own devices once again, looking at a much more anarchic situation than the one they currently enjoyed.
### Table 4: Phase III Assessment, 15 March 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Proximity</th>
<th>Investment</th>
<th>Collective Activities</th>
<th>Popular Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Police</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Predation</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Police</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Coercion, protection</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnis</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIRI/BADR</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMS/JAM</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Adjudication, Distribution</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D/1-28 IN</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Protection, Distribution</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

The first step towards social control in Bayaa was the ability to use violence to do purposeful things. SCIRI lost that ability and was relegated to the sidelines. After years of legitimacy and support, it was forced to sit out of the competition. The Sunnis had the resources to do violent things, but their actions amounted to little more than vengeance once they left the area. The Iraqi Police and National Police had the latent capacity to compete but lacked the investment to try. They provided security for themselves, but self-preservation did not contribute to social control.

OMS/JAM won the competition for social control by developing a reciprocal relationship with the population. They did this by addressing the security needs of the population. D Co’s doctrine and strategy called for exactly the same thing: provide security for the population, protect them from insurgents, and gain their trust. This will cause them to reject the insurgency and turn towards the government. The logics were much the same, but D Co failed to grasp that the population needed protection not only from militias, organized crime, and insurgents, but
from petty criminals, perceived slights, and false accusations. Though both D Co and OMS/JAM could coerce and protect the population, only OMS/JAM provided the level of security necessary to gain the support of the population.

There are a number of alternative explanations for why OMS and JAM established social control and D Co did not. First, OMS and JAM were Shia and Iraqi, and there was no way the population would accept social control from an outside group like D Co. It is well established that ingroup and outgroup dynamics are not only real and have an impact on perception and behavior, but that they are particularly salient when ethnic identities are hardened, align with other identities, or both.

While Bayaa does appear to have these characteristics, success for OMS/JAM was far from guaranteed, for a number of reasons. First, OMS and JAM did not enjoy widespread popularity prior to 2006. Despite the organization’s efforts to establish itself as a protector of and provider for the population after the invasion, it had little success outside of Sadr City and the disenfranchised lower-class. Bayaa and its Shia population were outside both of those circles. Tellingly, it was SCIRI, not the OMS, that had a well-established footprint and following inside the neighborhood. Their message and agenda were much more appealing to the middle-class Shia of Bayaa than Sadr’s. Though migration into the neighborhood certainly increased the die-hard followers, migrants only accounted for approximately 30% of the population at most. Even in 2007, it is difficult to claim that the OMS won control over the neighborhood on popularity alone. Second, as D Co moved into the area, people regularly stopped D Co patrols asking for help. Most often, they were confronted with some sort of violent activity or dispute that they could not address themselves; they were looking for security. These individuals seemed unconcerned that D Co were westerners, they were looking for anyone
who could help. As violence increased and lives were at stake, the identity of the group providing security mattered little as long as they could help.\textsuperscript{154} The terror of anarchy reduced the importance of identity below that of the capability to control and use violence.

Second, one could argue that D Co never intended to establish social control, rather they were there to simply drive down violence any way necessary. The company commander had no intentions of making himself the “mayor of Bayaa”, yet it was clear that Mohammed did. While this is an accurate statement (the company commander had zero desire, intention, or authority to become the mayor), D Co did seek to take away OMS/JAM’s ability to use violence, to win the support of the population, and re-establish law and order in the neighborhood.\textsuperscript{155} Their objectives and definitions of success were effectively social control, albeit with partnered Iraqi Security Forces and the institutions of the Iraqi central government. As their partners were either exceptionally weak or absent, it fell to D Co to compete with OMS/JAM for social control on their own.

Third, one could argue that D Co did not execute all the tactics contained in the US counterinsurgency manual that made other units successful during the Surge. Specifically, they did not establish a combat outpost (COP) inside the neighborhood, nor did they employ a local militia like the Awakening Groups that aligned with US forces against AQI in Anbar and other places. Had they done so, one could argue, then D Co would have established social control and won the support of the population. While it is correct that D Co did not establish a COP, they did achieve the purpose behind it, specifically, to position forces where they were ready and responsive to problems in the neighborhood 24 hours a day. Though D Co’s presence varied

\textsuperscript{154} The adage, “Any port in a storm” captures this concept nicely.

\textsuperscript{155} Recall again that the name of the operation in March of 2007 was OPN FARDH AL-QANOON, which translates into “Enforcing the Law”.

195
over the course of a year, the company managed its patrol schedule and distribution of forces such that the intent of a COP was achieved. Use of a quick reaction force, staging forces at other companies’ nearby COPs, and widespread use of the tip line and sources provided similar effects that other companies achieved by living in their area of operations.

While Awakening Groups did assist with establishing security in many places, it is misleading to say that they enabled US forces to gain social control. On the contrary, it is more accurate to state that US forces provided Awakening Groups the resources necessary for those groups to establish social control, not the US. When tribes or other groups flipped from supporting groups like AQI to working with the US, they achieved two objectives. First, they gained significant resources, often in the form of cash payments, to increase their organizational capacity and tools to compete with a rival group. Second, they reduced the number of competitors from social control. By mid-2006, relations between AQI and the tribes/militias had deteriorated, but US forces were targeting both. That resulted in at least three groups – AQI, tribes and their militias, and US forces – competing for social control in many places. By allying with the US, the tribes eliminated a competitor – US forces – and gained their former rival’s help in targeting their now-common adversary. With this alliance, tribes strengthened their latent capacity, pushed out AQI, and got the United States out of the competition. A closer analysis indicates that Awakening Groups consolidated social control in these areas, not the US.

In the next chapter, I will expand my analysis to other neighborhoods that faced similar conditions and competitions for social control. I will evaluate the theory across 5 neighborhoods in the Baghdad district of Tisa Nissan during the Surge. The analysis of these 11 groups, the populations they seek to control, and the outcomes of the competition will help illustrate the consistency and utility of this model.
Chapter 5 – Case Comparison in Baghdad

To evaluate the utility of this theory, I will apply it to other neighborhoods that went through competitions for social control under similar conditions and compare groups, behaviors, and outcomes. The purpose of this evaluation is not to conduct formal hypothesis testing or make causal claims. The paucity of data available and the variance between neighborhoods makes it extremely difficult to conduct rigorous comparisons or to confidently claim causation. Instead, this chapter demonstrates the utility of this theory as a heuristic, a tool that can be applied to areas, populations, and groups to provide greater understanding of their interactions under conditions approaching anarchy. These comparisons demonstrate that competitions for social control consistently unfold in accordance with the mechanisms and predictions of the theory.

In this chapter, I evaluate the major claims of my theory, explore alternative explanations, and assess the implications of my findings on the theory itself. I first investigate the competition for social control that occurred in five Baghdad neighborhoods during the Surge. Next, I will conduct a cross-case analysis between these neighborhoods and Bayaa to assess whether alternative explanations more readily explain outcomes. The results of this analysis show that theories based on assumptions about identity, group capacity, and norms fail to explain variation in outcomes as consistently as my theory. Finally, I will conclude with a reassessment of the theory considering the findings of the comparisons, suggesting refinements to the theory that require more testing.

Cases
To adequately evaluate this theory, it is necessary to compare it to other cases where groups competed for social control under conditions approaching anarchy. For those cases to
provide maximal analytical value, they ought to have highly similar structure but differentiation in the independent and dependent variables. Alternatively, they could be completely different except for the variables in the theory. Either way, both methods require highly detailed information on the structural variables of an area, the internal capacity and investment of the groups competing for social control, and consistent observations over the course of the competition to determine what activities they performed. One would also need data on the population themselves, their behavior, and the choices they made. As stated in the introduction, the data for Bayaa is highly unique – social scientists rarely have access to this kind of data within a war zone for an extended period of time.

Social science research at the micro-level during wartime generally, and from the Surge specifically, is limited. It is extremely difficult for researchers to gain access to villages and neighborhoods inside an active war zone. Most research at the local level is often done by interview or survey well after the events took place or from outside the conflict zone. While incredibly useful, these methods can introduce error due to degradation of knowledge, biased recounting of events, or a lack of people who observed the events to begin with. This error can be overcome with good methodology, but in the case of Iraq, this work is just beginning. Journalists often recount micro-level events, but rarely do they have extended access to the areas on which they are reporting.\textsuperscript{156} Other sources of information include memoirs or historiographies of specific people or events, which rarely delve into the level of detail or specificity that is necessary to assess a competition for social control.\textsuperscript{157} Finally, many studies

\textsuperscript{156} For example, Nir Rosen, \textit{Aftermath: Following the Bloodshed of America's Wars in the Muslim World} (Nation Books, 2010) provides a highly detailed account of neighborhood dynamics from both sides of the conflict, but it is relayed only in snapshots.

\textsuperscript{157} For example, Cockburn, \textit{Muqtada Al-Sadr and the Battle for the Future of Iraq}; Peter R. Mansoor, \textit{Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War} (New Haven: Yale University Press,
are focused at the macro level, recounting national-level events and actions of key leaders, glossing over the events on the ground. These factors make comparable data hard to find.

Luckily, there is an exception. Nicholas Krohley is a Yale and Kings College-trained social scientist who served as a Human Terrain Team specialist and researcher in the Baghdad district of Tisa Nissan throughout 2008. His is the only comparable study in terms of the scope, rigor, and detail of data that supports a detailed comparison of neighborhood-level competitions for social control. Though his book, *The Death of the Mehdi Army: The Rise, Fall, and Rebirth of Iraq’s Most Powerful Militia* asks different questions than mine, but his work is based on a highly detailed analysis the structural variables, groups, and population behavior in six neighborhoods in the district. When cross-referenced against contemporaneous reports, news articles from the same time frame, and other secondary sources, his account seems to align well with the work of others. Using his book as a source of information makes true hypothesis

---

159 For an excellent overview of the concept of the Human Terrain Team, its employment in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the methodologies they employed, see Chapter 5 of Christopher J. Sims, *Human Terrain System: Operationally Relevant Social Science Research in Iraq and Afghanistan* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 2015), 231–322; For an overview of the evolution of the HTS and HTT by one of its founders, see Montgomery McFate and Steve Fondacaro, “Reflections on the Human Terrain System during the First 4 Years,” *Prism* 2, no. 4 (2011): 63–82; Finally, for a compendium of recollections of Human Terrain Team operations, see Montgomery McFate and Janice Laurence, eds., *Social Science Goes to War: The Human Terrain System in Iraq and Afghanistan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).
160 As with Bayaa, sources that reference Tisa Nissan are limited. For a memoir-style book focused on the US battalion responsible for the district in 2007-2008, but also corroborates many of Krohley’s statements on the nature of these neighborhoods and their groups, see Finkel, *The Good Soldiers*; For the most robust references to the operations of JAM in these neighborhoods and the types of behaviors they displayed, see International Crisis Group, “Iraq’s Civil War, the Sadrist and the Surge”; To cross reference Krohley’s statements about the nature of JAM in these neighborhoods with JAM in other areas of Baghdad, see Munson, *Iraq in Transition*; To compare Krohley’s account of Human Terrain Team operations in Tisa Nissan, use Jonathan D. Thompson, “Human Terrain Team Operations in East Baghdad,” *Military Review* 90, no. 4 (2010): 76–84.
testing impossible, but the detail provided at the neighborhood level does facilitate rough evaluations of the theory's primary claims.

There are several advantages to using Krohley's analysis of Tisa Nissan's neighborhoods for comparison. Limiting the comparison to neighborhoods in Baghdad in 2008 controls for many of the scope conditions and structural variables. All neighborhoods experienced the invasion, the sectarian violence of 2006, and the expansion of the Sadr movement across the city. These urban neighborhoods dealt with the lack of social services, governance, and safety that marked the breakdown of social order and the withdrawal of the population from civil society. These populations were predominately mixed and Arab at the start of the war, and experienced migration towards homogeneity. The groups who competed for social control are also similar. JAM was the primary militia in the area, while US forces, partnered with weak Iraqi Security Forces and government, were the primary challenger for social control. As with Bayaa, there was little to no Sunni population left by the time the US and JAM begin their competition. These similarities are far from a perfect match, but they do help reduce a significant number of unaccounted for sources of variation that would limit the utility of comparison.

While the neighborhoods' similarities reduce confounders, their differences in key variables provide analytical leverage on the theory. Most importantly, JAM was not a monolith, and it performed different collective activities in different areas. While the US strategy, operational logic, and tactical execution remained effectively constant, JAM chose different strategies in different areas. Variation in the independent variable is crucial to determine if the dependent variable changes in accordance with the theoretical predictions. Furthermore, in some neighborhoods, JAM chooses to perform different collective activities at different times,
indicating JAM's choices are strategically, not structurally determined. Third, in places where JAM and US collective activities are constant, identities of the population in the neighborhoods vary, providing an opportunity to conduct cross-case analysis to determine if in-group/out-group dynamics are driving the choices of the population. Similar analysis is possible to determine if the most violent group wins. Lastly, these cases provide the information necessary to evaluate whether tribal adjudication can serve as a source of social control under these conditions.

The final advantage of using Krohley's analysis is that it reduces bias I might introduce in case selection. The paucity of available data forces me to evaluate the competition for social control in Tisa Nissan, regardless of how well it fits the theory. While Krohley did not select his cases at random, he certainly did not select them for how well the hierarchy of social control worked in each neighborhood. Though I cannot claim the cases are randomly selected, I have little agency in the matter. I analyze the cases available.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, I will provide an overview of Tisa Nissan, followed by an overview of the primary competitors for social control: JAM and the US-led coalition. Next, I will evaluate my theory against five competitions for social control in Tisa Nissan's neighborhoods: the central cores of Beladiyat and Mashtal, the peripheries of Beladiyat and Mashtal, Kamaliyah, Amin, and Fedaliyah. In each case, I will determine if the outcome of the competition aligns with the theoretical predictions of the theory.

Specifically, my theory predicts that under conditions approaching anarchy, groups that have the latent capacity (organization, tools, proximity) and investment will be able to compete for social control. Of those groups, the one that progresses to highest level of collective activities (predation, coercion, protection, adjudication, distribution, production) without skipping steps will establish social control. The indicators that a group has established social
control are the voluntary provision of intelligence, utilization of a group’s adjudication mechanisms, political support, or any combination of the three. If my theory has predictive power, then the population should provide these goods to the group who is performing the highest level collective activities and their lesser included functions. If I am incorrect, we can expect inconsistent variation between collective activities and social control, or variation consistent with alternative explanations.

The third section of the chapter will explore alternative explanations for the outcomes in these competitions. First, I address identity, that an ethnically different group could not establish social control as the population would reject it out of hand. To do so, I compare the competition for social control in Bayaa to the neighborhoods of Beladiyat and Mashtal. In the periphery of these neighborhoods, JAM’s identity matched the population in terms of ethnicity and in class. In the center of these neighborhoods, JAM matched in terms of ethnicity. In all three areas, the US had no match and was an out-group. If identity matters most, the US should not win any of these competitions. Second, I evaluate whether social control is won by the most violent group. In Kamaliyah and Amin, JAM equal or greater latent capacity than JAM in Bayaa, as well as high levels of popular support. However, they performed different collective activities. If violence matters most, the outcome should vary in accordance with their latent capacity and investment, not their collective activities. Finally, I evaluate whether a group can adjudicate — the critical step for social control — without the ability to control violence. As tribal adjudication in Iraq traditionally relies on norms and social sanction, I compare the tribal adjudication provided by sheiks in Bayaa to the adjudication provided by the Marsh Arab tribes in Fedaliyah and identify key differences between the two.
I will conclude with a re-evaluation of the model based on the results of the comparisons and cross-case analysis. There are two primary refinements to the theory. First, this analysis indicates there are consistent, observable implications for the population under predation and coercion. Observation of these indicators indicates that despite the presence of a violent group, there is no social control. Second, the theory states that the group that progresses the highest level of collective activities in the hierarchy without skipping steps will win a competition between two groups. In the hierarchy, adjudication is the critical step the group must take to establish social control. Protection is not enough. Yet in some of these comparative cases, a winner emerges by outperforming its competitors, not by providing adjudication. The population makes a choice, but they do not reach the equilibrium that comes with a reciprocal relationship between a group and a population. As a result, these neighborhoods remain unstable. This finding suggests that there is an intermediate state between anarchy and social control that invites further analysis and research.

**Tisa Nissan**

The east Baghdad district of Tisa Nissan was created during the mid-century modernization of Baghdad, an effort intended to create a centrally-planned, modern urban landscape of mixed commercial and residential spaces. As in Bayaa, land and property were designated not for specific tribes, sects, or ethnicities (the identities that had naturally distributed the population across the city) but by profession and class. By the 1970s, the districts’ neighborhoods were “divided and allocated to groups of soldiers, teachers, engineers, municipal workers, doctors, laborers, and factory workers, whereupon residential neighborhoods were founded that blended Baghdadis of various sects, religions, and ethnicities.”

---

161 Krohley, *The Death of the Mehdi Army*, 90.
As the city expanded, the utopian visions of a neatly organized city gave way to the realities of human behavior; Tisa Nissan’s neighborhoods diverged from their intended usage. The neighborhoods of Beladiyat and Mashtal were much like Bayaa at inception. Though initially occupied by middle class Sunni, Shia, and Christians, lower-class Shia migrants from other parts of the country settled on their fringes, increasingly expanding into the neighborhoods. This class-based, core-periphery tension grew through the 1990s and continued after the coalition invasion. The neighborhood of Kamaliyah, sitting on the eastern outskirts of Baghdad, came to be dominated by some of the poorest residents of the city, living in shanty-like houses called *sarifas* with little electricity and open sewage running in the streets. By the 1990s, it was
home to two industrial parks and their workers, but also migrant sex workers and the gangs that ran the Baghdad’s red-light district. The area was notorious for its danger, excess, and desperation.\textsuperscript{162} Residents of Amin were a step above the abject poverty of Kamaliyah, but under sanctions they suffered from a crippling lack of service provision, more than most parts of Baghdad.\textsuperscript{163} Fedaliyah, situated between Kamaliyah and Mashtal, came to be settled almost entirely by displaced Marsh Arabs tribes from southern Iraq. After centuries of living and working in the marsh lands between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, the urban development of the 1960s and 1970s encouraged some to migrate north to Baghdad. As part of a political agreement, they were allowed to establish a small enclave far from the city center, keeping their traditions and way of life. By the time the United States-led coalition invaded and toppled Saddam in 2003, the district was far from the homogenous, well-ordered district its builders intended.

The Competitors for Social Control
In each of the Tisa Nissan cases, the two primary competitors for social control were Jaysh al Mahdi and the US forces assigned to the district.\textsuperscript{164} As in Bayaa, there were other groups present, but for various reasons, they did not factor into the competition. Though JAM varied at the neighborhood level, each local branch shared similar characteristics. The US forces were quite similar across cases.

Jaysh al Medhi – Latent Capacity and Investment
Immediately following the invasion, a rekindled Sadrist movement moved quickly to establish a popular base in Baghdad. Capitalizing on the reputation the elder Sadr built in the district during the 1990s, the new organization under Muqtada and its fledgling militia, Jaysh al-

\textsuperscript{162} Krohley, 91, 125–26, 131–34.
\textsuperscript{163} Krohley, 91–92.
\textsuperscript{164} In Fedaliyah, the Marsh Arab tribes constitute a third which will be introduced at the beginning of the case.
Mahdi (JAM), quickly established themselves inside many of the neighborhoods in Tisa Nissan. Though the methods and timeline varied by neighborhood, in each JAM developed the latent capacity to perform the collective activities in the hierarchy of social control by the outbreak of sectarian violence in 2006.

In Fedaliyah, JAM quickly established a safe haven and operational base, recruiting cells of Marsh Arabs into the militia. These small units, products of a long bellicose tradition within the tribes, proved to be especially violent and effective fighting organizations. Kamaliyah and Amin quickly came under JAM control, as did the periphery of Beladiyat and Mashtal. Their proximity in these neighborhoods gave JAM access to a large population of disenfranchised young men who flocked to the renewed Sadrist message. When JAM’s ranks swelled by the tens of thousands in the first year, Tisa Nissan supplied many of the recruits. Though JAM would not have access to the full suite of Iranian arms, IEDs, and ammunition until later, they had nearly unlimited access to small arms from the beginning. This gave JAM a distinct advantage over the population and the ability to compel popular behavior. Though during 2003 they lacked the operational sophistication on display during 2006, they had enough coherence to take control of areas where they had a strong reputation and faced no competition from other groups. Over the next several years build greater and greater organizational capacity to use violence effectively.

JAM was clearly invested in the neighborhoods inside Tisa Nissan. This district, along with Sadr City, formed the political base of the Sadrist movement and the foundation of its support. The access routes in and out of Tisa Nissan linked JAM with their Iranian logistics.

---

supply and their supporters to the north, east, and south. As JAM spread across Baghdad, Tisa Nissan became a major support zone for the fighting, one that JAM wanted and needed to maintain.

For the first three years of the occupation, JAM operated with impunity in most of Tisa Nissan. Over that period, JAM built itself into a high functioning militia that met the necessary conditions to perform the collective activities sufficient for social control. When the Samarra Mosque was bombed in 2006, JAM immediately turned its attention on solidifying its hold over Tisa Nissan’s neighborhoods. Violence increased to a fever pitch, forced migration was rampant, and most of the remaining Sunnis in Amin, Beladiyat, and Mashtal were killed or expelled. In the face of escalating violence, civil society (except in Fedaliyah) fragmented and atomized down to the family level, just as it did in Bayaa in the spring of 2007. Though a lack of social services and economic activity made life exceptionally difficult, it appeared that JAM had fully established social control.\footnote{Krohley, The Death of the Mehdi Army, 93–95.}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{schematic.png}
\caption{Sectarian Changes in Tisa Nissan from 2003 to 2007}
\end{figure}
US Forces and the Coalition

Prior to the Surge, US forces expended little operational energy in Tisa Nissan. As a result, JAM consolidated its control over many of the district’s neighborhoods and forced out much of the Sunni population by early 2007. As the initial focus of the Surge was to reduce sectarian violence, the coalition spent most of that year focused on the more contested western section of Tisa Nissan where some Sunnis remained. When forced migration and sectarian violence began to stabilize in late 2007, the coalition redirected its efforts to challenging JAM in the homogenous Shia neighborhoods. Two large scale offensive operations took place in March of 2008: the government of Iraq’s offensive in Basra known as the Charge of the Knights, and the US-led operation commonly referred to as the Siege of Sadr City. In coordination with these efforts, US forces in Tisa Nissan conducted a series of offensive operations, pushing deeper into the neighborhoods of the district to challenge JAM’s control.

Though this operation was ostensibly partnered with the National Police, the Iraqi security forces still lacked the capacity for independent operations without US involvement. Iraqi institutions, such as local police, judges, courts, utilities, and trash removal remained nascent, with little influence or extension to the local level. The US forces were the primary group in the competition. The subordinate battalions and companies of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, however, possessed the same organizational capacity, tools, and investment that D Co had in Bayaa. Unlike Bayaa, these units did not achieve the proximity necessary to compete until much later in the Surge.

Through most of 2007, their proximity was limited to the parts of Tisa Nissan west of the Army canal. By late 2007, they established a foothold in the central areas of Beladiyat and Mashtal, but not in the periphery of those neighborhoods or places of JAM strength like
Fedaliyah and Kamaliyah. This changed with the offensives in early 2008 as they dramatically expanded their operations to challenge JAM's social control. By March of 2008, US forces met the necessary conditions to compete for social control in each of these cases.

The strategic logic and tactical approach in these neighborhoods was essentially the same as in Bayaa. Applying the doctrine of FM 3-24, the priority was to protect the population, re-energize the economy, introduce governance, and restart essential services in the area. To achieve this, the US would clear JAM from the area, hold the terrain, and build institutions to provide for the population. Once freed from the influence of JAM and protected by the coalition, the population would throw their support behind the coalition and the Iraqi government.

In each of these comparisons, I hold the US forces and their strategic approach constant. Though there was some variation from neighborhood to neighborhood, the collective activities they performed were much like the those of D Co. Once they established proximity, they rapidly progressed to protection. The amount of distribution they provided varied, but they did not provide adjudication.

JAM, however, was not so monolithic. Though the overarching strategy and tactics were the same, there was much greater variance at the neighborhood level between the "franchises" of JAM. Therefore, each case begins with a background of the neighborhood itself, followed by a brief analysis of the local JAM units. As JAM's tools, proximity, and investment are high in each case, their organizational differences – their leadership, fighters, and capabilities – are the focus. In the case of Fedaliyah, there is a third group in the competition. The Marsh Arab tribes will be treated as a single group, and I will begin the case with an analysis of the latent capacity, investment, and collective activities of the whole. I then compare the collective activities
performed by JAM to the protection offered by the US units. If they fail to progress up the hierarchy, then the US should receive the support of the population.

By most indicators, JAM held a significant advantage over the coalition in the neighborhoods of Tisa Nissan. These neighborhoods were second only to Sadr City in their veneration for the elder Sadr, relationship with his movement in the 1990s, and embrace of the new Sadrist movement. Their early acceptance of JAM meant many JAM members had familial and social ties to these neighborhoods. As the violence increased in 2006, militant Sunnis often targeted areas in Tisa Nissan as retribution for sectarian attacks, which would theoretically drive the population closer to JAM as their patron.

Therefore, these neighborhoods should expose weaknesses in the theory, especially as the independent variables in alternative explanations have high values in these neighborhoods. All the neighborhoods are Shia, and most are lower-class, the most common identities within the Sadrist movement. In Kamaliyah and Amin, JAM was stronger and more violent than in Bayaa, which provides a stronger signal for that explanation. Fedaliyah was both highly tribal and highly supportive of JAM. Therefore, if the mechanisms and patterns in my theory consistently predict behaviors and outcomes under these conditions, then it is strengthened by the comparison.\textsuperscript{168}

\textsuperscript{168} In a more formal case comparison with better data, David Collier might refer to these as "smoking gun" tests. In such tests, failing does not significantly weaken the theory - the conditions make it difficult for the theory to operate, especially if the effect is small. If the theory retains its predictive power, however, it is significantly strengthened by the comparison, as it outperforms other explanations in adverse conditions. However, as previously stated, the data and variation between cases makes such a rigorous test impossible, but the concept is still useful in evaluating the performance of the theory in these cases. See David Collier, "Understanding Process Tracing," \textit{PS: Political Science \& Politics} 44, no. 4 (2011): 823–830.
By 2003 and the fall of Saddam Hussein, Beladiyat and Mashtal had strayed from their middle-class design. These two neighborhoods were marked by a deep class divide that also reflected fault lines in other areas. The central core of both neighborhoods was ethnically mixed and firmly middle class. Sunni, Shia, Christians, and even Palestinians lived side by side and in relative harmony. Homes were nice, streets were generally cared for, and the quality of life was high.

The outskirts of these areas were quite different. Populated almost entirely of Shia migrants from other areas, these former open spaces were now occupied by shanty homes and squatters living barely above a subsistence level. Despite their poverty, the alternative for Shia in periphery areas before the invasion was worse. Therefore, the population steadily grew during the late 1990s. While the centers were able to maintain a decent quality of life, albeit degraded, during the sanctions period, those on the fringes were primary consumers of the social services provided by the elder Sadr in the 1990s. While the popularity and political support for the Sadr Organization grew in the outskirts, the center was firmly devoted to Sistani and his movement. 169

When the regime collapsed, the centers of the neighborhoods began to change. Those who could afford to leave the central areas departed quickly. The widespread violence and looting that swept Baghdad did not miss Beladiyat and Mashtal, so those who remained clustered

more tightly in the central core and adopted a bunkered mentality. While the population of the
periphery experienced significant growth, the cores gradually shrank into a smaller and smaller
footprint.

Though JAM had interest in consolidating its control over the entire neighborhood, it is
not entirely clear when JAM’s initial forays into the center of Beladiyat and Mashtal began. It is
certain that the Samarrah Mosque bombing and the sectarian violence that followed triggered
JAM’s final push into these areas. Despite a lack of sectarian tension or spontaneous violence
between the Sunni and Shia populations within the central areas, JAM began to cleanse the
neighborhoods under the guise of protecting Shia residents from their Sunni neighbors. 170
Tactics employed in Bayaa in early 2007 were applied to the central cores of these
neighborhoods a year earlier. JAM moved their special cells into the neighborhood and began
recruiting local fighters to support their operations. They quickly overran locally constructed
defenses and establishing themselves as the dominant group in the area. The militia violently
cleansed the Sunni population, killing or exiling most of the remaining Sunnis from the area.
The minority Christian and Palestinian populations were treated similarly. Many Christians fled
to the support of their diaspora abroad or clustered into a small enclave, while the Palestinians
(with no such support) received similar persecution as the Sunnis. 171

As the cleansing abated, JAM’s specialists departed and left the young fighters in charge.
Unlike Bayaa, where there was a core of senior leadership to direct the activities of the group,
this franchise was dominated by young men who had no experience with the social services that
formerly defined the Sadrist Movement. Rather than ascending the hierarchy to provide benefit

170 Krohley, 111n.
171 The especially brutal treatment of the Palestinian population is documented in Peter Bouckaert, “Nowhere to
to the population and create a reciprocal relationship, these fighters chose to use their latent capacity to benefit only themselves.

Once these neighborhoods had been sufficiently cleansed of Sunnis, JAM had turned its attentions to preying upon the remaining population, whether Sunni, Christian, or even Shia. In response, the population atomized. Homes became isolated enclaves for families, breaking down community support. The population ceased to be productive, focusing only on surviving the violence.\textsuperscript{172} Despite their early success in eliminating or suppressing their rivals, JAM did not progress up the hierarchy as it did in Bayaa, instead maintaining an extractive and predatory approach to social control.

As Surge forces arrived in Beladiyat and Mashtal, they focused their operations on the central cores. After spending time and energy establishing themselves west of the Army canal, US forces began their offensive. They built company outposts, conducted offensive operations against JAM, and began engaging with the local population. The US forces progressed quickly through coercion to protection. Despite the lack of effective Iraqi security forces, institutions, or government services with the Americans, the US forces were cautiously welcomed by the population as they established themselves as a credible competitor for social control in the summer of 2007. Within months, the population began furnishing the coalition with intelligence and assistance in the fight against the militia. This contributed significantly to the effectiveness of coalition operations, and with little to no support from the population, JAM withdrew.\textsuperscript{173}

In these core areas, both JAM and the US forces met the necessary conditions to credibly compete for social control. Both had the organizational capacity, tools, proximity, and

\textsuperscript{172} Krohley, \textit{The Death of the Mehdi Army}, 116.
\textsuperscript{173} Krohley, 119–21.
investment to progress up the hierarchy. Unlike Bayaa, where JAM consolidated its successes with forced migration and homogenization and progressed to protection, adjudication, and distribution, the young fighters who were left in charge chose to remain predatory and coercive with the population. When presented with a credible alternative – US forces offering protection – the population rejected JAM in favor of a group providing a higher level of order.

Case #2 – Periphery of Beladiyat and Mashtal

Following the invasion, the peripheries of Beladiyat and Mashtal diverged from the central cores. Their populations exploded, with migrants from Sadr City, Diyalah, and the southern provinces taking advantage of the open land and newly vacant houses to improve their lot in life. From 2003 on, there was a continuous and haphazard flow of lower-class Shia into these areas. JAM entered these neighborhoods almost immediately after the invasion and quickly proclaimed itself the protector of the people. That protection, however, was minimal at best and generally failed to counter the “prevailing atmosphere of lawlessness and chaos” that was pervasive in the lower-class and migrant areas of the neighborhoods.174 Soon JAM was using them as a base from which they launched attacks into the central areas of the neighborhoods and across the rest of the city.

With the onset of sectarian violence, these periphery areas morphed into JAM strongholds. Supplying JAM with a ready source of fighters, the makeup of the organization was quite like the franchise that operated in the central cores of the neighborhoods. Young and violent, these groups proved to be highly effective both during the cleansing phase of the fight and as they shifted their focus to attacking US forces. Despite the appearance of high levels of JAM support, the reality for those living in the periphery was quite different. The radicalization

of the young fighters and the model of predatory behavior demonstrated in the central areas influenced those that controlled the periphery as well. Regardless of one’s sect or political leanings, extortion, racketeering, kidnapping, and murder at the hands of JAM became a part of daily life in the periphery and remained so for well over a year and a half.\(^{175}\)

After their success in the core of the neighborhoods, US forces turned their attention to the peripheral areas. The advance of the coalition into western Beladiyat and eastern Mashtal – areas populated with lower-class Shia migrants who held strong sympathies for Sadr that JAM had controlled for years – slowed in the last months of 2007 in the face of significant levels of violence and resistance. The US redoubled its efforts in March of 2008 and pushed deeper into these areas than they previously attempted, establishing their proximity.

Rather than finding a civil society built around Shia underclass solidarity, protected and ordered by the Sadr Organization, these areas of Beladiyat and Mashtal were marked by an “atmosphere of chaos and uncertainty, where the resident population was preoccupied, above all else, with self-preservation.”\(^{176}\) As the US established itself in the neighborhood, residents of these areas were quite forthcoming with their opinions of “the militia”, both in public and in private. Interestingly, residents also made a clear distinction between the group that had controlled the area – JAM – and the larger Sadrist Organization. Despite their overwhelmingly negative opinions about JAM, their reverence for the movement, and especially the elder Sadr, remained.\(^{177}\) When provided an alternative to JAM, they voluntarily provided in the information

\(^{175}\) Krohley, *The Death of the Mehdi Army*, 121.
\(^{176}\) Krohley, 120.
\(^{177}\) Krohley, 121n.
necessary for US success. Popular support shifted to the US forces as the population accepted social control.

As with the central areas, JAM failed to progress up the hierarchy of social control. Despite possessing the capacity to do so, JAM chose to prey on the population and return little benefit to the population. As a result, the population remained isolated and focused only on their own security. When the US entered these peripheral areas and demonstrated that they could and would take on some of the security functions for the population, support shifted to the coalition as the population accepted the social control US forces offered.

Case #3 – Kamaliyah

Kamaliyah was perhaps the most notorious neighborhood in Baghdad following the collapse of the Saddam Hussein regime. In the 1960s and 1970s, members of both sects moved to the neighborhood, designed for low-income workers on the outskirts of the city. Though lower-class Shia dominated, there were few disputes amongst sects. As the sanctions era hit, the neighborhood fell to the bottom of the sectarian and social pecking order for resources from the central government. It devolved into an area dominated by criminal gangs that controlled the black market, booze, and prostitutes.

Figure 12: Kamaliyah and Amin

178 Krohley, 122.
for which the neighborhood became known. Streets fell apart, sewage ran through the streets into large cesspools, and the neighborhood took on the look of a shanty town. 179

The initial solution from the government was to re-energize the tribal system, inserting the “fake sheiks” to whom resources would be distributed to help manage the population as government institutions atrophied. Most of the sheiks used their position and resources to their own advantage, not for the people. Unsurprisingly, the presence of the sheiks did little to improve the fortunes of the average citizen and only delegitimized the stature of sheiks among the population. As the original Sadrist movement began, Kamaliyah was one if its first forays into social service provision. Though the impact was limited, the elder Sadr gained a level of veneration that translated into unquestioning support for the renewed movement under his son. 180

The coalition invasion was welcomed in these neighborhoods, but not for any love for the Americans. Many saw the invasion as an opportunity for the Shia community to change its fortunes under a new Sadr and his organization, JAM.

The immediate arrival of the Mahdi Army in Kamaliyah after the invasion was welcomed by the population. JAM proclaimed themselves a new, Shia-led government that would fix the problems in the neighborhood. The chaos and looting that followed regime collapse allowed JAM to quickly eliminated undesirable residents – Ba’athists and the migrants who ran and participated in the sex trade – but it also highlighted that then need to expand their organization quickly if they wanted to govern. As a result, JAM readily welcomed any group who could help them run the neighborhood. A ready-made solution presented itself – the local crime lords who had previously controlled the neighborhood. As these groups were already embedded in the

179 Krohley, 131–34.
180 Krohley, 134–35.
neighborhood and experienced in the application of violence, JAM accepted them into their organization whole cloth. In the years following the fall of Saddam, these criminal gangs, now re-branded and legitimized with their new title, continued to operate much as they had in the 1990s, providing little to no law and order functions, preferring instead to extract the population’s resources for their individual gain. 181

As violence swept across Baghdad in 2006, JAM initiated offensive operations within the population. Though they had ostensibly positioned themselves as both defender and benefactor of the population, JAM proved to be increasingly unable or unwilling to do either in the face of sectarian hostility. 182 Though Kamaliyah had endured a low level of chaos since 2003, these gangs cum JAM now rampaged through the neighborhood. While the purported goal was to purge the neighborhood of all Sunnis (a task which they achieved with striking effectiveness), Shia families also found themselves increasingly victimized by JAM’s violence. For all the rhetoric of sectarian solidarity and protection, it was quite clear that JAM in Kamaliyah prioritized its targeting not based on sect, but by the value of the homes and business from which they could make the most money.

As the initial wave of violence ebbed, JAM realized that while they had effectively driven off the Sunni population and plundered many of the Shia, they had also atomized the population, destroyed whatever economy remained, and effectively choked off their own revenue stream. To make up the difference, they conducted even greater extortion and crime, pushing the neighborhood into a cycle of predation. To insure compliance, JAM stood up morality police in some sections of the neighborhood. This was not a dispute resolution mechanism to help find

181 Krohley, 136–37, 137n.
182 Krohley, 138.
justice for victims, but rather a veneer applied over the coercive Islamic discipline they used to insure compliance with JAM’s demands.183

There was no reciprocal relationship, a fact symbolized by the contrast between the way Krohley describes the interaction, or lack thereof, between JAM and the population. The collective activities of JAM “prompted local families to withdraw further from its dangerous and decrepit public spaces, seeking sanctuary in their homes, where cleanliness and order...stood in stark contrast to conditions beyond their doors.”184 The mosques “from which JAM operated sat detached and isolated on the terrain, more like fortified fighting positions than integral parts of the surrounding neighborhood.”185

As US offensives in late 2007 and early 2008 commenced, the forces assigned to these neighborhoods fought to establish themselves as credible competitors for social control. Following the blueprint of the Surge, they built a patrol base next to an abandoned spaghetti factory to gain proximity to the population and conducted offensive operations against the militias who had turned these neighborhoods into Mahdi Army strongholds. They sought to protect the population while introducing government, social services, and infrastructure repair to improve the lives of the population, gain their support, and convince them to abandon JAM. By summer, a group of local Kamaliyah leaders did just that, coming forward to pledge the neighborhood’s support for the coalition and the government of Iraq.186

In Kamaliyah, JAM met the necessary conditions to move up the hierarchy towards social control, but the collective activities it performed were insufficient. It is reasonable to assert that

183 Krohley, 139.
184 Krohley, 138.
185 Krohley, 139.
186 Krohley, 144n.
the organization was much more sophisticated than JAM in either Beladiyat or Mashtal, as JAM in Kamaliyah was dominated by criminals who had dominated the neighborhood for decades. Despite this potential, they did no more than prey on the population and coerce their compliance. As a result, the neighborhood remained in chaos and the population atomized. When the coalition finally established itself as a legitimate competitor, the population chose the US forces over JAM.

Case #4 – Amin

Located in the southern corner of the district, Amin shared much of the demographic history of Kamaliyah. It was also intended as a lower-class worker’s neighborhood. Though majority Shia, the neighborhood was decidedly mixed. Amin avoided the crime of Kamaliyah during the sanctions era, but its fortunes fell. Businesses stagnated and closed, social services were reallocated to higher class areas, and jobs left the neighborhood. As in Kamaliyah, the Sadrist movement covered some of the shortfall with its social service provision and earned an enduring and passionate base. On the eve of the invasion, however, the neighborhood was known as a “congested, decaying urban grid with overcrowded schools, a crumbling infrastructure, and an increasingly destitute populace.”

After the fall of Saddam, JAM’s actions in Amin mirrored those performed in Sadr City, and, years later, in Bayaa. After moving into the area to curb the outbreak of violence, JAM established offices within the local mosques that served three primary functions. First, they acted as recruiting and mustering stations for young men who wanted to join the militia to fight. They recruited platoons of young men into the organization, inspired not by the social service

187 Krohley, 131–34.
traditions of the elder Sadr, but by the more militant and muscular calls for Shia solidarity and resistance from the younger Muqtada.\textsuperscript{188} Many of the first JAM units that clashed with the coalition were raised from Amin. This in turn strengthened the organization’s credibility and reputation as the protector of the neighborhood. Second, these offices immediately began distributing goods (gasoline and cooking oil were most common) and providing social services to the local population, improving, if only in small increments, the condition of the people. Third, these offices oversaw a controlled migration of lower-class Shia families into the area, increasing their already sizable base of support. These higher level collective activities significantly contributed to the increase in order and the relationship with the militia.\textsuperscript{189}

JAM clearly progressed up the hierarchy to protection and distribution. Though the evidence is silent as to whether or not JAM was adjudicating from 2003-2006, the “social services” they were providing could have included such a function, as they did in Sadr City. Regardless, despite the overwhelming poverty of the area and its difficult structural conditions, JAM appeared to have established social control as effectively as in any other area in the district.

When the sectarian war began in 2006, JAM departed from the role of defender and benefactor of the neighborhood.\textsuperscript{190} Amin’s reputation as a home of JAM’s fighting units made it an attractive target for Sunni car and suicide bombings. Devastating attacks hit the markets and populated areas of the neighborhood. JAM responded to these attacks not by going after the external groups who were responsible, but by targeting the Sunnis who lived \textit{inside} Amin for retribution. This triggered a cycle where each group would attack the population of Amin to take revenge on each other. Sunni groups would send car bombs that killed Shia civilians in Amin.

\textsuperscript{188} Krohley, 146.
\textsuperscript{189} Krohley, 136, 136n.
\textsuperscript{190} Krohley, 138.
JAM would kidnap and torture Sunni civilians in Amin. Sunni groups would then kidnap and torture Shia civilians in retaliation, and so forth. Despite their reputation as protectors, JAM focused its energies instead on revenge, forgoing their responsibilities to their population. They brought in fighters from other areas and Special Groups to improve their lethality, which in turn led to more violence.

Over time, they effectively purged the Sunni population and stopped the sectarian violence, but it came at significant cost, both to JAM and to the remaining population. Many of the highly violent external groups stayed on as enforcers of JAM’s rule. These groups, emboldened by their victory, pushed the elder members of the organization – the ones who had run social services and understood their importance – out of their positions of authority. Social services ceased. As with other neighborhoods that faced internecine violence, economic activity also ceased as the population withdrew to the safety of their own homes, seeking only to protect their families and themselves. Revenue fell off, and the younger leadership of JAM chose to pattern their behavior off JAM in Kamaliyah, ceasing its higher order collective activities in favor of predation and coercion.\textsuperscript{191}

As in Kamaliyah, US forces fought into the neighborhood to establish themselves as credible competitors for social control. They conducted offensive operations against JAM to protect the population while introducing government, social services, and infrastructure repair. After the first few months, they identified that they were not facing a popular insurgency, where the population and JAM were united in their resistance to the Americans and their Government.

\textsuperscript{191} Krohley, 139–41.
of Iraq partners, but rather a fight between the US and JAM with the population mostly on the sidelines.

There was little organic support for the coalition, as it was seen to have neglected these neighborhoods in the post-Saddam years. That said, JAM’s actions throughout 2006 clearly destroyed whatever relationship had existed between JAM and the population. Soon there was open communication from the population to US forces highlighting their discontent with “the militia”, especially about the cessation of services the population relied on. Further evidence of their discontent with the militia was reflected in popular iconography. Sadrist imagery on posters and banners began taking on a new tone, including Iranian Shia leaders. This is striking, in that their venerated martyr, the elder Sadr, was virulently anti-Iranian, but it reflects that the actions of his younger son’s army were pushing some of his most ardent supporters towards alternative leaders.

It is clear that JAM failed to maintain its ability or desire to protect the population when the sectarian violence began. The failure of JAM to keep the Sunni militias from targeting the population, and then their decision to begin targeting the population themselves, degraded the relationship between the two to the point where the population hid in their homes and avoided interaction with any group in the area.

Evidence of a clear popular choice in Amin of the coalition over JAM is thin. There was not widespread intelligence provision against JAM, nor did the population come forward offering their support. It is clear, however, that while JAM had nearly achieved social control in

---

192 Krohley, 128–29, 144.
193 Krohley, 141–42.
Amin, their choice to abandon higher level collective activities destroyed their reciprocal relationship with the population.

**Case #5 – The Marsh Arabs of Fedaliyah**

Fedaliyah is a unique neighborhood in Baghdad. Due to an unusual series of events, it avoided modernization and remained an enclave of Marsh Arab tribes with the distinctive traditions and lifestyle.¹⁹⁴ An agrarian Shia people who, for centuries, occupied the marshlands between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in southern Iraq, they were seen by most Iraqis as backward, strange, and undesirable. As punishment for their significant role in the 1991 Shia uprising, Saddam Hussein drained nearly 90% of the marshes, destroying their ancestral lands and way of life.¹⁹⁵ Over three quarters of their population left the marshes, with many moving north to Baghdad, where they settled in their enclave of Fedaliyah.¹⁹⁶

In the 1990s, the Marsh Arabs remained on the geographic and social fringes of Baghdad. They had little income and mostly practiced subsistence farming. While many Shia neighborhoods received little help from the government, the tribes’ status as former rebels meant

---

¹⁹⁴ Krohley, 149, 156–57.
the government ignored Fedaliyah entirely. Their odd lifestyle and way of doing things caused most Iraqis to shun them. The state newspaper had this to say about them:

"...the marsh people, so accustomed to breeding buffaloes that they have become indistinguishable from them. When they migrated to big cities like Baghdad, they made their living through begging, prostitution and robbery, not out of poverty but because of their intrinsic degraded nature. A true Arab, of course, cannot be so degraded. These are not Arabs."  

The Marsh Arabs’ outcast status had three other significant effects. First, ostracism forced them to rely on their traditional social order, creating a vibrant tribal system that was unique in Baghdad. Unlike other Shia neighborhoods in the 1990s, there was no need to recreate a tribal system with fake sheiks. In Fedaliyah, the sheiks never left, and the tribe never lost its centrality in daily life. Second, their ostracism further stoked a deep-seated hostility to modern government and Iraqi institutions. Third, it created fertile ground for the elder Sadr’s message of Shia solidarity. Fedaliyah became both a major benefactor of Sadrist social services and supporter of the Sadrist movement.

After the fall of Saddam, Fedaliyah did not experience the chaos that many Baghdad neighborhoods experienced, maintaining “a critical measure of internal social order.” Tribal sheiks played a central role in this strong social order. They enjoyed significant authority and prestige, and they adjudicated nearly every dispute within their tribes. Fedaliyah was a loose affiliation of independent tribes, holding varying levels of authority based on seniority. Tribal adjudication, called fasel, continued throughout the US occupation, including the period of 2006-

---

197 Krohley, *The Death of the Mehdi Army*, 159, 159n.


200 Krohley, 161n.


202 International Crisis Group, “Iraq’s Civil War, the Sadrist and the Surge,” 10; Krohley, *The Death of the Mehdi Army*, 161n.
2008, whereas in other places it collapsed. This tight knit society continued to function much as it had before while social order collapsed in most other places.

In addition to adjudication, the violent traditions of the tribes underpinned the coercive and protective activities of Fedaliyah’s social order. The Marsh Arabs were willing participants in both the 1991 Shia uprising and in riots following the assassination of the elder Sadr in 1999.\textsuperscript{203} With the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime, they were one of the first neighborhoods to throw their support behind the renewed Sadrist Movement. They quickly demonstrated their value to the movement as a potential vanguard for the organization, supplying JAM’s most notorious “shock troops.”\textsuperscript{204} Just as in Kamaliyah and Amin, the Marsh Arabs provided cells who were already “passionately devoted” to the cause.\textsuperscript{205}

Though the Marsh Arabs were willing to support the Sadrist cause, they maintained their independence from the organization. As previously mentioned, JAM’s military effectiveness in 2003 was in its embryonic stages. In some neighborhoods, JAM addressed this weakness by using established cadre to recruit fighters and grow new organizations over time. In others, they accepted existing networks and cells as subordinate units as they took over neighborhoods. The well-established tribes allowed no such activity. The organization, tools, proximity, and investment of the Marsh Arab tribes far outstripped that of JAM, and they never lost the ability to perform the collective activities sufficient for social control. Fedaliyah’s social order never fragmented, and their fearsome reputation and cohesive tribal structure gave them the independence and agency necessary to maintain control over their population. JAM could not,

\textsuperscript{204} Krohley, \textit{The Death of the Mehdi Army}, 161.
\textsuperscript{205} Krohley, 151, 158.
nor did they attempt to, seize control in Fedaliyah. Instead, they opted to establish an allied relationship rather than one of senior-subordinate.\textsuperscript{206}

By 2006, Fedaliyah was a near-impregnable sanctuary over which the Marsh Arabs maintained total social control. Neither the Sunni militias or Iraqi Security Forces could enter unmolested, and JAM was confident enough to place one of their major operations centers in the middle of the neighborhood.\textsuperscript{207} The “Marsh Arabs assumed prominent positions as proxy allies” for JAM, and they were well known across Baghdad for their extreme prosecution of JAM’s sectarian agenda. When Surge forces arrived, they too found themselves unable to establish a foothold, building their closest combat outpost outside the neighborhood’s borders. The neighborhood itself was seen as “a place to go to get in a gunfight,” and for most of 2007, it resisted every attempt by the coalition to establish the proximity necessary to begin to compete for social control.\textsuperscript{208}

After a stalemate of over a year, the tribes demonstrated their social control of Fedaliyah in striking fashion. As the coalition prepared to increase its offensive operations in Tisa Nissan in the spring of 2008, there appeared to be a recalculation of the tribes’ interests and the utility of their alliance with JAM. In the weeks leading up to the offensive, a series of murders occurred within the neighborhood, followed by reports of armed factions fighting from street to street within Fedaliyah.

\textsuperscript{206} Given the disparity in martial abilities at this time, it is unlikely that JAM would have succeeded in challenging a cohesive fighting force for social control. After a year’s worth of training and preparation, JAM’s routing in Najaf in 2004 by US forces demonstrated it was still a long way from the deadly militia of 2006. It is safe to say that a fight with the Marsh Arabs in 2003 would have gone poorly.

\textsuperscript{207} Krohley, \textit{The Death of the Mehdi Army}, 149, 151.

\textsuperscript{208} International Crisis Group, “Iraq’s Civil War, the Sadrist and the Surge,” 3, 10, 21; Krohley, \textit{The Death of the Mehdi Army}, 160–61, 165.
As US forces entered the neighborhood to establish proximity, they fully expected major resistance and fighting. To their surprise, they met none. US soldiers were welcomed into the neighborhood, invited into homes, and greeted by tribal leaders. Over the course of a few short weeks, it became apparent that the alliance with JAM had apparently been dissolved. The militia had been expelled from the neighborhood, and the Marsh Arab tribes sought a new relationship with the coalition. While their interests were aligned, the Marsh Arabs allowed JAM to operate freely within the neighborhood. When interests diverged, that invitation was rescinded, and JAM was forced out. As the tribes never lost the ability to coerce, protect, and adjudicate for their population, they determined what went on inside Fedaliyah, not JAM or the US-led coalition.209

In this final case, the Marsh Arabs of Fedaliyah maintained the necessary and sufficient conditions for social control. Throughout the 1990s, following the invasion, and during the sectarian violence, the tribes maintained the ability to coerce, protect, and adjudicate for their population. In 2003, JAM identified that they were incapable of challenging the Marsh Arabs for control of Fedaliyah, and chose instead for an alliance, one that was renegotiated when the interests of the tribe changed. US forces made a similar decision when offered an alliance, choosing to bargain rather than compete. By maintaining their place in the hierarchy of social control, the Marsh Arabs tribes retained agency over the outcomes for their population.

Cross-Case Analysis
Activity vs. Identity
First, one might argue this theory ignores the issue of identity. By omitting this variable, I could be incorrectly weighting the impact of violence on social control, as JAM’s success over

the US in Bayaa could simply be explained by in-group/out-group dynamics. Though JAM’s social order may not have been preferred over other Iraqi groups, any co-ethnic group would have been preferred over control by a western coalition led by the United States. While this certainly seems to be a viable alternative explanation to Bayaa, the cases of Beladiyat and Mashtal provide evidence to the contrary. These cases seem to indicate that under certain conditions, identity matters less than other, more violent considerations.

The cores of both neighborhoods were similar in both ethnicity and class to Bayaa. As such, neither were natural supporters of the Sadrist Organization. The periphery, on the other hand, was comprised of lower-class Shia, many of whom migrated from Sadr City following the collapse of the Saddam regime. The people in these areas were the archetypical Sadrist supporters. If ethnicity determines social control, then both areas should select JAM over the US coalition, which is an alternative explanation for what happened in Bayaa. If, within ethnicity, class determines social control, then the center should reject JAM while the periphery should accept JAM’s social control. These outcomes run counter to what happened in Bayaa, but if true, they weaken the claim that collective activities determine social control.

Given there was little support for the Sadrist movement from the start in the central core of Beladiyat and Mashtal, the rejection of JAM in those areas is unsurprising. These mixed, middle-class areas had few historic ties to the elder Sadr’s movement and felt little solidarity with its new incarnation. Their political views and social biases inclined away from Sadr and towards SCIRI. These perspectives were nothing if not hardened by the indiscriminate violence levied their direction in 2006. These characteristics describe Bayaa prior to the arrival of JAM, yet that neighborhood behaved quite differently. When the core areas of Beladiyat and Mashtal were presented with an alternative – social control offered by US forces – they gladly turned
away from their co-ethnics and provided intelligence support to US forces and their weak Iraqi partners. When Bayaa was given the same choice, they continued to support OMS/JAM, with whom they shared an ethnic identity, but few other similarities. This divergence weakens the argument that ethnicity predicts popular support, and that an out-group could not establish social control when there was an in-group option.

The identity of the population in the periphery of Beladiyat and Mashtal aligned with JAM to a much greater extent that in the core areas or in Bayaa. They were lower-class, Shia migrants who had faced decades of disenfranchisement and discrimination at the hands of the state. Indeed, the only group that had provided for their needs were the Sadrists, a group with which they consistently identified and supported. Yet when given a choice between JAM and the US coalition, they also willingly and openly chose the US, rejecting the group with whom they had the greatest identity ties. To be clear, this finding does not dispute the central role a common identity plays on a group’s ability to establish social control over a population in most situations. It does, however, show that under conditions approaching anarchy, the need for security is so essential that it can trump even powerful forces like identity.

Therefore, greater explanatory power lies in the collective activities of the groups in these neighborhoods. The latent capacity, investment, and collective activities of the US forces in all three areas is effectively constant, as was the latent capacity and investment of JAM. The collective activities performed by JAM varied significantly between Bayaa and Beladiyat and Mashtal. In Bayaa, the OMS/JAM progressed up the hierarchy of social control, performing coercion, protection, and adjudication for the population, whereas D Co stopped at protection. In that neighborhood, OMS/JAM won social control, as predicted by the theory. In Beladiyat and Mashtal, JAM remained highly predatory. Even if some of the collective activities were
coercive, they still feel well short of the protection offered by the US forces. The population chose the group that was using violence to do productive things for both the group and the population. Their open rejection of JAM as soon as a viable competitor arrived was telling. In both cases where the population chose the US coalition over JAM, their collective activities, not their identity, determined which group won social control.

Is Violence Alone Enough?

Second, one could argue that the theory over-weights the importance of collective activities. It is possible that latent capacities and investment, not collective activities, drive variation in the dependent variable, social control. In Bayaa, one could argue, the population was more concerned about the violence that OMS/JAM could bring to bear on them for working with the Americans, or that the population knew the Americans would eventually leave. These factors, more than anything else, determined OMS/JAM success. While this seems to be a viable explanation for outcomes in Bayaa, the cases of Kamaliyah and Amin appear to weaken this argument.

Kamaliyah and Amin are particularly difficult cases for the theory in comparison with Bayaa. First, JAM has an identity advantage in each – both are lower-class Shia neighborhoods. Second, the Sadrist movement enjoyed a long-standing relationship with both neighborhoods. Even at the height of JAM violence, the elder Sadr was revered. Third, JAM was exceptionally violent in both places: more violent than OMS/JAM in Bayaa or US forces in either location. Therefore, if the theory fails the evaluation, there are many possible explanations, but if it passes, it significantly strengthens the claims of the theory over this alternative explanation.

If the collective activities do not matter, and violence and investment are enough, then JAM should win a competition for social control in each case. If collective activities do matter,
then JAM should win in Bayaa and lose in the other two. If the violence, investment, and collective activities have no bearing on social control, then there should be no discernible correlation between the variables.

In Kamaliyah, JAM was both predatory and coercive from 2003 through the Surge. Yet, despite their remarkable ability to use violence, the neighborhood remained chaotic and the population atomized. In Amin, JAM progressed up the hierarchy from coercion to protection. Though the evidence is silent as to whether or not JAM was specifically adjudicating from 2003 to 2006, the “social services” they were providing could have included such a function. What is more important, however, is that JAM failed to protect the population when the sectarian violence began. Their inability to prevent Sunni militias from targeting the population, combined with their decision to begin targeting the population themselves, destroyed the relationship between JAM and the population. As a result, the population atomized, hid in their homes, and avoided interaction with any group in the area.

Both Kamaliyah and Amin stand in contrast to Bayaa, where the OMS/JAM progressed up the hierarchy from their coercive and protective behavior in the first phase to the more complex collective activities of adjudication and distribution in later phases. This progression resulted in social control. That OMS/JAM was able to do this in an area outside their popular base, while JAM in Kamaliyah and Amin failed to establish social control in areas of immense popular support, further reinforces the importance of specific types of violence, not just pure martial strength, in determining which group establishes social control.

**Adjudication Without Violence?**

Finally, one could argue that this theory has misplaced its emphasis on violence. In Iraq, concepts of honor, family, and ostracism underpin traditional dispute resolution systems, not
violence. As such, adjudication, the critical step to social control, is not a function of violence in Iraq, but rather a function of norms and cultural values. The case of Fedaliyah indicates that under conditions approaching anarchy, violence is more important than norms for establishing and maintaining adjudication.

To adequately address this alternative explanation, a short background on tribal adjudication in Iraq is necessary. Iraq has a long history of tribes providing social order. In part, this order is maintained through dispute resolution, a process of mediation known as *sulha* in Arabic, meaning “settlement”, or *fasel* in Iraqi, meaning “blood money”. This mediation is based on Bedouin traditions that date back centuries, and it is a system that values honor above all else. Traditionally, crimes against others are measured in large part by the dishonor they inflict on the offended, rather than their impact or violence. A crime committed by one person against another dishonors the victim, his family, and, if he is from another tribe, the tribe as well. Honor demands that revenge be taken by the victim against the perpetrator. To prevent an unending cycle of revenge between families and tribes, the *fasel* process restores peace by restoring honor.

A tribe’s sheiks play a vital role in the process, serving variously as representatives, negotiators, investigators, or judges. Their primary function of the *fasel* is to determine what action must be taken to compensate the victim for the crime. Sanctions are agreed upon by both tribes, the recompense is paid or done, and the matter is closed. This ruling relies on the traditional and expert authority of the sheiks and is backed up not by the threat of violence but by

---

20 This term is a reference both to the reparation that is often paid as well as the process in general. Much of the information in this section comes from Carroll, “Tribal Law and Reconciliation in the New Iraq,” 12, the most detailed work on how the fasel process functioned at the neighborhood level after the 2003 invasion.

21 This term is a reference both to the reparation that is often paid as well as the process in general. Much of the information in this section comes from Carroll, “Tribal Law and Reconciliation in the New Iraq,” 12, the most detailed work on how the fasel process functioned at the neighborhood level after the 2003 invasion.
the threat of social sanction. Compliance is insured by the threat of dishonor: loss of status within the tribe, social ostracism, or, in extreme cases, expulsion from the tribe and its protections. This sanction may have been done forcibly in the past, but in its modern conception, compliance is insured by norms.212

With the modernization efforts of the Qasim and Ba’athist periods, the fasel process went dormant for most of the second half of the 20th Century. In rural areas, tribes maintained some adjudication responsibility, but in the cities, and most markedly, in Baghdad, tribal adjudication ceased as state institutions provided law and order for Iraqis.213 This changed when Saddam Hussein struggled to regain control over many parts of the country during the Shia uprising of 1991. With state institutions failing, he turned to the tribes to assist with re-establishing his regime’s control over the restive areas.214 Over the course of the decade, Saddam systematically devolved power from withering state institutions to tribal leaders. Since most tribal leaders were eliminated or marginalized in previous decades, newly-minted sheiks were created and given de-facto authority over many social services, to include adjudication.215 In 1996, some tribes were officially given legal authority over administrative issues. By the time of the invasion, tribal authority had expanded in some areas to include adjudication of capital crimes such as rape and murder.216

Compared to the rest of Iraq, Baghdad’s tribal structures were the weakest. The effects of decades of de-tribalization and institutional expansion meant that the tribes had little sway,
especially amongst the Shia population.217 Even during the sanctions area, Baghdad’s social services received priority over periphery areas. The state functioned better there than anywhere else. Yet, with the fall of Saddam, the subsequent dissolution of state institutions, and the inability for the new government to extend its reach beyond the Green Zone, a demand for tribal adjudication grew within the city. The young sheiks saw an opportunity to expand their role, and the fasel process began again in Baghdad.218

Shortly after it began, the fasel process ended with the sectarian violence of 2006. Many sheiks fled, and those who stayed found their system of discussion and negotiation to have little value in the face of the unilateral authority exercised by American forces and militias. Furthermore, someone who disagreed with the sheik’s decision could now hire a militia member to kill the sheik, or, with the anonymity provided by chaos, simply do it themselves.

As with Bayaa, militias set up courts in many neighborhoods to adjudicate disputes. A sheik making a ruling in the same area put him in the dangerous position of openly opposing a militia.219 Most sheiks in Baghdad had no network upon which they could build local support to counter the militias’ influence. In Amin, when asked a sheik was asked if he or any of his peers had the ability to raise a militia to enforce rules and take control of the neighborhood, he responded, "This is Baghdad, not Anbar".220 The sheiks had no capacity to use violence to coerce or protect a population, let alone adjudicate the rulings of their tribal agreements and

217 Marten, Warlords, 155.
218 According to interviews with citizens recorded in Carroll, “Tribal Law and Reconciliation in the New Iraq,” 16, these services came with an ever-increasing price tag.
219 Carroll, 11n, 19.
220 Krohley, The Death of the Mehdi Army, 147n.
judgements. Without such a mechanism, there was no way they could resist the expansion of JAM and maintain their social control.\textsuperscript{221} As another sheik noted:

"The violence left no space for the tribes to enter and operate. There was no hope of justice because of the chaos. Even if there was a judgment nobody followed the orders. No one could ask for his rights because of the situation. You couldn't come and ask the shaykh for your rights because the shaykh couldn't give them to you."

This trend seems to support the theory's claims about violence carrying the greatest importance and overwhelming systems that operate on norms or social sanctions.

In Bayaa, as with most of Baghdad, tribal leaders existed and the \textit{fasel} process occurred prior to 2006, but it fell apart in the face of overwhelming violence. Without control over violence, they could not enforce their rulings on social sanction alone. When tribal leaders were empowered as part of the reconciliation process to resume \textit{fasel}, it was only with the tacit approval of JAM, the group that had control over violence, and therefore, social control.

In Fedaliyah, the tribes never lost their authority. They repeatedly resisted challengers (or in the case of JAM, potential challengers) with their impressive capacity to control violence and use it effectively. This allowed them to retain their independence and their agency to provide order in their neighborhood. While it is safe to assume that social sanction contributed to the order the tribes provided, this comparison indicates that the social sanction was backed up by the capacity for violence that the tribes maintained. Therefore, it appears that social sanction alone is insufficient for social control. Violence is required.

\textsuperscript{221} Krohley, 146n.
\textsuperscript{222} Carroll, "Tribal Law and Reconciliation in the New Iraq," 19.
Conclusions

These five cases demonstrate that under conditions approaching anarchy, a group’s collective activities consistently predict whether it establishes social control. This finding suggests that alternative explanations that have explanatory power under different conditions have less utility in this context. Across the cases, no one group consistently won social control. From neighborhood to neighborhood, groups that possessed latent capacity and investment had agency to both compete for and win social control, regardless of identity, level of violence, or cultural traditions and norms. The group’s ability to progress up the hierarchy mattered most.

Though none of the cross-case comparisons decisively prove my theory correct, each one strengthens some of the central claims of the theory. The cases of Beladiyat and Mashtal address the most common alternative explanation for JAM success in Baghdad from 2006 to 2008, that ethnic and class identity determined who won competitions for social control. If identity was universally deterministic, the demographic similarities shared by central Beladiyat and Mashtal and Bayaa (Shia, middle class) should result in similar outcomes for JAM. Yet, JAM lost in the central areas and won in Bayaa. Second, identity predicts victory for JAM in the periphery and defeat in Bayaa, yet the opposite occurred. Finally, in a choice between a co-ethnic and a western group, identity theories predict co-ethnic success, yet in Beladiyat and Mashtal, the US succeeded in establishing a level of social control. In each of these cases, my theory consistently predicts the observed outcome: the group that more effectively used violence by progressing up the hierarchy of collective activities won the competition.

---

223 It is worth noting that the US was unable to consolidate its victory over JAM in Beladiyat and Mashtal. Despite winning the competition with JAM, the US and its government of Iraq partners never provided adjudication. As a result, the areas remained unstable, and local strong men emerged to challenge the government for control after the departure of the US. See Krohley, The Death of the Mehdi Army, 174.
Kamaliyah and Amin provide support to my claim that the independent variable—collective activities—is doing most of the work in the theory, and that the right combination of collective activities is sufficient for social control. If I am incorrect, then a group with high levels of latent capacity, investment, or both could establish social control without performing the specific set of collective activities I suggest. In these neighborhoods, JAM had high levels of organization, tools, proximity, and investment. By the time the Surge arrived, JAM in Kamaliyah and Amin was far more capable than JAM in Bayaa. Yet, in both cases, they quickly lost the competition for social control to US forces. In Kamaliyah, JAM never progressed past predation and coercion. In Amin, protection and distribution were conducted for years but ceased after the sectarian fighting of 2006. If capacity for violence matters more than what one does with that capacity, then JAM should have maintained social control in all three neighborhoods. In Kamaliyah and Amin, however, they lost to the US coalition. Only in Bayaa, where OMS/JAM adjudicated, did the Sadrists maintain social control. This is consistent with the predictions of my theory and strengthens its claim of the central role adjudication plays in social control.

Finally, the case of Fedaliyah poses an alternative source of social control: the traditional authority and social sanctioning mechanisms of the fasel process. It is clear that fasel and social sanctioning were ongoing in Fedaliyah. That fasel continued only in the place where the tribe also had control over violence is telling. It indicates that violence, not social sanction, compels behavior. The breakdown of the fasel process in places where the sheiks did not have the capacity for violence, as happened in Bayaa, indicates that social sanction alone is insufficient for social control.
These comparisons also highlight aspects of the theory that need further study. The outcomes of these comparisons suggest that the measures of the dependent variable, social control, need greater refinement. For this study, social control is coded as a binary. If a group adjudicated and if it provided the population specific services related to violence, then it is coded as having established social control. Under social control, a reciprocal relationship exists between the population and the group, resources are voluntarily exchanged between the two, and the population becomes productive. This specification seems to be supported by the evidence, but the measurements and indicators of the outcomes of predation, coercion, and protection need greater refinement. These tests offer two new conclusions.

First, these comparisons highlight consistent observable implications of no social control under predation and coercion. Krohely repeatedly refers to the populations of Beladiyat, Mashtal, Kamaliyah, and to a lesser extent, Amin, as being “atomized” under JAM, a term I borrow as well. When a population is atomized, there is no civil society, no basis for collective action. Trust is lost amongst the population, families become the highest social unit, and day-to-day survival dominates individual action. Under such conditions, the population is minimally productive. Under conditions of extreme violence, such as the anarchy that exists when groups are only predatory or coercive, atomization occurs. This is the state of the population of Bayaa during the first phase of the competition between OMS/JAM and D Co, and it is the state that widely exists during the sectarian cleansing of 2006. Therefore, a more precise articulation of the state of social control under predation or coercion is “atomization”. This also appears to be the set of observable indicators of the scope conditions under which this theory operates.

Second, there appears to be a middle state of the dependent variable between social control and atomization. When US forces win the support of the population in Beladiyat and
Mashtal, they were clearly a better alternative to JAM and the semi-state of social control created by protection was welcomed. Yet, discontent and pessimism in the population continued. Tension between middle-class and lower-class Shia continued to run high, stunting development and, at times, becoming violent.\textsuperscript{224} Though US forces won the competition for social control in Kamaliyah and Amin, it was due less to a reciprocal relationship than an opportunity to extract vengeance against JAM. With no way to resolve disputes, civil society remained fractured. Though the population began to resume its economic activity, trust remained low, social progress was stunted, and unrest was high. As Krohley summarizes, "The goodwill achieved through gains in public safety was offset, therefore, by festering discontent over continued problems with essential services, creating an atmosphere of frustration and disenchantment."\textsuperscript{225} While these comparisons are not conclusive, but they suggest that protection yields some form of unstable social control, one where equilibrium is elusive and future competition for control is likely. As the gains of the Surge failed to translate into long term control for the Iraqi government, this intermediate state demands greater investigation and future research.

\textsuperscript{224} Krohley, 174.  
\textsuperscript{225} Krohley, 147.
Chapter 6 – Analysis, Application, and Future Research

This dissertation investigated how groups establish and maintain social control when the complex web of institutions, norms, and systems that normally provide order is absent. It proposed a new theoretical construct, derived from an application of social science theory to the competition for social control that occurred in Baghdad, Iraq from 2006 to 2008. It developed and evaluated hypotheses that helped define what was both necessary and sufficient for a group to establish social control over a population under conditions approaching anarchy.

Based on the empirical investigation of this study, it seems that a group must do three things to establish social control. First, a group must develop or possess specific latent capacities that enable them to credibly control violence. Second, groups must apply violence in purposeful ways, ascending a hierarchy of increasingly complex collective activities to establish social control. Finally, social control is achieved only when the group uses violence to provide a specific set of benefits that return utility, not just to the group, but to the population it seeks to control as well.

Is the analysis in this study decisive, definitively answering a question that has puzzled researchers for centuries? No. This dissertation does, however, provide a window into the primordial origins of social order and how it re-forms when government and civil society break down. As it is rare for a social scientist to observe human interaction under such conditions, the limited data and rough methodological comparisons used in this study still provide valuable insight into the process, despite their flaws.

In Bayaa, different groups interacted with the population in different ways. Their choices – specifically, how they chose to use violence – determined which group established social
control more than any other factor. The Sunnis and SCIRI had a vested interest in the neighborhood, but quickly found that they lacked the capacity to effectively compete. They ceased to have an impact on the population. The local and National Police sought only survival for themselves, caring little for what went on around and within the population. As a result, the population cared little for them, and these groups did not contribute to social order in Bayaa.

OMS/JAM and D Co were different. Both sought to create a relationship with the population, providing benefits in exchange for support. Both sought to create order within the neighborhood and keep other groups from taking control. Despite their significant material advantages, D Co lost the competition to OMS/JAM.

Adjudication was the essential activity that OMS/JAM performed that D Co did not. I have no direct evidence confirming that this was the single, decisive difference between the two groups. I have no public speeches, written diaries, interviews, or surveys of the population that unequivocally prove that the provision of law and order caused the population to choose the Sadrists over D Co. It does seem that D Co attempted nearly every other alternative activity to win popular support. The company was coercive when it needed to be, but not overly so. It demonstrated its willingness and ability to protect the population early in the competition and continued to do so over the course of the year. It distributed charity, started contracts for generators and trash removal, and granted money to small businesses to help restart the economy. By 2008, it is even reasonable to assess that D Co was outperforming OMS/JAM in many ways, yet still the population remained committed to the relationship with the Sadrists, their social control, and their order.

The comparative cases with the neighborhoods in Tisa Nissan suggest that alternative explanations of OMS/JAM success in Bayaa – they shared identity with the population, they
were more violent than the coalition, the stickiness of tribal norms – do not predict the outcomes of competitions more consistently than the hierarchy of social control. In most of the world, shared identity between the group in control and the population is essential for stability, yet this study shows that under conditions approaching anarchy, the need for security overrides this strong impulse. Though the co-ethnic group won in Bayaa, it lost in Beladiyat and Mashtal, two neighborhoods where JAM was a predator, not a provider. This study undercuts the idea that the strongest always wins. JAM was far more violent in Kamaliyah and Amin than the coalition, yet as soon as the US became a credible competitor, the population switched sides. The population chose the group that was protective over the one that was purely extractive. Finally, this study shows how norm-based orders – the adjudication of tribal sheiks – broke down when faced with violent opposition. The only tribes that maintained social control throughout this period were the Marsh Arabs, who also controlled violence. The tribal leaders who lacked that capacity lost their ability to adjudicate, and therefore provide control. Though the evidence presented here falls well short of proving the theory true, it does suggest that this theory provides scholars and policy makers a heuristic model that both can use to help them understand, in any given area, (1) who is in control, (2) who might be able to take control, and (3) what a group must do to succeed in a competition for control.

The empirical analysis of Bayaa and Tisa Nissan highlighted three areas where the theory of social control is weak and needs further testing and refinement. First, in this study, social control is a binary state: a group either has control or it does not. Yet, the comparative cases of Tisa Nissan show that an intermediate phase exists. In Beladiyat, Mashtal, Kamaliyah, and Amin, the group that progressed to the most complex collective activity while maintaining lower-level functions won the competition. This is consistent with the theory. However, since
US forces only progressed to protection, not adjudication, the neighborhoods languished under a malaise of unrest and instability. The population emerged from the atomization that existed under JAM, but since no group was regulating the daily interaction between members of the population, they could not fully focus on productive activities. As a result, these neighborhoods continued to experience low-level conflict and discontent, and they remained unstable. This finding – a middle state of unstable social control – needs greater definition, research, and analysis.

Second, the rough analysis of the role of identity presented here is a significant finding. It appears that when choosing between a predatory or coercive group and one offering protection or adjudication, populations are willing to prioritize the behavior of the group over its identity. This dissertation does not go far enough, however, to determine when those priorities change. This study does not, for example, compare Bayaa to a case where an in-group is offering protection and an out-group is offering adjudication. Such a comparison would be a hard test for the theory. Furthermore, it seems logical that when choosing between an in-group or an out-group performing the same collective activities, the population would choose the in-group. Future study must test this intuition. Lastly, this study shows that an outgroup can establish social control, but it does not investigate what is necessary and sufficient for such a group to maintain it. It seems that an outgroup that wishes to maintain control must increasingly take into account the population’s previous traditions, customs, and norms as the competition recedes into memory. As the population moves further and further away from anarchy, other sources of social control and order likely increase in value and salience. Incorporating and adapting to the population’s wishes and will may be antithetical to the group, especially if they are from a different tradition, as is the case with a third-party intervener like the United States in a post-
conflict situation. Understanding the half-life of a third-party’s social control is an essential next step for this theory.

Third, access to intelligence and information about the population and other groups is an essential element of success in a competition for social control. Yet, this concept is under-theorized in this study. The theory currently accounts for intelligence in two ways: first, as an important by-product of latent capacity, and second, as an observable indication of popular support. An exchange of intelligence and information as part of the reciprocal relationship between the group and the population as part of social control is sound; more refinement of the impact of intelligence and information on a group’s ability to perform collective activities is needed. The theory specifies that a group must be able to use violence in specific and deliberate ways. In the case of Bayaa, OMS/JAM had access to significantly more information and intelligence than D Co. They knew or quickly found out who was Sunni and where they lived, enabling them to apply their coercive activities to a specific population. Their intelligence networks facilitated accurate targeting of D Co or Sunni militants as they demonstrated their ability to protect the population. Knowledge of the people and their activities helped them effectively adjudicate disputes and resolve conflict. Conversely, D Co’s effectiveness in the competition improved over time, and their information about the population and their intelligence on OMS/JAM increased on roughly the same curve.

A simple explanation for this phenomenon is that intelligence is a conditioning variable in the theory, a necessary condition to move up the hierarchy of social control. There is, however, an endogeneity problem. The level and type of information and intelligence that a group needs to succeed in such a competition is dependent, at least in part, on popular provision, which does not happen en masse until adjudication. Despite massive progress in data analysis
and technical intelligence collection, there is still some information which is only accessed by talking with people. The group’s behavior (i.e., its collective activities) influences these conversations. If the group is coercive, the intelligence acquired may not be credible.\textsuperscript{226} If a group is only protective, then it is unlikely that they have the consistent, embedded interactions with the population to build the trust that is often required for people to divulge sensitive information. The case of Bayaa shows that when a group offers protection, there are often early adopters who provide intelligence that helps the fight, but the reasons and theoretical boundaries of this provision are under-specified. The provision of information and intelligence only becomes consistent and reliable when interactions are consistent and reliable – the state that exists under adjudication. It is unclear if information and intelligence provision under protection is enough for the group to successfully build to adjudication, or if a group must provide adjudication first to get the information and intelligence necessary to defeat another group. Greater specificity of intelligence provision under protection, to include accompanying measurements and boundaries between other phases is necessary to disentangle this problem in future studies.

Future Research

These weaknesses suggest avenues of future research to resolve these problems and better understand competitions for social control. First, more work is needed on how different groups competed for social control in Iraq from 2006 to 2008. This study focuses on the competition for control over neighborhoods in Baghdad between Shia groups and the US forces partnered with

\textsuperscript{226} The unreliability of coerced information and intelligence is well-established. The U.S. Army manual that covers human intelligence collection articulates it well: “Use of torture is not only illegal but also it is a poor technique that yields unreliable results, may damage subsequent collection efforts, and can induce the source to say what he thinks the HUMINT collector wants to hear.” In U. S. Army, \textit{FM 2-22.3 Human Intelligence Collector Operations} (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2006), 5–21.
the government of Iraq. Though it necessarily controls for a wide variety of confounders to help illustrate the validity of the theory, it also raises questions of generalizability. Expanding the study to investigate how the competition for social control played out in Sunni neighborhoods is an easy next step, as is taking the study out of Baghdad to cities like Mosul and Basra that have different demographic and political variables in play. Looking beyond urban contexts into the rural areas where traditional social structures hold greater influence could better test the importance of violence and adjudication over social sanction.

Second, further definition and specification of the measurements of each of the variables is necessary to more precisely differentiate between groups. The measurements of latent capacity and investment in this study rely on external observation and binary values (e.g. the group either has the tools that gives it a marked advantage over the population or it does not). Sharpening these measures with a more rigorous scoring methodology based on tangible and specific qualities facilitates a more precise, quantitative evaluation of groups and their behavior. Such a typology would enable precise coding of large numbers of neighborhoods, facilitating more advanced quantitative analysis of the theory across Iraq during this timeframe. Survey data and interviews with the population would provide greater information than simply observing behaviors, providing insight into the thinking and motivation of the populations in question.

Third, when this analysis ends in 2008, the Government of Iraq barely functions. Yet, in 2018, some Sunni families have returned to Bayaa, a local government is established, and OMS/JAM is gone. Their headquarters is once again a civil courthouse run by the Iraqi government. What occurred in the intervening ten years, and what does my theory have to say about what transpired? Did the neighborhood pass out of the scope conditions under which this
theory applies, or was there another factor that influenced these changes that damages the validity of this theory? Further research is needed to answer these questions.

Finally, out of sample testing is essential to understand the generalizability of this theory. There seems to be a wide variety of contexts where social control might be contested and where this heuristic model could be used, but this dissertation only hints at the theory's limits and boundaries. Exporting this theory to a wider range of contexts with different structural and temporal variables will help define the conditions under which this theory has explanatory power. Future research must discover where and when the theory fails, and why.

Academic Conclusions
This study demonstrates that when society breaks down, violence has the power to overwhelm almost every other source of order. When order first broke down following the initial invasion in 2003, and again following the Samarra Mosque bombing, the city exploded with widespread violence, looting, and death. There were no limits on behavior and nothing to stop one person from doing whatever they wished to another. In the face of such violence, the instinct for survival and self-preservation took over. Civil society atomized. Families, fearing for their safety and survival, retreated to the confines of their homes and acted solely in their own interest. Laws, traditions, and norms held little value – the strongest groups simply did what they wanted. The capacity for collective action or resistance evaporated, and with it the population's ability to solve problems on its own. To bring order to this level of chaos, a group must first deal with violence on behalf of the population. To establish control, a group had to first control violence and then use it to bring order.

This study also shows that violence alone is not enough. From the local and National Police in Bayaa, to the youthful gangs in Belladiyat and Mashtal, to the criminal networks and
special groups fighters in Kamaliyah and Amin, using violence exclusively for the group’s gain did little to help the group gain control or provide order. A group must use violence in specific ways, channeling it to maximum effect. These activities are complex and costly, yet when performed, they provide benefit to both the population and the group, solidifying the control of the latter over the former. OMS/JAM followed this progression with significant success in Bayaa. The Marsh Arabs in Fedaliyah never lost the ability to perform these activities throughout the period of study, and never lost their social control. When the US established itself as a credible competitor in the areas where JAM was predatory, and performed at a higher level than JAM, the population threw its support behind the coalition. Interestingly, it appears that JAM in Amin progressed up the hierarchy of collective activities and achieved some measure of social control, only to lose it when they chose to become predators rather than providers.

It also suggests that other, non-violent sources of order contribute to social control only when the right violent behaviors are in place. D Co’s attempts at distribution did not help it gain social control in Bayaa, but those attempts did appear to help the OMS/JAM in Bayaa and the Marsh Arab tribes in Fedaliyah provide order within their populations. While adjudication is the key step towards social order, this function relies on the group’s ability to credibly threaten or selectively apply violence to the population to insure compliance with the rulings of the group. The adjudication provided by OMS/JAM and the Marsh Arabs was backed by their ability to use violence. In Bayaa, rulings by sheiks without violence were useless. Though the collective activities in the hierarchy are only one of many sources of social order in a developed society or state, this study shows that a group must ascend the hierarchy of violent collective activities before any of the other sources of social order can begin to take hold.

249
Furthermore, this study shows that individual actors can have a significant effect on strategic success. Following electoral success in late 2005 and the outbreak of violence in early 2006, the Sadrist organization seized upon the opportunity to take control of Baghdad and create a permanent Shia majority built from their political base. Their tactical plan in support of this strategic goal was a forced migration of Sunnis from the city, replaced by needy Shia families. Despite outward appearances, this study shows the success of this plan varied widely. Maps that showed the change over time from mixed areas to Shia betrayed the reality on the ground. Shia may have dominated those neighborhoods, but support for OMS/JAM was contingent on how the group behaved in each neighborhood. In places like Bayaa, where the leadership of the group provided the right mix of violence and rules, the Sadrist enjoyed significant success in the face of an effective US competitor. In places like Kamaliyah and Mashtal, where JAM chose to prey on the population, JAM was reviled. Neighborhoods like Amin show that when JAM decided to provide for the population, they enjoyed solid support. When they dropped their social services, the population looked for an alternative. Furthermore, each of these neighborhoods at times seemed to operate independently of Sadr's directives. Though he seemed to have direct influence on the behavior of Special Groups, local OMS/JAM organizations operated independently. Violence continued in Bayaa well past the August 2007 ceasefire, and JAM in Kamaliyah, Mashtal, and Amin followed a similar pattern. Local groups had agency, and their decisions had a direct impact on the larger organization.

Finally, this concept refines several classic theories of social order. Charles Tilly, Margret Levi, and Mancur Olson provide excellent explanations of why a group might move from one type of behavior to another. They explain the rational motivations for groups to move from one form of governance to another, why a group would take on a task like providing social
order or governing, and why some forms of governance provide better outcomes to satisfy these
groups’ interests.\textsuperscript{227} This dissertation leaves those concerns somewhat to the side and
investigates \textit{how} a group actually makes the transition from one set of behaviors to another, what
capacities a group must possess to successfully ascend the hierarchy, and what both do to
contribute to social control.

\textbf{Policy Conclusions}

This study revises some of the common interpretations of the Iraq war and suggests new
lessons that policy makers might derive from the conflict. This dissertation suggests a revised
counter-factual for US operations in Iraq at two critical junctures. First, it suggests that the
coalition might have had greater initial success in achieving its objectives if it had a better
understanding what was both necessary and sufficient for social control in post-conflict
situations. Second, the Surge might have had more long-lasting effects if the US had a more viable partner in the Iraqi Government. Protecting the population was not enough. Had the US
focused its efforts on providing law and order through greater oversight of the local police forces and distribution of the Iraqi judicial system, success might have come earlier and to more places.

The first counter-factual asks who could have established social control after the invasion? The invasion that successfully toppled the Saddam Hussein regime also shut down the state institutions that had maintained social order in many places in the country. Widespread looting and violence in the first weeks underscored the chaos that can follow a successful campaign for regime change. Under these conditions, this theory suggests that re-establishing social control is contingent on forces that have the organizational capacity, tools, and proximity

to the population and investment in the process to establish social control. These forces must be able to compel, protect, and adjudicate disputes amongst the population. In the case of Iraq, the coalition had two potential groups who might be able to provide social control: the remnants of the Iraqi regime’s institutions, or the US-led coalition themselves. Modern orthodoxy suggests that a foreign military taking control of a conquered country’s population is a bad idea. Yet, there is a long history of the US military, specifically the US Army, successfully providing governance, law, and order for various durations in post-conflict situations. But, as the coalition desired to leave Iraq as quickly as possible, it invaded with forces far less than what was necessary to establish social control. This left the responsibility for re-establishing social control to Iraqi institutions. Unfortunately, the most effective Iraqi security, law, and order institutions were dismantled by Coalition Provisional Orders #1 and #2, leaving the task to its least capable force – the local police – and a barely functioning legal system.

When considered against the theory of social control, the logic of these decisions seems suspect. First, the decision to leave as quickly as possible was justified in part by the belief that the Iraqi people would never accept western forces exercising the rule of law over them. While this may be true for an extended period, this dissertation suggests that when faced with chaos, people care less about identity than they do about security and order. Secondly, the most capable Iraqi institutions were disbanded under similar thinking: the Iraqi people wanted to see the Ba’athists punished and would no longer accept their rule. While this may have been true for the higher-level leadership, the mid-level bureaucrats and non-intelligence security forces might have overcome this identity issue by working with US forces to provide order. Third, despite the

rhetoric of the Coalition Provisional Authority, the US government, and the US military that stated restoring law and order was a top priority, observable actions by the coalition following the invasion indicate this was not the case. The coalition selected the least-capable Iraqi Security Force on which to reconstruct their law and order institutions. The accompanying effort to train, equip, and advise the Iraqi police force was massively underfunded and undermanned. If these functions were a top priority, these choices are troubling. This dissertation shows that social control is the essential first step to creating a social order, and by ignoring it, efforts in other areas were marginally effective in moving the new government forward. Instead of consolidating the military victory into positive political outcomes, the US instead set off a competition for social control, one that was won by a variety of militias the US would fight years later.

The second counter-factual, if US forces had a stronger Iraqi government partner during the Surge, outcomes could have been different. With the outbreak of sectarian violence in 2006, the US was once again presented with the opportunity to compete for social control under conditions approaching anarchy. The theoretical requirements for success remained the same – a group with enough capacity and investment to perform the collective activities that lead to social control. This time the coalition selected a middle approach, choosing to provide the force necessary to compete for social control, but relying on the fledgling Iraqi government to provide the law and order functions for the local population, a function it was unprepared to provide.

As chapter four showed, this was the fatal flaw in D Co’s operations in Bayaa, causing the population to choose OMS/JAM over the coalition. In other areas where JAM was a predator, the coalition was able to win the competition and establish a marginal level of social control. Even in those areas – Beladiyat, Mashtal, Kamaliyah, and Amin – the inability of the
government to provide law and order led to continued unrest, especially after the departure of the coalition.\textsuperscript{229} Despite the meaning of Operation Fardh al-Qanoon – Enforcing the Law – the coalition had almost no ability to actually do so, nor did they understand the criticality of this failure. As a result, the coalition was, in many places, unable to ascend the hierarchy and non-state groups established social control in many parts of the city. Had the US helped the government of Iraq develop more useful forces – specifically local police and a functioning legal system that could extend the reach of the central government – perhaps the outcome would have changed.

This dissertation appears to indicate that the counter-factual for both periods is that if the US had invaded with enough force, brought with them the military and civilian civil affairs support, and had the authority to establish governance functions immediately following the fall of the regime, the US might have avoided the open competition for social control in the aftermath of the invasion. Greater investment in the rehabilitation of security forces and law and order institutions, rather than their disbandment, half-hearted reconstitution, and training, could have prevented the rise of the conditions that led to the civil war of 2006 and the extension of the US commitment from the Surge.

Even if the first opportunity was missed, the Surge again created the conditions where the US could establish social control, if they had a viable security force partner that was willing and able to adjudicate the behavior of the population. In theory, had the US focused its training efforts of the Iraqi Army less on counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency, and more on policing functions, then perhaps they could have taken on greater responsibilities in the neighborhoods of

\textsuperscript{229} Krohley, \textit{The Death of the Mehdi Army}, 172–76.
Baghdad. Similarly, if the coalition had focused all its institutional development effort on the legal and justice systems, a functioning court system might have been possible by 2007. The addition of US forces could have set the conditions for courts who could address the needs of the population to extend to the neighborhoods of Baghdad.

The question remains, however, if this was possible in practice. In FM 3-24, the five essential lines of effort in a counterinsurgency, the areas an external intervener must address in order to succeed, are security, host nation security forces, governance, economic development, and essential services. The provision of law and order through a legal or justice system is a sub-requirement underneath governance, just one of many institutions the manual identifies as necessary for success. When one considers it took the US Army three years, hundreds of millions of dollars, and countless man hours to build a marginally functional Iraqi Army, it should be no surprise that the court system was in no condition to function outside the Green Zone. Notwithstanding the significant efforts by elements of the executive branch, such as the State Department, the Justice Department, and the United States Agency for International Development (among others), the US lacked an expeditionary capability to build government institutions outside of the military. As such, the development of governing systems was largely left to Iraqi elected leaders, newly appointed bureaucrats, and a handful of US advisors. Rather than focusing on the hard work of extending the reach of the central government, ministries became spoils fought over by political parties and sources of revenue for their members. When the Surge forces arrived, there were no institutions to bring to the neighborhoods.

The training efforts of both the US military and other government agencies were operating at maximum capacity and yielding, at best, marginal military capability and corrupt government institutions. It is difficult to envision, even with an alternative focus, a scenario
where a better outcome was possible. By choosing not to establish social control after the invasion and then deciding to build a government and its accompanying institutions from scratch, the United States set Iraq on a path of instability and weakness that the Surge strategy was incapable of fixing. Small gains were made, but as recent events show, Iraq is a depressingly weak state, even after billions of dollars in vested and hundreds of thousands of lives lost.

With the increased understanding of the realities of establishing social control out of near anarchical conditions, such as exist following major conflict, this theory raises many questions that a state must ask itself if it is considering the use of military force to achieve its objectives. If an intervener has maximal military goals – to destroy a regime and replace it with a government more favorable to the intervener’s interests – then it must realize that a competition for social control will likely follow success. If the intervener is willing to bear the full costs of winning such a competition, in terms of, among other things, force, resources, casualties, time, and public opinion, then perhaps an invasion makes sense. When facing an extreme threat, such as the Axis powers in World War II, it seems that these costs are worth the investment. If not, then other questions arise. Is it possible to calibrate the amount of destruction to the state and its institutions so that a viable partner for establishing social control remains? Given the fog and friction of war that makes these sorts of precise calculations difficult at best, it seems unlikely. If calibrated destruction is not possible and the intervener is unwilling to bear the costs on its own, then is the intervener willing to accept open competition for social control within its adversary? Such competitions have uncertain outcomes, as shown by Iraq and Libya. If such outcomes are undesirable, then the use of military force appears ill-advised. Thinking hard about these questions and their answers is essential as a state plans for the post-conflict consolidation of military success.
Application

Potential applications for this dissertation exist wherever an existing social order collapses and fragments. It is especially applicable in areas where this collapse occurs in a short period of time, such as in post-conflict situations. The framework and conclusions presented in this theory provide policy makers with a heuristic model with which they can assess the impact of military operations on the immediate post-conflict situation, such as in Iraq in 2003.

Understanding the implications for destroying the social order of another state can help leaders decide to modify their objectives to avoid a competition for social control, or allocate the necessary forces, resources, and time to win the post conflict competition as part of the consolidation of military victory into the attainment of a favorable political outcome.230

A social order can collapse because of events other than military intervention. Civil wars often cause collapse of a regime, a fragmentation of civil society, or both. This framework could be used to evaluate the popular support and stability of ISIS control over cities in Iraq and Syria in recent years.231 It has potential application in areas of economic crisis and state contraction, as happened in many African countries in the 1980s and 1990s, where a combination of factors triggered competitions for social control as rulers turned away from developmental policies toward predatory behavior.232

This dissertation can also operate as an assessment tool to determine which group exercises control over an area. Though the world is neatly divided into states, there are many

230 Schadlow, *War and the Art of Governance* provides a relatively complete typology of United States post-conflict outcomes. This listing includes examples of where the US did it well (Philippine War, Japan, Germany) and where the US did it poorly (unsurprisingly, Iraq and Afghanistan).


257
parts of the world where the state has little to no control over the population. The state is often
the default partner for other nations, non-governmental organizations, and businesses, yet if the
state is not the provider of social control, then it may be difficult for those organizations to
achieve their objectives. In areas where the state is weak, failing, or non-existent, control is
often held by a variety of non-state actors, be they tribes, religious leaders, criminal networks, or
some other form of civil society. Depending on one's objectives, any one of these may be a
more viable partner than the state. Often many groups co-exist together, playing different roles
for the population and carrying varying levels of influence. Disentangling which group has the
power to direct collective action and influence the behavior of the population is vital, not only
for ground-level units, but also for strategic leaders, planners, and policy makers. This
theoretical construct can be used to clarify the structure of a social order and to determine which
group has control.

Finally, this theory has application in circumstances when states or other groups initiate a
competition for social control. Rather than relying on an exogenous shock to spur a competition,
rival groups can initiate a competition for control when they attempt to expand their influence.
From the beginning of the post-colonial period to present day, states commonly set of
competitions for control when they sought to establish a direct relationship with their
populations. This construct provides suggests various lines of operation that, if pursued, could
weaken the social control of their adversaries. In the case of a state attempting to take control
from non-state groups, the state could attack the organizational capacity of their adversary,
targeting the leadership, cohesiveness, and trust that enables it to perform complex collective

---

233 Excellent comparative studies on how these kinds of state building endeavors are discussed in Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*; and Waldner, *State Building and Late Development*. 233
activities. The state could also target their adversary’s supply of weapons, ammunition, or materiel that allows the organization to maintain its coercive advantage over the population. It could physically force its adversary to leave the area, taking away its proximity and its influence over the population. The state could alter the incentive structure for the group in charge, lowering their investment in the area by providing members of the group alternative sources of resources, prestige, or both, by giving them positions of power or influence within the government in exchange for the group’s control over an area. Finally, the state could disrupt the collective activities of the group by providing the population better protection and adjudication, enticing the population to throw their support behind the state rather than the group. To succeed, a state would likely need to pursue all these lines of operation to some degree or another, but as the theory shows, the state must not just degrade the capacity of the group currently in charge, it must also be ready to provide a viable alternative for the population.

This is by no means an easy task. As this study highlights, establishing social control is an exceedingly costly and time-consuming task, even if the social order is naturally disrupted. Unnaturally generating such disruption, in addition to being costly, could introduce significant violence within the population, polarizing the people against the state. This is especially true if the existing social order is popular amongst the population. Furthermore, if the state disrupts the current social order, but is unprepared to replace it with its own institutions, then it could trigger a much wider competition where other groups challenge the state for social control. These are the risks currently faced by the Brazilian government as it attempts to reassert itself over the crime bosses in Rio’s favelas. City governments in the United States will face similar challenges when they attempt to re-enter inner-city areas ruled by gangs. When used as an assessment tool,
whether by an external intervener or a state considering internal expansion of control, this theory illustrates the costs, risks, and difficulties one will likely face undertaking this kind of endeavor.

This dissertation attempts to shed light on an apparently simple question – who’s in charge here? Though answering the question in Iraq was anything but simple, this work takes initial steps towards providing both academic researchers and active practitioners better tools for finding an answer. This dissertation illustrates what is necessary and sufficient to win a competition for control. It should also caution anyone who is faced with such a competition that success is neither simple nor straightforward.
Bibliography

http://www.understandingwar.org/region/9-nissan-
%D8%AA%D8%B3%D8%B9%D8%A9-
%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%86.
283.
Al-Khalidi, Ashraf, and Victor Tanner. Sectarian Violence: Radical Groups Drive Internal
Project on Internal Displacement, 2006.
Allawi, Ali A. The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace. Yale University
“Al-Sadr Stays a Cut above the Rest.” Al Jazeera, June 29, 2005.
Behn, Sharon. “Militias Force Thousands of Iraqis to Flee.” The Washington Times, April 19,
Bensahel, Nora, Olga Oliker, Keith Crane, R. Richard Jr, and Heather S. Gregg. After Saddam:
Prewar Planning and the Occupation of Iraq. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation,
2008.
Bouckaert, Peter. “Nowhere to Flee: The Perilous Situation of Palestinians in Iraq.” Human
Rights Watch, September 2006.
Bowen, Stuart W. “Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience.” United States Office of
the Special inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, 2009.
Burns, John F., and Jon Elsen. “Several Mosques Attacked, but Iraq Is Mostly Calm.” The New
April 4, 2018, sec. World.
https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/04/04/world/middleeast/isis-documents-
mosul-iraq.html.
Carroll, Katherine Blue. “Tribal Law and Reconciliation in the New Iraq.” The Middle East
Chenoweth, Erica, and Maria J. Stephan. Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of
Christoff, Joseph A. Rebuilding Iraq: Preliminary Observations on Challenges in Transferring
Security Responsibilities to Iraqi Military and Police: Testimony Before the Committee
on Government Reform; Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and
International Relations; House of Representatives, Pub. L. No. GAO-05-431T, §
Committee on Government Reform; Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging
Threats, and International Relations (2005).

Cloud, David S., and Damien Cave. “Commanders Say Push in Baghdad Is Short of Goal.” The

Cochrane, Marisa. “The Fragmentation of the Sadrist Movement.” The Institute for the Study of

Cockburn, Patrick. “Battle for Baghdad ‘Has Already Started.’” The Independent. March 25,
2006. http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/battle-for-baghdad-has-
already-started-6105634.html.


Collier, David. “Understanding Process Tracing.” PS: Political Science & Politics 44, no. 4


Cordesman, Anthony H., and Emma R. Davies. Iraq’s Insurgency and the Road to Civil Conflict.

———. Iraq’s Insurgency and the Road to Civil Conflict. Vol. 2. Westport, CT: Greenwood
Publishing Group, 2008.

Cordesman, Anthony H., and Jose Ramos. “Sadr and the Mahdi Army: Evolution, Capabilities,
and a New Direction.” Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies,
August 4, 2008.

Dahl, Robert A. Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition. New Haven: Yale University Press,
1971.

———. “The Concept of Power.” Systems Research and Behavioral Science 2, no. 3 (1957):
201–215.

Dawisha, A. I. Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation. Princeton, NJ:

De Soto, Hernando. The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails


Dobbins, James. Occupying Iraq: A History of the Coalition Provisional Authority. Rand
Corporation, 2009.

Durkheim, Emile. The Division of Labour in Society. Translated by WD Halls. London:

Elliott, DJ. “Training the Iraqi Police: From Ministry of the Interior Ad Hoc Paramilitaries to

Evans, Peter B., Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol. Bringing the State Back In.


Wright, Timothy F. Interview with Author, May 2007.