Explaining Cohesion, Fragmentation, and Control in Insurgent Groups

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B.A. Political Science
University of Chicago, 2004

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

SEPTEMBER 2010

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Submitted to the Department of Political Science on July 15, 2010 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

ABSTRACT

The internal unity and discipline of insurgent groups helps us understand the military effectiveness of armed groups, patterns of violence against civilians, and the ability of insurgent organizations to negotiate and demobilize, but the causes of insurgent cohesion and fragmentation have not been systematically or comparatively examined. This study offers a theory to explain why some armed groups are more cohesive and controlled than others. It argues that the trajectories of insurgent organizations can be substantially explained by focusing on two variables: the structure of the social networks and institutions upon which the organization is built, and the organization’s access to material resources from outside the war zone.

First, the structure of the core networks upon which an organization is constructed determines the internal social environment of the group: its social base shapes its organizational form. The denser the core networks, and more tightly they pull together local communities, the more robust will be the organization that emerges. Social embeddedness can therefore be more important than mass political popularity, public goods provision, or ideology in providing the basis for enduring organizational cohesion. Organizations built around coalitions of localized pockets of collective action or leaders operating among populations with whom they lack social ties will face severe problems of internal control - regardless of organizational blueprints or ethnic and class appeals.

Second, external material support from states and diasporas tends to centralize internal control and to enhance insurgent military power. Rather than encouraging looting and thuggishness, resource-wealth can fuel highly cohesive and disciplined armed organizations. The interaction of social bases and external support generates empirically distinct trajectories of organizational cohesion. Mechanisms explaining change over time are derived from the structural underpinnings of this argument.

This theory is tested with a study of 26 armed groups in nine civil wars. The primary research design is a set of within-conflict comparisons of insurgent organizations in civil wars in Kashmir, Northern Ireland, and Sri Lanka. Within each war there is dramatic variation across groups within a shared structural context. Fieldwork, primary sources, and secondary sources are used to trace out the different trajectories of militancy and their origins. An external validity check is provided by a study of Southeast Asia, relying on a cross-national comparison of communist insurgents in Malaya, Vietnam, and the Philippines, a sub-national, cross-conflict comparison of armed groups in Aceh and East Timor, and a within-conflict comparison of separatists in the southern Philippines. These comparisons reveal strong support for the theory relative to its competitors while also uncovering new mechanisms of change and evolution.

Thesis Supervisor: Roger Petersen
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I owe a huge debt to my dissertation committee. Roger Petersen has been an exemplary chair, providing excellent feedback, advice, funding, and moral support throughout my time in graduate school. Roger’s sense of humor, intellectual creativity, friendliness, and willingness to go above and beyond for his students have added immeasurably to my graduate experience. I am indebted to Barry Posen in more ways than he likely realizes. His deep knowledge of military organizations and security studies provided a strong foundation for the questions driving this study, and his lack of patience with jargon, obfuscation, and trivia were in the back of my mind while writing every page of this thesis. Stephen Van Evera’s insistence that political scientists ask important questions, write clearly, and engage with real world issues has had a foundational influence on my thinking. Steven Wilkinson generously agreed to be an external member of this committee and has provided detailed, constructive feedback. His questions and suggestions consistently cut to the issues at the heart of this project.

Several other faculty deserve particular thanks. From my undergraduate days at the University of Chicago to my year at Yale’s Program on Order, Conflict, and Violence, Stathis Kalyvas has been a rigorous and supportive guide to the world of political violence. Elisabeth Wood read numerous drafts of various parts of this thesis and provided extensive comments and suggestions. Fotini Christia, Taylor Fravel, and David Andrew Singer took the time to offer feedback and advice at numerous points in the last six years, despite being incredibly busy junior faculty.

My fieldwork has been crucial to this project and a huge number of people provided invaluable help and guidance to an often-clueless American. I want to single out Mairead Collins and Margaret Hagan in Belfast, Chenoa Stock, Amaia Sanchez Cacicedo, and Navin Weeratane in Colombo, Dann Naseemullah, Nick Eubank, Bart Scott, and Mrs. Monisha Khan in Delhi, and Aijaz Hussain in Srinagar for their friendship and assistance in navigating very new worlds. While I do not name my interviewees, a wide variety of journalists, academics, analysts, politicians, bureaucrats and security force officials (both current and retired), students, community workers, and normal people generously agreed to share their insights and experiences with me. I am profoundly in their debt and can never sufficiently thank them for their hospitality, knowledge, and contacts. I also found myself frequently relying on the kindness of strangers and I appreciate their assistance.

A number of institutions supported my field research, despite my inability to offer anything in return. In Belfast, I am indebted to Queen’s University-Belfast and the Linen Hall Library for access to their incomparable resources on the Troubles. In Delhi, Pratap Banu Mehta provided me with both office space and advice at the Centre for Policy Research, and I received assistance from the staff and/or libraries of the India International Centre, Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, Observer Research Foundation, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, and Institute for Conflict Management. Sumit Ganguly, Jack Gill, Christine Fair, Stephen Cohen, and Ashutosh Varshney were pivotal in putting me in touch with the right people in Delhi. In Colombo, I relied heavily on the Centre for Policy Alternatives and International Centre for Ethnic Studies for both office space and research resources.
Institutions closer to home provided extensive financial and research support. The Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs in Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government provided a wonderful home during the 2008-9 academic year. Stephen Walt, Steve Miller, Sean Lynn-Jones, and Robert Rotberg were excellent mentors, and I had the good fortune of spending time with a great group of fellows in the ISP and ICP programs. Negeen Pegahi kept me laughing and I was truly fortunate to share an office with Maya Tudor. Maya taught me a huge amount about India and Pakistan, being a good parent, and the nutritional virtues of chocolate. Widener Library provided most of the footnotes below.

I finished this dissertation during 2009-10 while a fellow at the Program on Order, Conflict, and Violence at Yale University. I benefited greatly from the feedback and ideas of the phenomenal faculty and graduate students at OCV and from Yale’s world-class research resources. I want to thank Rob Person and Dominika Koter for welcoming me into their always-interesting lunch circle, and Chris Haid and Abbey Steele for both personal friendship and intellectual support. The Smith Richardson Foundation, Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, Harvard Center for European Studies, and MIT Center for International Studies all funded fieldwork and writing, and the United States Institute of Peace connected me with a group of very smart people.

A variety of people have provided feedback on this project. While I am sure I have unintentionally overlooked too many of them, I would like to thank Lee Seymour, Monica Duffy Toft, Teresa Cravo, Ragnild Nordas, Ahsan Butt, Adam Berinsky, Jacob Shapiro, Jason Lyall, Chaim Kaufmann, Adria Lawrence, Patrick Johnston, Kelly Greenhill, Janet Lewis, Alexander Evans, Dan Slater, David Siroky, Shivaji Mukherjee, Jeremy Weinstein, Kenneth Oye, Shane Barter, and Jonathan Obert. I appreciate the comments of participants in workshops and seminars at MIT, Harvard University, Yale University, Lehigh University, the 2009 American Political Science Association annual meeting, and the Centre for Policy Alternatives.

I cannot imagine a better place to learn about international security and ethnic conflict than MIT. The various working groups and seminar series in the Department of Political Science and Security Studies Program created an intellectually stimulating environment. Susan Twarog, Diana Gallagher, Paula Kreutzer, Magdalena Rieb, and Lynne Levine all helped me deal with administrative issues and track down faculty. I benefited enormously from the friendship and engagement of my fellow graduate students, including Will Norris, Keren Fraiman, Llewelyn Hughes, Josh Shifrinson, David Weinberg, Hanna Breetz, Gustavo Setrini, Peter Krause, Andrew Radin, Stephanie Kaplan, Vanda Felbab-Brown, Evan Liaras, Reo Matsuzaki, Josh Rovner, Colin Jackson, Phil Haun, Tara Maller, and Kristin Fabbe. Adam Ziegfeld was a patient and enthusiastic guide to doing research in and on India.

I particularly thank Paco Flores for being a great colleague, friend, and roommate, Austin Long, Jon Lindsay, and Sarah Zukerman Daly for teaching me how to study civil wars up close, and Caitlin Talmadge and Brendan Green for being excellent officemates, conversation partners, voluntarily or not, and scholars. Down the river at Harvard, Vinip Narang has been my most trusted (and emailed!) sounding board on everything from dissertation topics to tropical diseases.

I also owe thanks to non-political scientists. Lonn Waters and Ricardo Jimenez-Kimble were roommates who always encouraged me to have more fun than I otherwise would. Thais-Lyn
Trayer was supportive as I navigated my first year in grad school. Rachel Sussman and Art Kuo made me feel welcome in Boston from my very first week in town, and Keith and Erin Edwards were invaluable friends during the three years we overlapped in Cambridge. David Berger and Justin Reinheimer were always no more than a quick flight away for a dose of hilarity and trip to tasty Asian food (plus a stiff drink).

Finally, I owe my deepest debts closest to home. For the last two years, Rebecca has shown extraordinary patience, support, and love while I wrote this thesis. She has navigated my absent-mindedness, weekend sojourns in the office, time away from Boston, and political science shop talk with remarkable grace. I can never hope to repay her, but only to show my very deepest gratitude.

My family has been the most important source of support. My sister Laura put up with her nerdy older brother while providing an example of boundless energy and initiative. This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Alberta Sbragia and Martin Staniland. They have been unconditionally supportive of all of my decisions, from going to graduate school to unexpectedly wandering around dangerous places, while offering endless amounts of great advice, smart ideas, and simple common sense. They are the models of both scholarship and parenting that I hope to emulate for the rest of my life.
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Chapter 1
Building Rebellion: Insurgents, Organizations, and Civil War

The back alleys of West Belfast are strewn with graffiti, proclaiming the writer’s allegiance to one of various acronyms – RIRA (Real Irish Republican Army), PIRA (Provisional IRA), INLA (Irish National Liberation Army), and CIRA (Continuity IRA). Each represents an armed group that has battled the British state over the past forty years; each was born and survived in the same set of working class neighborhoods and rural communities; each fought for a 32-county democratic socialist Ireland; each relied heavily on the rich array of symbols drawn from the long history of armed struggle in Ireland; each offered an organizational structure that combined an Army Council at the top with Active Service Units on the ground and a political wing on the side. Most importantly, each justified lethal violence by claiming to represent the truest and deepest aspirations of the people of Ireland.

Yet despite these numerous similarities, the acronyms at war dotting Belfast’s walls took wildly divergent trajectories during the brutal decades of “the Troubles.” Sinn Fein and its Provisional IRA compatriots share power in the Northern Ireland Assembly, having survived multiple ceasefires, protracted peace negotiations, and, finally, demobilization as a unified and cohesive organization. PIRA and its political wing, Sinn Féin, now reap the benefits of their discipline, from political clout in the assembly to an array of local “community worker” jobs that provide sustenance for former fighters and sympathizers. By contrast, the battered remnants of the INLA straggle on as a collection of isolated drug dealers and local toughs – the fratricidal feuds that ripped apart the group in the 1980s and 1990s decisively ended INLA’s aspirations to revolution. The Real IRA has similarly fractured, a series of internal arguments and a 2002 split ruining its bid to “spoil” the Good Friday Agreement. The Continuity IRA lives a shadowy
existence between these two extremes. The cohesion (and its lack) of these war-fighting groups fundamentally affected their ability to generate violence and deploy it towards political ends.

Northern Ireland is not an isolated case. Whether in Iraq, Pakistan, or Sudan, the cohesion of war-fighting organizations fundamentally shapes the trajectory of societies shattered by civil war, influencing the military nature of the struggle, patterns of human rights abuses, and the possibility of negotiation and de-mobilization. Armed groups differ dramatically from one another because the politics of insurgency are vicious, fragmented, and dangerous. Organizations and factions compete for power and wealth, local elites try to achieve their own agendas under the guise of ethnic aspiration, and counterinsurgency (COIN) splinters and divides communities. Few armed groups can survive this tumultuous political, military, and social battering for any significant period of time - most leaderships lose control of their organizations, which fragment into multiple sub-groups, erupt into violent feuds, or collapse in a haze of death and betrayal.

My dissertation aims to explain variation in the cohesion of insurgent groups in the midst of this lethal free-for-all. The theory I offer focuses on the interaction between social networks and external sources of material support, studying the widely varying ways in which men and guns are supplied and organized. In contrast to a literature that focuses on weak and failed states, I primarily study this question in militarily capable and resolved counterinsurgent state, where long-run armed group unity faces long odds amidst high risk. I argue that the structure of the core networks and institutions upon which insurgent groups are built plays a crucial role in determining the organizational form and internal workings of nascent armed groups. When battling capable states, external flows of support are essential sources of cohesion and organization-building, rather than being triggers for indiscipline. I argue that these core
mechanisms operate even irrespective of variation in mass popular support, specific ideological
worldviews, provision of social services, or state policy.

As detailed below, this argument challenges conventional wisdom in both academic and
policy literatures on insurgency and civil war. We have become used to viewing armed groups as
either the seamless expression of mass ethnic, class, or religious grievance, or as collections of
loot-seeking untermenschen preying on civilian populations. The truth is far more complex.
Armed groups rely heavily on social support, but the specific structure of that support varies
dramatically, with important implications for the ability of insurgent entrepreneurs to construct
and maintain organizational cohesion. Simply appealing to mass aspiration is not enough to
overcome the challenges of intense counterinsurgency and high levels of popular support are
insufficient to construct robust institutions amidst constant threats of death and arrest. We often
see small groups of disciplined men with guns shaping social incentives and pushing aside
moderate majorities in pursuit of their political vision.

Instead, I suggest that we need to devote far more attention to the specific social
transmission belts of insurgent power, the preexisting networks and institutions that convert
popular sentiment into disciplined violence. In the context of high-risk insurgency, having the
support of “the people” is less important than being able to rely on embedded, overlapping social
ties that can provide trust, commitment, and monitoring, whether built for insurgency or not.
Overlapping networks provide the social connective tissue that pull together local communities
and organizational leaders, allowing for institution-building and control from the top of the group
to the bottom. If we misunderstand the actual social sources of insurgent organization, we miss
opportunities to both explain the world around us and to successfully engage in policy
interventions. A focus on social structures and the tightly-intertwined links (rather than
differences) between networks and organizations can help us make better sense of an important set of puzzles that are central to the dynamics of civil war.

At the same time, it is essential to move beyond the conventional view of resource-rich insurgents as greedy thugs and rabble. This scholarly worldview is reflected in the rhetoric of counterinsurgents, who dismiss their foes as bandits, criminals, and psychopathic irreconcilables. Yet some of the most disciplined, politicized, and ruthlessly committed armed groups in the 20th and 21st century have been fueled by state sponsors, illicit economies, and diasporas. To characterize them as apolitical looters is to ignore the complex ways in which material resources can be deployed and controlled through powerful social structures and organizational mechanisms. If we want to accurately explain how drugs, guns, and cash shape and fuel militancy, we need to look far more closely at the specific effects of these resource flows on the organization of armed groups, across varying contexts, fine-grained comparisons, and new cases.

**The Argument**

Why are some groups better able than others to surmount the challenges they face in confronting a capable, resolved counterinsurgent state? My theory argues that the structure of the organization’s *social base* interacts with the presence or absence of *external material support* to generate distinct patterns of internal organizational control. The social base is the structure of the networks and institutions that insurgent entrepreneurs mobilize in the early days of the organization, which determines the trust, monitoring, and worldviews of the key personnel building the group. When states are committed and capable, and thus collective action is extremely risky amidst deep uncertainty, preexisting social structures are crucially important in determining whether strong institutions can be constructed – or whether they will instead falter in a haze of splits, feuds, and betrayals. External flows of material support are similarly crucial
when battling a capable counterinsurgent regime, since the existence of state “infrastructural power” makes it difficult for insurgents to raise large amounts of revenue from within the combat zone, regardless of their level of social support. This theoretical approach is situated within the “political process”\(^1\) tradition in studies of social mobilization, and supplements this general framework with more specific mechanisms drawn from literatures on social networks, organizations, and insurgency.

By studying how varying social bases interact with varying access to external material support, I offer predictions of patterns in the frequency and intensity of internal feuds and splits, the level of factional autonomy, and issues over which unrest breaks out. These four indicators provide a multi-dimensional and fine-grained conceptualization of the level and nature of internal organizational control.

*Social Bases and Militant Mobilization.* We start with the observation that insurgent entrepreneurs build armed groups around the social networks in which they are embedded. We can think of these networks as “social bases” for future organizations. Organizations built around “bonding” network social bases that are characterized by dense embeddedness both within and across local communities will be most likely to construct robust institutions characterized by elite consensus at the top and local control on the ground. Organizations built on the basis of “coalition” network social bases (either collections of localized warlords, or groups of leaders unlinked to the communities they are mobilizing) are likely to instead suffer from higher levels of internal feuding and disobedience. The absence of strong preexisting bonds of trust and commitment linking leaders to one another and to their local communities degrades organizational function, even if the organization’s structures appears to get the incentives right.

These crucial early network structures are often exogenous to conflict onset or the strategies of insurgent leaders, who are instead forced to fall back on historically-contingent, preexisting social “start-up” structures as conflicts unpredictably escalate. They can try to shape and transform social networks, and sometimes succeed over the long run, but in the foundational days of a movement their ability to do so is tightly constrained by preexisting structure. While the specific manifestations of social bases will vary across societies (from caste groupings to communist parties to religious organizations), we can categorize and measure them according to more abstract structural characteristics: whether or not they involve an embedded overlap of local and supra-local social networks. Bonding networks will have a significant proportion of members who are embedded in local communities but who also know and trust one another across communities. There are different types of coalition networks. Some are amalgamations of highly localized warlords with weak ties to one another, while others are composed of a tight core of leaders who nevertheless lack strong links to local communities.

Armed groups based on bonding networks fill the ranks of their command cadres with a narrow but homogeneous elite linked by shared worldviews, trust, and in-group policing. This set of insurgent entrepreneurs, bound by exclusive ties of reciprocity and solidarity, form a cooperative leadership. Their simultaneous presence in local communities allows them to select and then control new recruits who become socialized in the image of the organization. Key leaders are simultaneously embedded in local communities and robustly tied to other pockets of mobilization, allowing the disciplining and coordination of violence at the top and bottom of the group even in the presence of high risk and uncertainty. Robust institutionalization is most possible with this social infrastructure.
Groups mobilizing on *coalition network* social base may represent a popular cause, appeal to the political aspirations of the people, and attract many recruits. However, this type of social base lacks locally-embedded leaders and/or strong ties between factional elites. Whether a solidaristic set of urban students heading into an alien countryside or a set of parochial warlords, coalition networks lack the simultaneous local and regional/national embeddedness of bonding networks. In clear contrast to groups based on bonding networks, organizations built around coalition networks lack internal ties of trust, commitment, and fear that can sustain high-risk militancy. Intra-elite social division triggers horizontal feuds and splits in groups built around parochial coalition networks. Within organizations constructed on the basis of “foco-ist” coalition networks, unincorporated new recruits fuel local factionalism and dissension from below, as foot soldiers are not properly socialized and monitored because of the weak links between insurgent entrepreneurs and local communities. All else being equal, this makes it difficult for insurgent entrepreneurs to forge and maintain group unity and organizational discipline, regardless of whether the cause is popular and mass support forthcoming.

Thus organizations embedded in bonding network social bases will be more likely to generate and maintain high levels of commitment from their fighting cadres, even if their political cause is not widely popular, they do not provide social services, or they are not led by charismatic individual leaders. And conversely, even highly popular armed groups that are built around socially-diffuse coalition networks can be shattered by their own social divisions and heterogeneity. This has serious political and analytical implications: insurgency is a contest in

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2 The dissertation does not focus much on groups based solely on *localized* (a specific village or sub-region) networks because in the capable-state context these are usually quickly isolated and marginalized, even in strong local communities. They are thus unable to generate significant manpower or organization, and quickly are knocked out of wars if they do not try to become coalition networks.

3 As I discuss in Chapter 3, there are several types of coalition networks, with subtle but observable differences in organizational form. The most important are parochial coalition networks (with first movers embedded in local communities but sparsely tied to one another) and foco-ist coalition networks (with first movers densely tied to one another but sparsely tied to local communities).
violent collective action, not in popularity, legitimacy, charisma, or social service provision. Social structures can provide a crucial source of collective action, or a crucial source of internal dissension, amidst uncertainty and risk. We need to pay far more careful attention to the sinews of social power that underlie insurgent organizations: these conduits of mobilization vary in their strength and structure, with implications for institution-building.

*External Support and War-Fighting Materiel.* Insurgent groups need guns and money, not just social integration. I argue that cohesion can be bolstered by material external support, in which weapons and resources flow through the top leadership to units and foot soldiers. In the capable-state context, and especially when lacking access to drugs or mineral wealth, the only viable means of acquiring significant wealth and materiel comes from state sponsors and diasporas outside the war zone. As I will argue below, however, resources need to be integrated with social structure to arrive at a more sophisticated understanding of insurgency. This argument reconciles two conflicting findings in the literature. On the one hand, there is a consensus that external support can bolster insurgent groups. Yet on the other, an influential argument has emerged suggesting that external support leads to predation and thuggishness. I suggest that these two arguments can be reconciled by showing that the effects of external support are conditional upon prior social structure: external support can be productively used by integrated, cooperative armed groups in pursuit of clear political goals, but it can also flow into socially-diffuse and internally divided armed groups where it may be used for apolitical and loot-seeking purposes.

There are two mechanisms through which external support affects cohesion. First, it encourages *resource centralization,* since it is provided to the leadership of a group rather than to foot soldiers or commanders. Second, external support provides the organization with high
material capacity, through the possession of large amounts of guns and money, that attracts and retains individuals and factions interested in inflicting damage on the state while minimizing their own vulnerability. The combination of centralization and credibility creates coordinated military strength that enhances internal command and control. Insurgency requires less materiel than conventional war, but when battling a capable state rebellion still demands consistent flows of cash and guns in order to keep up the fight. Therefore resources are necessary and important: simply relying on the generosity of peasants is unlikely to be militarily sufficient when staring down the Indian or Indonesian armies.

The absence of external support, in this context, leads to comparatively low capacity and high resource diffusion, causes disintegrative military weakness. Prospective and actual insurgents interested in inflicting damage on the state while protecting themselves are unlikely to join or remain in a weak organization, since it will leave them vulnerable to the state, open to attack by militant rivals, and unable to gain local benefits on the ground. The most effective groups will, I predict, be comparatively resource-rich, using guns and money from outside the area of direct combat to remain potent in the face of a credible counterinsurgent state. This constitutes a challenge to the “greed” school of insurgency, which see resource-rich groups as predatory and apolitical thugs. The case evidence I present later in this thesis reveals that this emerging conventional wisdom is too simple and that extrapolations from the Great Lakes region of Africa are not necessarily valid in other contexts.

Trajectories of Militancy. The interaction of social base and material support leads to four broad patterns of armed group organization with different propensities toward cohesion and fragmentation (Table 1.1):
Table 1.1. Causes of Variation in Armed Group Cohesion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External Material Support</th>
<th>Social Base</th>
<th>Bonding Network</th>
<th>Coalition Network$^4$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>Cohesive [I]</td>
<td></td>
<td>State-reliant [II]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Consensus-contingent [III]</td>
<td>Factionalized [IV]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organizations that are mobilized on the basis of bonding networks and that have access to significant material support are *cohesive* (I). Factional autonomy is low, and feuds and splits are rare and quickly cauterized by the incumbent leadership. While major political shifts can cause some internal dissent, tight internal control results from a powerful mixture of robust social infrastructure and resource control by the leadership. Groups like the Provisional IRA, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hizbul Mujahideen, and Tamil Tigers have been cohesive groups for most of their history, combining a bonding network social base with extensive diaspora and/or state support. These groups have been able to shift their formal organizational structures, sometimes engage in peace processes, and retain basic unity in the face of vastly superior state power. The introduction of external support (and under some circumstances, I suggest in Chapter 8, gains from illicit economies) is hugely helpful in generating serious military power, while internal social structure underpins organizational form and allows groups to deal with the risks imposed by state coercive power.

*State-reliant* (II) groups are supported by state and/or diaspora sponsors but lack a bonding network base. Leaders of these insurgent armies can hold their organizations together only so long as the sponsor continues to devote material resources to the group. The lack of social integration makes cooperation and control difficult if the material basis for cooperation diminishes; state sponsor or diaspora policy plays a crucial role in determining the fate of these organizations. If there are ruptures within the group, they are usually driven by disagreement

$^4$ In Chapter 3 I also specify different types of coalition network social bases and the implications of these more subtle variations for organizational form.
over how to distribute the guns and money flowing into the organization, not over large political issues like ceasefires and elections. The Harkat-ul Mujahideen and Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation are excellent examples of state-reliant proxy armies that were primarily held together by external patronage. These are the category of cases that fall into the purview of Mueller, Weinstein, and Collier’s theories – but they are only one slice of a much richer range of variation.

*Consensus-contingent* organizations (III) result from a bonding network social base but a lack of external support. Incumbent leaders in these situations can rely on some level of shared social solidarity, but the material basis for defiance is widespread. The leadership can neither punish dissidents nor reward loyalists because it is militarily weak. As a result, internal cooperation is contingent on leaders maintaining a consensus and avoiding dramatic policy shifts - they are constrained by their inability to monopolize the means of coercion due to a lack of military power. The Ulster Volunteer Force in Northern Ireland and Eelam People’s Revolutionary Liberation Front in Sri Lanka spent most of their existences in this category, trying to maintain basic unity despite low capacity and internally-diffused control of resources. The Provisional IRA and Tamil Tigers spent a significant period of time as consensus-contingent groups before acquiring significant external support that allowed them to improve cohesion.

Finally, *factionalized* groups (IV) arise when organizations lack external material support and the organization is not built around a bonding network base. Elites lack trust and shared commitment, local mobilization exacerbates factionalism, and there are few material incentives for cooperation. Not only is factional autonomy very high, but factionalized organizations are highly prone to split over multiple issues, from personal rivalries to disagreement over the division of illicit spoils. This is the most common outcome for armed organizations, from the
People’s Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam to the post-2001 Jaish-e-Mohammed to the Irish National Liberation Army. These groups splinter and fracture for numerous reasons, from politics to crime to personality, lacking either a robust social infrastructure or centralized control over the distribution of resources. Depending on the type of coalition network these groups are built upon, we will observe different types of organizational fragmentation, from warlord-on-warlord feuding to revolts by Young Turks from below.

**Data and Methods**

No theory will be able to account for anywhere close to all of the variation in insurgent organization. Endogeneity, agency, and contingency are hugely important as wars escalate and evolve over long periods of time. But we can aspire to offering theories that improve our understanding of the subject, while offering new insights into the often confusing world of militant rebellion. In particular, I aim to find a systematic, if necessarily incomplete, pattern that avoids the totalizing embrace of endogeneity and contingency that characterizes some of the most recent work on civil wars. I rely heavily on the comparative case study method at different levels of details and comparison across states, wars, and groups. Detailed, fine-grained historical research is essentially for accurately measuring the variables and mechanisms of both my theory and its competitors. Tightly-structured comparisons are necessary to control for a variety of plausible confounding variables, from regime type to rebel war aims. And we would prefer a reasonable number of cases to assess a probabilistic theory. This combination of detail, tight comparisons, and multiple observations creates fairly demanding empirical requirements, which

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explains why much of the existing research relies on either a small number of organizations or on highly aggregated, blunt large-N datasets.

I use two primary empirical strategies for studying my theory of organizational control and its alternatives. The first, and the bulk of this dissertation, is composed of three extremely detailed sets of within-conflict comparisons of the 19 major insurgent groups within the civil wars in Kashmir, Northern Ireland, and Sri Lanka. Within each conflict I compare five or more armed groups over time, exploring the causes of variation while holding largely (though not entirely) constant important variables like regime type, state strength, terrain, social cleavages, and historical legacies. I rely on historical research and fieldwork to identify relevant social bases and their origins, external material support from states and diasporas, and the ways in which these social structures and resource flows interacted to shape and constrain organizational outcomes. These in-depth comparative cases combine many observations across time and space with shared contexts within each war that hold constant major macro-level variables. They are ideal comparative “laboratories” in which to study mobilization, organization, and war.

I then examine a set of major insurgent revolts in post-World War II Southeast Asia to explore the external validity of my theoretical approach, relying on clusters of cross-national, sub-national, and within-conflict comparisons to study a variety of political and economic contexts. I study the Viet Minh in French Indochina/Vietnam, Malayan Communist Party in Malaya, and Hukbahalaps in the Philippines as a cross-national comparison of Communist guerrillas in the wake of World War II. This takes us to different regime types, political opportunities, and organizational ideologies than in the ethno-separatist groups studied in the previous chapters. I then turn to Indonesia and a sub-national study of the GAM in Aceh and Fretilin in East Timor to examine variation in organizational cohesion in different wars while
fighting the same state (and especially the same army) at roughly the same time. Finally, a
within-conflict comparison of the MNLF and MILF in the southern Philippines since 1972
returns to the core comparative approach of the dissertation, examining two groups with different
levels of cohesion in an otherwise similar structural environment.

For the three core comparative chapters (Northern Ireland, Kashmir, Sri Lanka) data on
the internal workings of the organizations, the social bases of collective action in these societies,
and the behavior of state sponsors and diasporas is drawn from field interviews, primary
documents, secondary literature in history, anthropology, and political science, and press reports.
I spent over a year doing fieldwork in Colombo, Belfast, Delhi, and Srinagar, including more
than 100 interviews with current and former militants, politicians, current and retired government
officials, journalists, analysts, and community workers. While imperfect due to numerous data
constraints, these studies, particularly in Kashmir and Sri Lanka, are largely original to the
political science literature. This thesis offers the most detailed comparative study of each of
these three wars’ insurgents, moving beyond the focus on macro-level political dynamics that has
categorized most work on these conflicts. The Southeast Asia comparisons are drawn from an
extensive study of the secondary historical literatures on these wars. The dissertation thus aims to
combine detailed micro-level history, rigorous and wide-ranging comparisons, and a new theory
to improve our understanding of civil war.

Contributions

The argument I offer makes five theoretical contributions to the study of
insurgent/paramilitary organization, beyond explaining the dependent variable of interest. First,
it brings together social mobilization and material support under a single framework, rather than
dichotomizing “greedy/opportunistic” vs. “activist/grievance” militants or between groups
supported by “criminal thugs” and those supported “by the people.” 6 When professional militaries are studied, both material and social/organizational variables are acknowledged as crucially important, and the same should be true for insurgent groups. The theory I offer examines how different combinations of social base and material support interact and generate varying “economies of incentives” 7 within organizations. This is a more realistic and multifaceted assessment of how violence is produced and organized, offering a bridge between contending theoretical approaches. In particular, this approach challenges the “greed” school of insurgency by showing the military and organizational utility of resource-richness and external support rather than simply focusing on its predatory aspects.

Second, this dissertation specifies and clarifies the mechanisms through which social support is (and is not) converted into organizational form, and through which material resources generate different types of internal obedience. This approach helps us make sense of a wide range of empirical cases that are puzzling from the perspective of existing arguments. Many of the prevailing wisdoms in the academic and policy communities are intuitive, but vague and underspecified. Social support obviously matters in some way, but existing research has not been able to nail down the mechanisms through which it operates – and just as importantly, the mechanisms through which it does not seem to usually operate. The dynamics of popular support will also be deeply affected by political context, and I outline how differences in state power and resolve can create varying opportunities for mobilization that in turn shape insurgent organization.

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6 This is the core argument of Weinstein’s excellent book Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). While advancing our understanding in a number of ways, his theory is too vague and underspecified on the social support side to provide fine-grained explanatory power. It also ignores the mechanisms through which external support can actually centralize and consolidate internal discipline and control.

By focusing on specific social networks and network structures, and linking them to variation in broader political context, we can engage in more fine-grained, detailed studies that have clearer policy relevance and greater explanatory power. Knowing how different types of social structures are appropriated and transformed into different types of insurgent organizations, and under what circumstances, moves our understanding of insurgency forward.

Third, my argument links level of analysis from foot soldiers to national elites. The existing literature oscillates unevenly between a focus on unitary insurgent organizations and leadership strategy, on the hand, and an extremely micro-level study of individuals and communities. This approach, while valuable, does not deal well with the crucial role of local commanders and supra-village networks of mobilization, the messy factional politics that exist within groups, or the wide-ranging variation in the nature of “transmission belts” connecting local mobilization with the strategy and capacity of the broader organization. By studying the structure of group social bases and its implication for organization, I link these different levels of mobilization to explain why some insurgents can coordinate behavior and impose control from the top commanders all the way down to individual fighters in distant villages – and why others falter in this task despite operating in an identical environment. In doing so I also argue that history profoundly matters in explaining social mobilization in civil wars. Though endogenous mechanisms within war are certainly important, historically-rooted, preexisting social structures provide a crucial resource for rebels.

Fourth, I argue that, at least in the civil war context, distinctions between networks and organizations are dubious. Instead, I show that formal organizations and institutions lie atop social structures that play a crucial role in determining the function of these institutions. Planting a Leninist model of organization atop an anomic, coalition social base will not lead to Leninist
outcomes; decreeing a cellular structure does not actually summon one into existence. Organization charts do not determine internal control and cooperation, and differences in formal institutions are not particularly important - in fact, we can even see groups changing their organizational form without changing their level of cohesion. Getting incentives right is obviously important, but the relevant incentives actually vary broadly depending on the level of social integration within a group – the social “stuff” atop which organizations lie determines the functioning of their formal institutions. This conclusion supports recent efforts in sociology to combine studies of networks and organizations rather than dichotomizing them. This effort also moves beyond a vague appeal to social networks into a more specific examination of variation across network structures.

Finally, a wide range of recent work has placed armed group and opposition movement cohesion/fragmentation at the heart of major civil war dynamics – explaining why some groups engage in more indiscriminate violence than others, why some negotiations succeed and others fail, why some groups are better at fighting than others, and why suicide bombings do or do not occur. The dependent variable of this study is a major explanatory variable in studies of everything from military effectiveness to de-mobilization and disarmament, and so improving our understanding of armed group organization improves our knowledge about a wide variety of other important subjects. Scholars can use some of the framework of this dissertation to build organization into their explanatory theories in a more explicit and central way. By defining terms, clarifying measurement, and offering theoretical hypotheses, this dissertation will hopefully advance the broader research agenda in the study of civil war.
Contributions to Practice

Civil war is the dominant form of political violence in the post-Cold War world, and often also stretches across borders to become entangled with interstate conflict. Counterinsurgency, post-conflict stabilization, and de-mobilization are major challenges faced by governments, international organizations, and NGOs, while bolstering particular insurgencies remains a strategic interest for states under a variety of circumstances. This thesis aims to generate some useful knowledge for practitioners, analysts, and the interested public. I discuss policy implications in more detail in Chapter 8, but here offer a brief sketch of some insights that can shape how policymakers understand the causal underpinnings of civil war.

First, the argument I offer should make us skeptical of conventional wisdom about counterinsurgency, including that encapsulated in the Counterinsurgency Field Manual (FM3-24). Cliches about “popular support,” “fish in the sea,” and “narco-insurgency” populate much of the discourse on militancy, in part reflecting greed vs. grievance arguments found in the academic literature. I argue that the key to understanding insurgency lies in assessing the capacity of different social networks and structures to achieve high-risk collective action and to acquire the capacity for violence, rather than in trying to measure (much less manipulate) mass popular attitudes or fulminating about the evils of narco-terrorists.

Dealing with militancy thus requires assessing the structures of mobilization, often based on highly specific social networks and institutions, that can get people on the streets or into the jungles, not trying to appeal to the median citizen or assuming that government policies are the main drivers of individuals' behavior. The COIN discourse emerging from Iraq has emphasized population security and massive force deployments, while largely ignoring the centrality of tribal
“flipping” and the co-optation of local social networks. This reflects a misreading of how social structures influence the mobilization of violence: violence can be produced and peace can be enforced by robust, disciplined social networks and organizations, even if they are not fully representative of ethnic or class interests. It would serve both academics and policymakers well to more vigorously investigate prevailing conventional wisdoms, which are often not based on rigorous or detailed comparative research.

Second, this dissertation makes the case for disaggregating the actors in civil wars when making policy towards them. While very useful for studying broad political trends, taking either ethnic groups or insurgent groups as unitary actors is less helpful when trying to engage in fine-grained policies, whether support of or opposition to insurgent groups, or when trying to build peace and stability. This is not to downplay the importance of ethnic and religious identities, but instead to point out that the meaning of these identities and who will have power within them is open to debate and (often violent) contestation. Identities matter both at the ethnic and sub-ethnic levels, as clans, tribes, families, socially-rooted political parties, and caste groupings form crucial bases for mobilization and rebellion.

For instance, ethnic categories can consolidate into unitary armed blocs under some circumstances, but in circumstances where insurgencies involve substantial intra-ethnic betrayal and rivalry (like Kashmir, Assam, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Iraq) ethnic identities are less useful for figuring out how groups are organized and what they want. Misunderstanding these distinctions can lead governments to use indiscriminate violence and enact blunt policies that fail to actually target either the motivations or the organization of the people actually doing the

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8 I owe Jon Lindsay for pointing out in detail the distance between FM3-24 and the actual roots of stabilization in Iraq.
9 Often when institutions exist to structure conventional military conflict along ethnic lines, as in Bosnia, Nigeria, and Rwanda.
fighting. Rather than focusing on broad ethnic blocs, states and international organizations can rely on fine-grained distinctions that lead to cleaner and more effective policies.

Finally, it is important not to overemphasize the specific nature of the ideology of an armed group. Policymakers and analysts have often come to view insurgents as mirroring their stated ideological goals – communists, nationalists, and Islamists have at various historical points been cast as uniquely disciplined, fanatical, fractious or bloodthirsty. Theories and analyses have periodically emerged discussing the unique aspects of communist organization, of Islamic radicalism, or of ethno-nationalist identification. Yet by comparing different kinds of groups across time and space, we can identify core similarities that transcend the nature of their war aims. Whether Islamists, communists, or nationalists, insurgent entrepreneurs need to overcome a shared set of tasks in building organizations: they face the challenge of generating robust institutions in environments where risky collective action and successful military operations are difficult.

In general it is wise to view different types of groups under a shared analytical framework. Policy efforts can focus their attention on those common organizational dynamics rather than relying on problematic, if often insightful, assertions about the intrinsic nature of different movements. Helping to socially scientifically explain variation can also help to direct effective policy by moving from the specific and contingent to the more abstract and general while retaining the capacity for detailed analysis.

**Roadmap of the Dissertation**

The rest of the dissertation offers more detailed theory and empirics to make the arguments I have previewed above. Chapter 2 defines in details the dependent variable and how to measure it, specifies why this topic matters, and discusses the limits of existing explanations
for organizational cohesion and structure centering on popular support, economic endowments, ideology, and state policy. Chapter 3 then offers a theory to explain why groups vary in their ability to overcome common challenges to internal control within particular political contexts. By studying the effects of variation in organizations’ social base and access to external material support, I predict observable, testable patterns on the dependent variable. I then outline a research design combining sub- and cross-national comparisons of 26 insurgent groups in Northern Ireland, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. Drawing on detailed historical material and field research, this research design offers a systematic and detailed comparative study of the organization of insurgent violence.

Chapter 4 offers a fine-grained study of five major republican insurgent groups in Northern Ireland from 1962 to 2005. It argues that variation in the cohesion of these groups can be traced largely, though not entirely, to 1) their access to external state and, especially, diaspora support and 2) whether or not they were able to build upon a bonding network of local republican elites whose family and party loyalties were born in the brutal Irish civil war of 1922-3. This combination built and sustained the Provisional IRA as a unified organization for three decades. Groups unable to mobilize around networks of republican notables and traditional families fractured and collapsed into feuding and disarray (INLA, IPLO, Real IRA), while those that could not generate diaspora/state support splintered due to military weakness and resource diffusion even if they retained a bonding network base (the Official IRA).

Chapter 5 shifts to the bloody insurgency in Kashmir between 1988 and 2008, which has seen numerous rebel groups and extensive variation in their cohesion across time and space. I argue that the most cohesive organizations (Hizbul Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Taiba) built their command elite on the basis preexisting religious-political networks, deeply intertwined with...
family, party, and religious networks. I compare indigenous Kashmiri groups to one another and primarily Pakistani armed groups to one another, while looking across both categories of militants for shared patterns. These organizations have taken an extraordinary beating at the hands of India’s massive security apparatus but survived as relatively unified groups. By contrast, groups with a coalition base, *even if advancing similar or more popular political causes*, have fractured badly. In addition to differing social bases, we see significant variation in the willingness of Pakistani state authorities to support armed groups, with their decision calculus being largely based on ideology and strategic aims, rather than prior group cohesion. Groups combining Pakistani patronage with bonding network social bases were dramatically more socially integrated and militarily stronger than other militants (including those with only Pakistani patronage).

Chapter 6 takes up the same set of questions in the complex case of Tamil militancy in Sri Lanka between 1972 and 2009. I compare five major Tamil insurgent groups since 1972, focusing on the rise to dominance of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), despite its status in the 1980s as smaller than some of its contemporaries. My argument does not work as well in Sri Lanka as in the previous two conflicts, but it still helps us gain new insight into the trajectories of insurgency. I argue that Indian state sponsorship (1983-87) and then massive diaspora support have combined with the LTTE’s caste-regional social base to forge a highly integrated and militarily powerful armed group, suffering only two significant splits over 37 years of existence, even in the face of total annihilation in 2009. By comparison, state-reliant groups like TELO, and factionalized groups like PLOT and EROS, fell apart in a haze of splits and feuds (and were targeted for destruction or absorption by the Tigers during this fragmentation). Some of these groups have taken shelter in the arms of the Sri Lankan state.
Even though the Tigers have now been destroyed, they dealt with this and other military setbacks with remarkable discipline considering the long odds arrayed against them, and despite the fact that they have had to use massive coercion to keep their Tamil co-ethnics in line.

Chapter 7 takes the theory traveling to a set of other cases in Southeast Asia. I explore whether the argument can generate insights beyond the specific conflicts that I study in depth in this thesis. From colonial Malaya to Suharto's New Order Indonesia to the contemporary Philippines, this chapter examines my theory in a wide variety of political contexts, with variation in the goals of insurgents, the types of counterinsurgency policies pursued, the nature of incumbent regimes, and international interest and involvement. I find significant but not complete support for the argument, with communist groups representing the most clear outliers. Chapter 8 concludes by discussing the theoretical and policy implications of the argument and evidence presented, while outlining promising directions for future research.
Chapter 2
Definitions, Importance, and Theories of Insurgent Cohesion

"We know that it is not at all necessary to have the sympathy of a majority of the people in order to rule them. The right organization can turn the trick."¹

Insurgent organizations are a pervasive feature of the contemporary security environment, but they tend not to be studied with nearly the same detail and rigor as their state counterinsurgent foes. Governments are easier to talk to than militants, capital cities are easier to visit than shattered peripheries, and insurgent violence tends to attract biased admirers and detractors. Rather than seeing insurgent movement as either the seamless expression of mass grievance or as faceless criminals in thrall to violence, we need to analyze insurgent groups as complex social, political, and military organizations that face pervasive challenges of dying, killing, and being torn apart from within. Existing theories of insurgent organization have tended to fall into three camps. One camp argues that insurgent groups are essentially the product of community grievance and mobilization, reflecting the political desires and ideological visions of an ethnic or class group. A second camp sees insurgents as mercenaries whose behavior and organization is shaped by their desire for loot and gain. The final camp suggests that insurgents’ behavior is most powerfully shaped by states and counterinsurgency policy. Insurgents are passive and reactive, their fates determined by structural forces and government elites.

These theoretical arguments have significant virtues, but they lie in uneasy contradiction to one another and offer uni-causal accounts that create artificial dichotomies. The most dramatic example is found in theories that mirror the well-trodden “greed vs. grievance” debate. In both theory and case histories, highly cohesive armed groups are often said to result from successful appeals to community grievance, grassroots mobilization and politicization, and spontaneous

outpourings of mass support. Fragmented, undisciplined organizations, by contrast, are said to be the result of greedy, apolitical thugs pursuing diamonds, rape, and state patronage. Yet in the empirical record we can find numerous groups that are mass mobilizing/politicizing and are also internally fragmented (JKLF in Kashmir, Naxals in India, Huks in the Philippines). We can similarly observe groups that are fueled by huge inflows of guns and cash from diasporas, state sponsorship and illicit economies and are also highly motivated and disciplined (Hezbollah in Lebanon, Lashkar-e-Taiba in Pakistan and Kashmir, MILF in the Philippines). Similarly, we can find dramatic organizational variation across ostensibly Islamist insurgents, between similarly-communist armed groups, and among fellow ethno-nationalists. There are a set of important puzzles for the existing literature that demand explanation. This rich array of variation, which often occurs within the same country and even the same war, challenges conventional wisdoms that has relied on either blunt and highly aggregated cross-national quantitative studies, or on loosely-structured single or comparative case studies.

This chapter aims to advance the study of insurgent organization by systematizing definitions, outlining the areas in which insurgent cohesion is relevant to explaining other conflict processes, and structuring the existing literature into a set of mechanisms. First, it defines insurgent cohesion and discusses how it can be measured. Cohesion is a difficult concept, and an even more difficult measurement, and so this needs serious attention. Second, it highlights the importance of insurgent cohesion and fragmentation in scholarship and policy analysis, arguing that it clearly helps to drive variation in war outcomes, human rights abuses, and demobilization. This is a dependent variable that deserves closer attention.

Third, I outline the existing literature, drawing from both political science and sociology. This “brush-clearing” exercise gives a sense of the existing arguments and empirics in the study
of insurgent organization. While previewing some of the argument and findings to come, I assess both the virtues and limits of current explanations, which focus on macro-level grievances, material endowments and resource mobilization, and state policy. I will argue that many of the specific arguments tend to track, intentionally or not, literatures on collective action and contentious politics, and theoretical progress in those broader debates can be fruitfully applied to the specific realm of insurgency. Intellectually and empirically, studies of civil war, social movements, and organizations have remained unproductively distinct. To understand the dynamics of militant mobilization amidst risk and violence, we need to integrate these studies into a more coherent and systematic whole.

I. Dependent Variable: Insurgent Organizational Cohesion

Concepts and Definitions. Maintaining unity and discipline is perhaps the most fundamental challenge facing the leaders of an insurgent group. Their ability to forge an “integrated” 2 politico-military strategy hinges on whether they can make their ostensible subordinates obey them in situations of both war and peace. This unity is threatened by government forces targeting command and control structures, internal rivalries that escalate into feuds, local units pursuing their own parochial agendas that undermine broader strategies, and state divide-and-rule strategies that try to peel away parts of the organization. As my primary unit of analysis, I focus on formal militant organizations — institutions that publicly claim to operate as a unitary force with internal lines of command and control in violent opposition to a central state authority. 3 Some of the organizations I study are in fact closer to amalgamations of

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3 This is not a study of alliances, which at least ostensibly involve horizontal relationships between relative equals, rather than vertical relationships of power. See Fotini Christia, “The closest of enemies: Alliance formation in the Afghan and Bosnian civil wars.” Ph.D Dissertation (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2008). Instead I am trying to understand the forging of enduring organization.
free-agent warlords, but they all claim to be a single group under a unified command. Thus in this thesis the Afghan Northern Alliance is not considered an organization, since it explicitly an alliance of distinct organizations, but Ahmad Shah Massoud and Burhanuddin Rabbani’s Jamiat-e Islami is considered an organization.  

Yet organizational cohesion is a loaded term, which can range in meaning dramatically. The relationships within units, between units and their commanders, and among commanders constitute insurgent “organizational forms,” which can be more or less cohesive. Castillo defines military cohesion as “the unity of a group and the commitment members have to a group’s interests.” Specifically, insurgent cohesion can be conceptualized as 1) the extent to which a central leadership of an organization exists that is able to reach decisions without internal violence or defection, and 2) the extent to which members of an organization (including commanders) comply with this central leadership in pursuit of shared political-military goals, engage in high-risk combat activities over long periods of time when ordered to do so, and do not defect with resources and manpower previously pledged to the organization. This echoes

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4 Factions in this study do not refer to distinct organizations, but instead to sub-groupings within an organization. This is for clarity; some use the words interchangeably, like Kristin Bakke, Kathleen Cunningham, and Lee Seymour, “Shirts Today, Skins Tomorrow: The Effects of Fragmentation on Conflict Processes in Self-Determination Disputes,” Manuscript, 2010. The Islamic Jihad would not be a Palestinian faction, but the Damascus wing of Hamas would be considered a faction (of Hamas).


Carron, who defines cohesion as "a dynamic process that is reflected in the tendency of the group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its goals and objectives." 

The members of cohesive organizations, at all levels of seniority and power, identify closely with the mission of the organization, seeing their fates intertwined with that of the broader organizational form. Cohesive organizations are able to desired to simultaneously delegate tactical autonomy and initiative to local units while maintaining clear strategic and operational control over fighters and factions. Crucially, obedience is high even when internal punishment is difficulty or unlikely: these are not organizations simply held together by fear and internal tyranny. Splits, feuds, and defiance on the ground are all characteristics of a lack of cohesion, suggesting a disconnect between individual or factional perceptions of interest and those of the broader organization.

In the study of professional militaries, small unit cohesion is the primary focus of research because of the massive size of forces and bureaucratization of combat, as well as the implicit assumption that the leaderships of these organizations are essentially on the same page: splits and violent feuds within the US military’s officer corps, for instance, are unthinkable. To study militant organizations we need to broaden our scope of explanation to include more aspects

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10 Wilson’s classic work on the police emphasizes the importance of studying situations in which normal operators within an organization have high levels of discretion. Tactical insurgency is an area where monitoring is often impossible, uncertainty is high, and there are a wide variety of possible policies. James Q. Wilson, *Varieties of Police Behavior; the Management of Law and Order in Eight Communities* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1968).
11 This attempt to define organizational cohesion follows Siebold, “The Evolution of the Measurement of Cohesion,” that “a structural definition of group cohesiveness that focuses on the pattern of relationships among group members as held together through the forces of social control seems to overcome most definitional problems and provides for measurement in terms of horizontal, vertical, and organizational cohesion,” p. 21.
of the organization, ranging from small units to the leadership cadres. The insurgent context is distinct in at least two key ways. First, insurgent groups tend to be comparatively tiny, with leaderships and foot soldiers frequently enmeshed in close physical and social proximity. Though organizational charts may posit a highly disciplined structure, in most insurgent groups (particularly in their foundational early days) there is much more fluidity and overlap between commanders and foot soldiers. Studying small units alongside macro-organizational structure is necessary to construct a convincing portrait of how insurgent groups work.

Second, unlike some militaries with centuries of deep institutional history and experience, many, indeed most, insurgent groups are recent creations, nascent organizations that are forced to construct new institutions and structures in the heat of escalating conflicts. We cannot take for granted the loyalty of commanders to one another, or of units to their ostensible

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13 This draws on the empirical move of both Bartov and Castillo, who view a pure focus on the small unit as insufficient. In this thesis, I will argue that insurgent groups must be able to balance local small-unit loyalties with loyalties to the broader organization. One without the other leads either to a sterile elite putschism or a profusion of short-lived pocket rebellions that are quickly smashed. Omer Bartov, Hitler's Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); and Castillo, "The Will to Fight."

14 We can imagine distinctions between unit cohesion or individual motivation, on the one hand, and organizational cohesion, on the other, but my level of analysis is the formal organization, not variation across particular units, local communities, or individuals in terms of their willingness to fight. Kenny 2010 argues that cohesion is distinct from organizational form (which he calls structural integrity): that small units can be cohesive even if they are not contributing to the structural integrity of a broader organization. But this attempt to distinguish on-the-ground dynamics from organizational dynamics is hard to sustain since the two blend into each other in crucial ways: organizational integrity in the heat of war is impossible to maintain without dedicated efforts on the ground, while fragmentation within a broad organization shatters the logistical chains, command and control, and information necessary to sustain combat and motivation in local arenas of conflict. More broadly, "cohesion" among sociologists can refer to any level of human organization. More specifically, this distinction is unsustainable even within the military sociological tradition. Military sociologists use cohesion to refer to effectiveness of armies in battle, which intrinsically involves both local effort by particular units and the integrity of much larger military command structures under extreme stress. Shils and Janowitz, Bartov, and others study both small-unit and macro-organizational variables in order to understand the broader puzzle of the Wehrmacht’s functional endurance as a massive military organization. If one wants to avoid using cohesion as a broad catch-all term, a better differentiation is possible between unit cohesion and organizational cohesion.

15 As Kuhn notes of Chinese anti-imperial rebellions, "utopian leadership must in the end face up to concrete problems of local administration." Philip Kuhn, Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure, 1796-1864 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 84. The organizational and micro-level cannot be separated, at least not very productively. Siebold argues that "On a theoretical basis, I view military unit cohesion as an ongoing process of social integration among the members of a primary group, with group leaders, and with the larger secondary organizations to which they belong." Emphasis added. Guy Siebold, "The Essence of Military Group Cohesion," Armed Forces & Society 33, no. 2 (January 2007), p. 288.
commanders, as insurgent entrepreneurs struggle to build organizations. This suggests that the closest professional military equivalent to insurgent groups are the armies that arose in newly independent post-colonial states, in which political order was (and often remains) fluid, organizations and institutions had to be built or adapted to new circumstances, and internal cleavages within armies reflected broader social divisions. Splits and feuds among leadership ranks in these armies have been common, as well as mutinies and defiance from below. This difference also provides an opportunity to study the initial causes of organizational form and function, rather than their consequences.

Thus empirically we are interested in whether there is a clear structure of command and control within an organization that is obeyed by both fighters and factional leaders. I want to make it clear that cohesion does not necessarily refer to overall success or even necessarily military effectiveness – in the face of a weak state, for instance, even fractious groups can

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16 In an analysis of the origins of the Indonesian military, Anderson describes a situation that would be familiar to any student of insurgent organization: “army hierarchies came to be defined by personal relationships between commanders and by the relative firepower over which they disposed. The history of Indonesia’s independence struggle was from then on to be marked by a long battle to impose central command and authority over a swarming mass of heterogeneous armed groups that grew up from the bottom on the basis of personal loyalties and fighting experience.” Benedict Anderson, Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944-46 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), p. 106. The legacies of the army’s foundational experiences persisted for decades, as national leaders tried to balance factions, territorial commands, and religious differences. In a related vein, McCoy and Kammen and Chandra look at intra-military social networks (based on military academy classes) as a crucial determinant of military politics and behavior in, respectively, the armed forces of the Philippines and Indonesia. Alfred McCoy, Closer Than Brothers: Manhood at the Philippine Military Academy (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1999); and Siddharth Chandra and Douglas Kammen, “Generating Reforms and Reforming Generations: Military Politics in Indonesia’s Democratic Transition and Consolidation,” World Politics 55, no. 1 (October 2002), pp. 96-136. The (violent) process of military formation in Burma involved ethnic, party, and personal networks, as outlined in Mary Callahan, Making Enemies: War and State Building in Burma (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2003).

17 For instance, see Donald Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); and Cynthia Enloe, Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in Divided Societies (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980). In Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Uganda, and Burma, among many others, state militaries have been constructed on the back of insurgent movements. This suggests interesting research agendas that compare armed organizations across state/non-state boundaries, with a focus on the creation of organized violence as part of a process of aspirational state formation.

18 Some theories focus on how differences in discipline, socialization, and value infusion lead to varying outcomes, but they tend not to study why these variables themselves vary systematically, which begs the questions of why some organizations are able to engage in these processes and not others.
nevertheless emerge victorious. Similarly, cohesive groups can make poor strategic decisions, lack appropriate alliances, or simply be overwhelmed by massive state force, leading to defeat or marginalization despite their organizational robustness. Though there is significant overlap, cohesion is not synonymous with broader success.

Measuring Organizational Cohesion. Because this dependent variable has not been studied in sufficient detail, there is no consensus way to measure it. In the theory and empirics below, I aim to study the nature and level of internal control within a group. Generally speaking, I am interested in whether a group’s existence involves patterns of unity (few splits or feuds, peaceful leadership transitions, factions under central control), of fragmentation (many splits and violent feuds; high factional autonomy), or of some intermediate trajectory. Rather than simply counting up splits or relying on some measure of factional autonomy, I try to gain a composite, multi-dimensional conceptualization of militancy by incorporating the specific four indicators below for any period of time:

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19 This is a reason I primarily focus on capable states— they test cohesion in ways that weak states cannot.
20 Examples being Gulbuddin Hekmatyar’s Hizb-e Islami in Afghanistan and the LTTE in Sri Lanka. I thank Janet Lewis and Libby Wood for raising this issue. An analogy in the interstate conflict realm is the Wehrmacht – its extraordinary fighting power did not lead to strategic victory for Nazi Germany. Yet Wehrmacht cohesion was nonetheless hugely important, allowing Germany to seize vast swathes of territory, kill tens of millions of people, and fundamentally alter great power politics. As Van Creveld, Fighting Power, p. 3, notes in his discussion of fighting power, “a small army can be overwhelmed by a larger one. Confronted with impossible political and economics odds, a qualitatively superior force may go down to defeat through no fault of its own. Not the outcome alone, but intrinsic qualities as well must therefore figure in an attempt to measure military (or any other) excellence; omit to do this, and the very notion of quality becomes impossible to sustain.”
21 It is possible to think of cohesion as involving hierarchical (or “U-form”) organization, and fragmentation involving networked/horizontal (or “M-form”) organization, as in Patrick Johnston, “The Geography of Insurgent Organization and its Consequences for Civil Wars: Evidence from Liberia and Sierra Leone.” Security Studies 17, no. 1 (2008), pp. 107-137. But I find that formal organizational structure on paper does not necessarily align in any useful way with actually patterns of splits and feuds – some groups with Stalinist organizational structures collapse in fissiparous disarray, while others with collective decision-making cohere. Elisabeth Jean Wood, “Armed Groups and Sexual Violence: When Is Wartime Rape Rare?” Politics and Society 37, no. 1 (March 1, 2009), pp. 131-161; and Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy M. Weinstein, “Handling and Manhandling Civilians in Civil War,” The American Political Science Review 100, no. 3 (August 2006), pp. 429-447, study the ability to internally discipline and to levy taxation. I focus on the first issue under “factional autonomy” but not on the second, since not all armed groups facing a strong state are able to reliably tax, even if they are fairly powerful and institutionalized.
1. **Frequency**: how frequently there are violent feuds and internal unrest within, and splits from, the organization in question. Splits occur when an internal faction breaks off and formally declares itself a distinct organization.

2. **Intensity**: how protracted and violent feuds and splits are. The longer and/or bloodier, the more intense.

3. **Autonomy**: the extent of factional/unit leaders’ obedience to central leadership in matters of strategy and operational behavior. This studies whether major factions defy central leadership on important issues like ceasefires, new offensives, and how to use violence, and whether central disciplinary decisions are made and implemented on the ground.

4. **Issue**: the issue/s and cleavages over which major internal unrest, in the form of feuds, splits, and other internal discontent arise. This could be political-military strategy, the distribution of material goods, or some combination of reasons.

In each empirical case for a given period of time, I identify the number and severity of splits, the (known-of) violent feuds and leadership transitions within the group, the apparent level of factional autonomy, and what issues drive internal unrest. The first three indicators attempt to get a sense of the level of internal control; the fourth tries to measure the *nature* of control (and its lack). These indicators can be studied for any group at any time, and thus are not reliant on my independent variables or case selection. Theoretically, any combination of them is possible, so I am not creating artificial categories that conveniently line up with the explanation I offer. I will argue that there tend to be *patterns* of these values that cluster together for systematic reasons. This setup allows fairly fine-grained tests – rather than coding a group cohesive or not cohesive, we can look at different dimensions of internal control and cooperation and arrive at more nuanced empirical pictures of an organization.\(^2\)

Two examples from Northern Ireland give a sense of how I measure the DV. The Irish National Liberation Army between 1980 and 1990 had one major split, several minor splits and numerous internal feuds (high frequency), with the major split being extremely bloody and protracted (high intensity), factions operating with little central control and significant inter-factional rivalry throughout this period (high autonomy), and multiple issues driving internal

\(^2\) It also significantly increases the number of observations for each group, making comparisons more persuasive.
unrest. By contrast, the Provisional IRA during this period had no major splits or feuds (low
frequency), some internal challenges squashed short of a split and factional unrest influencing
leadership policy (medium strategic autonomy), and internal unrest caused by political-military
disagreements over the strategy of the organization as it moved into politics.

Measurement requires extremely detailed study of the internal politics and organization
of these groups. We cannot rely on formal organization charts or titles to reliably tell us how
these groups operate.\textsuperscript{23} Important aspects of cohesion, particularly factional autonomy, are much
difficult to code, which is why the in-depth historical study is so important.\textsuperscript{24} While
simplification and generalization are important goals, to really understand insurgent groups in
comparative perspective we need to delve deeply into their often-murky inner workings. In the
next section I discuss some of the ways in which organizational cohesion matters for explaining
key dynamics of civil war.

\textbf{II. Why Cohesion Matters}

Armed group cohesion and control, measured in a variety of ways by various authors, is
important in both contemporary policy analysis and in the scholarly literature. This is obviously
a pressing issue in the real world – it matters greatly for the future of Afghanistan whether the
Taliban can maintain coordination and control as opposed to splintering into feuding factions;
Iraq may take a different course if Muqtada al Sadr improves the cohesion of the Mahdi Army;
the trajectory of Colombia hinges on the ability of FARC to hold together in the face of
government counterinsurgency. Governments try to split insurgents, or keep them together in
order to have a negotiating partner; the international community assesses internal control, and

\textsuperscript{23}“observers who assume firms to be structured in fact by the official organization chart are sociological babes in
\textsuperscript{24} And in fact, for more obscure groups, even just figuring out when unrest happens requires a large time investment.
what might fracture it, when figuring out who to negotiate with and how de-mobilization policies might work; armed groups try to pull away factions from their rivals and devote enormous effort to constructing and reproducing internal control.25

Moreover, a wave of recent political science research has placed insurgent/opposition movement cohesion or fragmentation at the center of important civil war dynamics.26 These studies do not necessarily adopt the conceptualization of group cohesion used here; some focus on fragmentation in the overall insurgent milieu (“movement fragmentation”), rather than in single groups, while others, like this dissertation, focus on specific organizations. But both conceptualizations are clearly linked to the ability or inability of individual groups to forge consolidated hegemony through the unified application of lethal violence. This research has cumulated to the point that it is clear the armed group cohesion has an important causal effect on the core dynamics of civil war. I briefly outline the findings for each category.

Violence Against Civilians. First we consider how armed group cohesion influences abuses against civilians. Humphreys and Weinstein link this variable to patterns of civilian victimization in war, with fragmented organizations engaging in higher levels of indiscriminate violence in Sierra Leone – they argue that “internal factional attributes including the characteristics of a group’s membership, how they are recruited, and how they relate to one another are key factors that help to explain variation in levels of abuse in the Sierra Leone conflict.”27 Cohen uses survey and interview data in Sierra Leone and cross-nationally to argue that “combatant groups with persistently low levels of social cohesion are more likely to commit rape, especially gang rape. Combatant groups with the lowest levels of social cohesion are those

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25 An example of this kind of policy analysis is Fotini Christia and Michael Semple, “Flipping the Taliban.” *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 4 (August 2009), pp. 34-47.
26 A preliminary overview is Bakke et al., “Shirts Today, Skins Tomorrow.”
27 Humphreys and Weinstein, “Handling and Manhandling,” p. 441.
that recruit their members through forcible abduction.”

Wood contends that internal discipline can act as a check on organizations’ use of sexual violence against civilians.

Pearlman argues that fragmentation in the overall Palestinian national movement has encouraged the targeting of civilians in war. At high levels of cohesion (generally under the control of a single overall organization), the movement has been able to coordinate violence and non-violence. But when there are several autonomous groups, but none dominant, there are incentives for groups to target civilians violently. Groups attract adherents by engaging in attacks, rivalries reduce constraints and coordination, and there are more opportunities both for spoilers to have an impact and for external sponsors to engage in manipulation. Bloom offers a similar argument about the effects of inter-group rivalry on suicide bombing – they outbid one another in a quest to maintain and attract members. Metelits suggests that as the number of armed factions and competition them grows, civilians become more victimized.

Cohen, Wood, and Humphreys and Weinstein focus their analysis within individual groups, while Pearlman and Bloom look at the relations between groups, but they all agree that higher levels of fragmentation can increase the use of indiscriminate violence. This does not mean that cohesive and disciplined armed groups will not commit human rights abuses - indeed, they may be most equipped to engage in systematic atrocity and population displacement. The coordinated ethnic killing and mass expulsions carried out by the Tamil Tigers against Sinhalese.

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Buddhists and Muslims in northern and eastern Sri Lanka are a classic case in point, as is the use of sectarian violence by Al Qaeda in Iraq. But this kind of human rights abuse will be part of a political-military strategy, and thus controllable and, at least theoretically, driven by a Clausewitzian logic. The thuggish opportunism John Mueller identifies as a motivation for combatants is tempered and directed by cohesive and disciplined organizations.33

Military Effectiveness. Cohesion also directly influences the ability of militant groups to fight the government. This line of argument has related roots in the literature on militaries. Shils and Janowitz famously looked to the social cohesiveness of the Wehrmacht as a crucial cause of its ability to keep fighting in the face of almost-certain defeat in World War II.34 They argued that the social “primary group” of individual soldiers provided their motivation to fight, and underpinned by a Nazi “hard core” that anchored the organization even in the face of certain defeat. Rosen argues that militaries with internal social divisions and problems of legitimacy are less militarily effective than homogeneous armies based on cohesive societies.35

In the world of non-state violence, Shapiro argues that different levels of organizational control affect the ability of terrorist leaders to calibrate violence.36 Discriminate violence requires high levels of organizational control, but this is costly, meaning that leaders who are unable to summon the resources for oversight and monitoring will be less able to generate focused and target militant violence. Sinno presents an account of how armed group structure affects war outcomes, though does not offer a comprehensive argument about how

34 Shils and Janowitz, “Cohesion and Disintegration.”
organizational structures are chosen. He argues that when centralized groups have access to a territorial sanctuary they are likely to win, while decentralized groups are most effective without a sanctuary.\footnote{Abdulkader Sinno, Organizations at War in Afghanistan and Beyond (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).} Lewis suggests that more cohesive groups will be able to effectively challenge the state, escalating “sparks” into full-blown “fires” of rebellion.\footnote{Janet Lewis, “Ending Conflict Early: Nascent Stages of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency.” Ph.D dissertation in progress (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2010).}

Johnston persuasively argues that hierarchical and cohesive “U-form” (unitary, as opposed to “M-form” or multidivisional) insurgencies are more militarily effective. U-form groups approximate my conceptualization of relatively high cohesion. He writes that “U-form organizations are more effective than M-forms because of their capacity to manage agency problems, which reduce military efficiency and hinder coordination. Moreover, U-form groups enjoy a centralized, unified military strategy, whereas M-form groups must attempt to overcome internal actors’ varying preferences and strategies. U-form organization thus allows smaller armed groups to get the most out of their personnel.”\footnote{Johnston, “The Geography of Insurgent Organization,” p. 117.}

If military effectiveness is in some way linked to internal cohesion, it can also help us understand other puzzles. For instance, Kalyvas offers a major study of how shifts in power and territorial control drive variation in patterns of violence within civil war.\footnote{Stathis Kalyvas, The Logic of Violence in Civil War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).} But he “black boxes” the sources of insurgent power, taking the military balance as an exogenous given at any point in time. Castillo links military cohesion to the staying power of armies, and this analysis could plausibly be linked to studies of insurgency as well.\footnote{Castillo, “The Will to Fight.”} A better understanding of cohesion could offer further insight into how and why violence in civil war varies across time and space – we should expect to see very different patterns of power shifts and territorial control depending what

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37 Abdulkader Sinno, Organizations at War in Afghanistan and Beyond (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).
41 Castillo, “The Will to Fight.”
type of insurgent forces the state is doing battling with. Ultimately, if in counterinsurgency
“victory will be obtained only through the complete destruction of that [insurgent]
organization,” then it is worth studying organizations in depth.

Conflict Resolution and Recurrence. Stedman and subsequent scholars of “spoilers”
highlight the dangers of both movement and organizational fragmentation to peace
negotiations. The basic insight offered in this line of work is that if there are multiple actors
with power over outcomes in a negotiation and demobilization context, there will be higher
barriers to arriving at and implementing a settlement. Cunningham argues that the overall
number of “veto players” in a war affects its duration – the more actors involved, the longer the
war will go on. Cunningham offers a theory linking the fragmentation of a separatist movement
to the outcomes of its bargaining with the center. The basic insight of much of this work is that
“U-form [cohesive, centralized] insurgencies are both more formidable on the battlefield and
more reliable at the negotiating table.” The more groups there are and/or the more factionalized
each group is, the less likely we are to see an end to a civil war. To the extent that major groups
can hold themselves together without major splits or factional autonomy, the greater the
likelihood that civil wars can be cleanly terminated and non-state actors de-mobilized.

This brief overview of the importance of insurgent cohesion (in various

42 There is a reason that the British Army had to devote massive resources to maintaining influence in the shattered
ghettos of West Belfast, while areas of South Belfast with similar ethnic composition posed essentially no challenge
to the state and could be easily controlled. The strength of PIRA in West Belfast, I will argue, had much to do with the
particular family, party, and educational networks embedded in parts of the Catholic community there.
43 Trinquier, Modern Warfare, p. 7.
pp. 5-53; Andrew Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, “Sabotaging the Peace: The Politics of Extremist Violence.”
International Organization 56, no. 2 (Spring 2002), pp. 263-296; Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, “Conciliation,
Counterterrorism, and Patterns of Terrorist Violence,” International Organization 59, no. 1 (Winter 2005), pp. 145-
176; Pearlman, “Spoiling Inside and Out.”
45 David Cunningham, “Veto Players and Civil War Duration,” American Journal of Political Science 50, no. 4
(October 2006), pp. 875-892.
46 Kathleen Cunningham, “Divided and conquered: Why states and self-determination groups fail in bargaining over
autonomy.” (University of California, San Diego, 2007); and Bakke et al., “Shirts Today, Skins Tomorrow.”
conceptualizations) suggests that understanding the roots of variation in how armed groups are organized and structured is a central question for the study of civil war. The open question for many of the theories above is where their key independent variable comes from. This leaves significant room for advancing a broad research agenda through a specific focus on insurgent organization. Moreover, each of these issues is not just an object of academic study but also a core concern for policy makers, NGOs, and international organizations trying to resolve or mitigate the consequences of civil war.

III. Existing Explanations for Armed Group Organization

Here I outline important perspectives that have been advanced in the literature to explain insurgent cohesion. This section combines a literature review with examples that either bolster or call into question existing theories; it would be a rather dry exercise to simply list explanations without hinting at their explanatory value. I first discuss the early wave of research on armed groups associated primarily with communist and/or anti-colonial militancy. This lays much of the intellectual basis for the modern study of civil war, but with a very specific focus on the particular problem of Marxist-Leninist mobilization. I then go into more detail in outlining and assessing newer explanations that have taken on more of a hypothesis-testing bent.

Communism, Colonialism, and the First Wave. The modern study of insurgency emerged in the 1950s and carried through into the late 1970s, when it dropped off fairly precipitously until the late 1990s. This “first wave” is enormously valuable, and I draw heavily on it in building my own theory in Chapter 3. However, it is often quite descriptive and lacks systematic comparison. Pye’s study of guerrilla communism in Malaya argues that Malayan Communist Party was able to recruit Chinese alienated by the rapid social change and upheaval that emerged during and
after World War II. He describes the exceptional abilities of the MCP in creating a social and organizational environment that stressed discipline and obedience; he further found that individuals left the MCP not for ideological reasons, but instead when they felt they were being treated poorly by the organization. The roots of the MCP’s ability to create this kind of indoctrination are unclear, however, because of the lack of comparisons.

In a similar vein, Selznick finds that communists had been able to construct “combat parties” in which discipline and control are forged and reproduced across a wide variety of institutions (from insurgency to trade unions). Selznick attributes this organizational strategy and competence to the ideology and example of Lenin. For Pye and Selznick, it is something about communism, or at least about the interaction of communism and modernization, that has been able to breed organizational discipline. The origins of the organizational weapon are taken as a given and its consequences explored, rather than its causes.

Huntington follows in this line of thought, arguing that “the organization and the creation of new political institutions are the peculiar contributions of communist movement to modern politics.” The party succeeds because its members’ “devotion is to the party, not to any social group.” The cause of communist cohesion and discipline is the ideology and “standard operating procedure” of Leninism, translated to new arenas but uniquely able to generate organization. Studies of the rise of revolutionary violence in Vietnam similarly place their emphasis on how a disciplined cadre party exploited grievance and state dysfunction, bound by a

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50 Interestingly, Selznick in TVA and the Grass Roots: A Study in the Sociology of Formal Organization (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949); and Leadership in Administration offers much more explicit arguments about how institutions adapt to both internal and external social and factional pressures. I rely on Leadership in Administration heavily in Chapter 3.
52 Huntington, Political Order, p. 337.
clear organizational ideology and model drawn from the combination of Mao and Lenin, but do not explain why the discipline and consequent party-state emerged.\textsuperscript{53} The French school of counterinsurgency dealt with both communist and non-communist groups, but with a similar diagnosis and prescription, focused on the primacy of organization.\textsuperscript{54}

A major problem with the focus on Marxism-Leninism is that some communist armed groups have found themselves divided and disorganized, while non-communist militant organizations have been able to summon disciplined mobilization.\textsuperscript{55} There is a certain "organizational genius" to Leninism and its variants, but the organization of communists cannot be attributable solely to communist ideology, given the range of variation within communist organizations, and the presence of deep cohesion in some non-communist parties.\textsuperscript{56}

Research in the 1970s moved beyond communism as a cause of organizational cohesion. Leites and Wolf offered a spare analytic framework for understanding the "system" of inputs and outputs that constitutes an insurgent group, linked to empirical observations.\textsuperscript{57} They did not, however, offer a theory that could link empirical variables to outcomes. Popkin’s comparative study of movements in Vietnam offers a major step forward, combining theory, research, and comparison.\textsuperscript{58} He argues that peasants respond to rational incentives and that movements have successfully mobilized when they provide selective incentives to peasants through local political


\textsuperscript{54} Trinquier, \textit{Modern Warfare}.

\textsuperscript{55} For instance, in SE Asia, the Viet Cong and Khmer Rouge can be contrasted with the Hukbahalaps, Pathet Lao, and MCP. In South Asia, the Nepalese Maoists can be contrasted with the Indian Maoists.

\textsuperscript{56} In Chapter 3, I draw heavily on Selznick in particular, but argue that his insights are more broadly applicable to militant mobilization in general, demanding that we not exclusively focus on communism as the cause of control, as he himself applied them in Leadership in Administration.


entrepreneurs. Revolutionary mobilization is not a grand process, but instead the accumulation of successes, village-by-village, in overcoming an Olson-ian collective action problem. The problem in Popkin’s account and in this general approach to organization is that there is little explanation of why some groups were able to achieve this kind of selective local mobilization, while others were not, despite operating in a shared political-economic environment.  

Recent Explanations. A new wave of research has emerged in the last fifteen years that has revitalized the study of civil conflict. While most of this work has taken organizations as essentially given, there have been a number of important works that either directly or implicitly suggest causes of insurgent organizational form.

Table 2.1. Theories of Insurgent Cohesion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Prediction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Solidarity</td>
<td>Ethnic homogeneity → cohesion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grievance</td>
<td>Increasing popular support → cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Greed</td>
<td>External support/material resources → fragmentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Capacity</td>
<td>External support/material resources → cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charisma</td>
<td>Charisma of key leader → cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>Preponderance of Hawks/Doves → cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Policy</td>
<td>Regime type/COIN policy → cohesion/fragmentation</td>
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A. Mass Popular Support

I start with two plausible, and closely related, lines of argument that link popular grievance to group cohesion. Ethnic solidarity arguments contend that groups with ethnic bases are driven by powerful in-group bonds of loyalty and shared preference, allowing them to

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59 I discuss nationalism below, but it is worth mentioning that some have compared contemporary militant Islam to international communism. However, the same basic problem applies here: many of the most radical Islamist organizations, especially in Egypt, Algeria, Pakistan, and Iraq, have found themselves torn apart by internal feuds and disagreements that undermine organizational cohesion. We need to distinguish between goals and motivations, on the one hand, and actual organizational behavior on the other. This conflation mixes conceptually distinct things: why people rebel vs. their ability to achieve coordinated violence once they do rebel. This is like the difference between the causes of wars and causes of victory and defeat in war.
cooperate and coordinate in ethnic wars. Scholars contrast homogenous ethnic groupings with appeals to either leftist, nonascriptive identities or to multi-ethnic coalitions. Ethnic homogeneity, these arguments claim, can lead to organizational cohesion, through a variety of mechanisms, from shared preferences to better in-group monitoring. Some have also argued that ethno-nationalism has a special power that hardens identity boundaries and makes defection and side-switching more difficult, thus bolstering nationalist armed groups. Horowitz, Kaufman, and Petersen argue that highly resonant cultural symbols and processes can tap into deep, enduring ethnic sentiments that sustain rebellion and high-risk collective action. Some cultures and their resident armed groups can generate cohesion based on historically-grounded experiences and norms.

Broader grievance arguments suggest that social groupings most profoundly disaffected by the pre-war status quo will have the greatest incentive to cooperate and fight, ethnic or not. Organizations that are best appeal to politically aggrieved populations will in turn become the most robust institutions. Weinstein explicitly argues that mass mobilization and politicization by "activist" insurgents interested in grassroots organization-building lead to internal discipline and control, while class-based studies link organizational outcomes to shared political-economic

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62 Kaufmann, “Possible and Impossible Solutions.”


interests. When armed groups can tap into mass political grievances and deploy those against the state, they will be able to attract and retain followers willing to obey risky orders in pursuit of a shared political vision. Other scholars suggest that the provision of social services can provide credibility and support to armed groups: the presence of grievance, whether poverty, poor governance, or exclusion, opens the opportunity for armed groups to.

The level and extent of social support drives patterns of mobilization and conflict. These arguments, both focused on specifically ethnic and broader grievances, reflect common analogies about insurgents as “fish” in the “sea” of supportive civilians – the more pervasive the popular support for armed groups, the better they can build enduring organizations. Overcoming the collective action problem will be easier with highly motivated participants drawing on a broad pool of recruits. Indeed the recent FM3-24 Counterinsurgency Field Manual offers a similar approach aimed at the broad popular legitimacy as a way of breaking insurgent groups. This is also the story advanced by insurgent groups themselves in my fieldwork – they succeed when they appeal to the deepest aspirations of the people by offering the most authentic representation of political ethnicity or class solidarity. It became very clear in my research that, for instance, the Provisional IRA and LTTE viewed themselves as the truest, most legitimate Irishmen and Sri

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65 The rich literature on peasant rebellions in the 1960s and 1970s tried to understand why different classes and economic groups did and did not support rebels.
66 Galula views “the cause” as the ultimate root of insurgent mobilization, and explicitly argues that a good cause is one that “must, of course, be able to identify himself totally with the cause or, more precisely, with the entire majority of the population theoretically attracted by it” Galula, David. Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2006).
67 This is at the “club model” offered in Eli Berman, Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), and is found in a variety of case-specific literature. As I will note in the empirical chapters, social service provision often tends to actually follow insurgent mobilization, not vice versa.
68 Doug McAdam, Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) offers a powerful critique of an earlier sociological variant of this approach, in which contentious politics was seen as the result of social strain that eventually triggered unrest.
Lankan Tamils. As the Provisional IRA proclaimed in 1972, “it should be clear to all that the only authentic voice of the people is the Republican Movement, the only authentic army of the people, the Provisional I.R.A.” This rhetoric was seamlessly applied to class analysis by leftist groups, regardless of whether it was actually accurate.

_Problems with the Mass Popular Support Arguments._ There is certainly something important to these arguments. However, I find several problems with an approach that links mass grievance (of varying sorts) to organizational outcomes. Under some circumstances, ethnic boundaries are indeed very rigid, yet we have rich evidence of ethnics betraying one another in order to align with rival groups or state forces. Splits and feuds have been endemic in many nationalist movements. This does not mean nationalism is not a powerful motivator of rebellion, but instead that it is not a reliable guide to organizational behavior once in the heat of war, when fear, rivalries, and bribes can all operate. Ethno-nationalism is certainly not sufficient for cohesion. The crucial question may be what networks and institutions are used to mobilize groups and which cleavages those line up along, not simply whether there is ethno-linguistic or religious homogeneity in social composition.

In terms of broader popular support, whether ethnic, class, religious, or some other cleavage, there are similar concerns. First, popular support arguments are often so vague as to be almost impossible to test or measure, leading to an unhelpful underspecification. For instance, Weinstein’s “activist” groups “draw on social endowments that tie them to potential followers by means of ethnic, religious, or ideological ties. They can also mobilize within ethnic networks,
religious organizations, formal and informal associations, and communities. 72 This is so expansive as to lack analytical utility: if there are any ethnic/social/community/ideological ties of any sort between a population and a group, we should expect to see discipline and cohesion. Yet we know that many, perhaps most, armed groups that do draw upon ethnic, religious, ideologies, or other mobilization appeals fail miserably to build disciplined armed structures. Weinstein’s argument about social support is cast in such general terms as to massively over-predict cohesion and control among groups that rely on any type of social support (and, I argue below, to massively under-predict discipline and commitment among resource-rich groups). 73 Put simply, not all networks, identities, communities, and religious organizations are the same, and mass popular participation is no guarantee of internal commitment and discipline.

Case-specific studies often explain why insurgents falter by pointing to the loss of popular support, but scholars and analysts tend to identify the lack of popular support by observing organizational fragmentation. This leads to a severe danger of tautology and backward-inferring the independent social support variable. A rich literature on networks and mobilization, which studies variation across social ties, has repeatedly insisted that the simple existence of identity links or appeals is not the primary cause of variation in movement trajectories. The social world is far more complex than a binary “social support or not” variable: instead, social support takes different forms through different structures, and we can expect that this variation has potentially important implications for organizational trajectories.

Second, there is no apparent correlation between mass support (when we can roughly measure it) and insurgent cohesion. While popular support is obviously important, the most

72 Weinstein, Inside Rebellion, p. 9.
73 More broadly, Weinstein argues that socially-rooted armed groups are unlikely to use violence against civilians. His scope conditions and case selection are crucial here, since he does not study ethnic/sectarian/religious conflicts in which large parts of the civilian population are politically targeted for expulsion and mass killing. In these wars, disciplined armed groups can strategically use violence against civilians as a political tool.
disciplined groups are often not the largest nor most representative of popular ideology within an overall identity category, whether ethnicity or class. Nor do highly cohesive groups always engage in mass politicization and education. Leites and Wolf observe that “even fairly far along in the struggle, R [rebel group] can make substantial progress without significant popular endorsement.”74 Wickham-Crowley notes that “‘warm feelings’ are of precious little value to a social movement,”75 and Kennan argues that the Russian civil war was characterized by “shifting, undependable winds of popular sympathy.”76 The power of communist revolutions has often been disciplined mobilization of small groups of ruthless revolutionaries, which bears echoes in other revolutions (Iran, for instance) and many insurgencies.77

Analytically, these assertions make sense - we know that collective action often does not emerge, even if the sentiments of many favor collective action.78 What seems more important is prior social organization, not popularity; “combat parties” are superior to the winners of elections or the group most proximate to the median citizen when it comes to cohesion and control.79 Kalyvas has argued along similar lines that, rather than deep-seated political loyalties, most (but not all) normal people just want to be left alone and will collaborate with whoever controls their particular piece of territory; macro-level grievances are too vague and distant to overcome the pressing needs of security and survival facing ordinary people in civil wars.80

Despite his appeal to deep cultural symbols and ethnic solidarity in later work, Petersen in earlier

74 Leites and Wolf, Rebellion and Authority, p. 149.
77 While often simply a rhetorical device by counterinsurgents, it is also the case that many civilians are indifferent or hostile to insurgents. Ambivalence and fear are probably the most common reaction by normal people.
79 Trinquier and other writers in the “French school” of COIN repeatedly make this point. They understated the importance of political motivation, but are a welcome corrective to many of the vague platitudes about insurgency that have become so popular.
80 Kalyvas, The Logic of Violence in Civil War.
research notes that ethnically-identical villages in Lithuania varied dramatically in their actual mobilization – despite all being aggrieved Lithuanians, only some picked up the gun.81

Second, the brutal intra-ethnic feuding so common between rival militants and between violent and non-violent ethnic political entrepreneurs makes it clear that there is often not an undisputedly “authentic” ethnic representative. Clashes between rival leftist and religious factions are also common and represent similar struggles over interpretation and control of the political direction of a movement.82 There is tremendous variation and competition within ethnic, religious, and class categories, and so shared macro-level identity and grievance cannot explain variation across groups within an identity bloc. Trotskyites battled Leninists, the Jamaat-e-Islami contends with the Deobandis and Ahl-e-Hadith, and the co-ethnic UDT and FRETILIN engaged in fratricidal war in East Timor.

Popular support matters not primarily in its quantity, but, I will argue, instead in its structure and depth. Symbols and identity bonds are important, but it’s clear that these are not sufficient to build an armed group around. All Muslim Kashmiris may respond to religious discrimination, but that alone is unlikely to hold them together in the face of risk and intense divisions along lines of sect, class, region, and ideology. Instead, certain structures of preexisting social networks may keep groups afloat even in the face of mass neutrality or substantial hostility; they provide islands of sympathy and support upon which organizations can find sanctuary amidst risk. Political grievances matter, but the evidence suggests that we need to look deeper within identity categories to find the most robust groundings of group cohesion, even if they represent a minority. Grievances must be funneled through actually existing organizations, and we should expect dramatic variation in those transmission belts of rebellion. We reasonably

81 Petersen, Resistance and Rebellion.
82 I alluded above to the factional struggles within the radical Islamist milieu, calling into question the binding power of religious ideology on its own to hold movements together.
suspect that social support is linked in some way to organization, but the possible mechanisms are numerous, and the implications of different mechanisms significant for our broader understanding of civil war. Getting the dynamics of social support right is absolutely essential for the study of insurgency.

B. Material Endowments and Resource Determinism

_Greed._ An important line of theory has emerged that focuses on how the sources and nature of the material endowments affect group organization. If the grievance arguments above draw loosely on the relative deprivation tradition in social movement theory, these argument draw on the resource mobilization approach, with some overlap with contracting and principal-agent theories.\(^{83}\) Material endowments arguments cut in two directions — _greed_ and _capacity_. Some hugely influential research, in advancing the _greed_ argument, suggests that groups with plentiful resources from state sponsors or illicit economies will be plagued by indiscipline and opportunism, and thus face recurrent threats to cohesion.\(^{84}\) These groups do not need to generate revenue or cooperation from the population because much of their funding comes either from abroad or from exploitable natural resources and criminality. Nor do the leaders of these “greedy” groups have any incentive to build discipline, since they attract recruits through the promise of easy loot, and have no need to be discriminating in their use of violence against civilians. “Value infusion” and personnel homogenization are unnecessary if the goal is to pump drug money into a group of criminals in order to get rich.

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This means that resource-rich groups, with state sponsors, diasporas, control over drugs/diamonds/mines, and links to looting and crime, will be unable to match “activist” or “grievance”-driven organizations in terms of cohesion and internal discipline. This has become a conventional wisdom in certain parts of the literature, suggesting that only organizations unreliant on state sponsors or natural resources can be truly political and disciplined. This interpretation has fueled research that castigates insurgent groups are mercenaries driven by cheap thrills, easy money, and the lures of power. Some organization in my thesis look like the greed model predicts – bloated, undisciplined proxy armies fighting on someone else’s dime. They are lax and chaotic, prone to schisms and disobedience. There is certainly some empirical basis for accepting the greed’s model link between external support and/or natural/criminal and an outcome of fragmentation.

Problems with the Greed Argument. The “greed” argument is essentially a particular variant of resource mobilization theory in the study of social movements, which has come under serious criticism. As McAdams argues, “it is enough simply to make the obvious point that resources do not dictate their use, people do. All too often however, a nonproblematic link between resources and insurgency is implied in the mobilization perspective.” In reality, some of the most determined and cohesive groups rely very heavily on state sponsors and diasporas, while even groups reliant on drugs and criminality can maintain internal discipline and control.

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85 Mueller is the clearest example of this, but Collier’s contempt for the notion that any insurgencies have any political aspect is also striking, especially in *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). A valuable critique of the “new wars” literature is Stathis Kalyvas, “New” and "Old" Civil Wars: A Valid Distinction?” *World Politics* 54, no. 1 (October 2001), pp. 99-118.


This is because greed-based theories largely ignore the risks of civil war, at least when insurgents are fighting relatively capable states. People may be quite happy to loot or prey, but in many conflicts the benefits of predation are likely to be small compared to the possibility of being killed, imprisoned, or having one’s family harmed. There are far easier ways of making some cash than facing down Pakistani artillery or the tender mercies of the Burmese or Indonesian militaries in a peripheral area far from human rights oversight. External and illicit resources may be desirable and useful because they allow groups to fight better and to take care of their cadres, not just because of a desire for personal gain.

This theoretical critique of resource determinism is borne out in reality. There are numerous examples of “resource-wealthy” organizations maintaining cohesion. Despite state support and drug-running, “the Taliban maintain a sufficient degree of cohesion in the field through the strong ideological commitment of their ‘cadres’ and the accepted legitimacy of its leadership.” The Badr Brigade in Iraq and Hezbollah in Lebanon have received significant material (and in the case of Badr, sanctuary) support from Iran, yet are the most disciplined and controlled non-state actors in their respective countries. Kalyvas notes that even RENAMO in Mozambique, which Weinstein derides as an opportunistic and thuggish proxy army, turned into an effective military force that “fought the Mozambican government to a standstill.” The Viet Cong received massive external support from the North Vietnamese government yet was a

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88 And even here, criminals often rely on quite explicit processes of socialization and trust-checking in order to avoid being caught and convicted. Social ties are entirely compatible with predation, just as disciplined organizations are entirely compatible with genocide and ethnic cleansing. See Diego Gambetta, Codes of the Underworld: How Criminals Communicate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009) on these issues of trust and commitment.


highly-disciplined force. Thus the "greed" mechanism appears to be an overly-exuberant generalization of specific patterns we observe in some extremely weak African and Latin American states with no serious barriers to mobilization. In other contexts this argument may not hold - external resources and crime may allow armed groups to survive in high-risk, high-cost environments where they would otherwise be destroyed. Greed theorists often do not study sophisticated insurgencies and thus they miss the centrally important military, political, and organizational role of resources.

Capacity. Others make this point in outlining a capacity mechanism linking materiel to mobilization. These scholars argue that technology and external support can overcome problems of group cohesion in particular settings by giving commanders the capacity to control their factions and create incentives for cooperation, even in the failed African states where greed is supposed to dominate. Johnston points to the role of technology in monitoring factions and building military effectiveness, arguing that the combination of geographic scope and technological sophistication drives variation in group structure. Felbab-Brown argues that the presence of drugs can, under certain circumstances, bolster popular support for groups. Thus it is the absence of external support and technological/material endowments, not their presence, that contributes to organizational degradation.

Problems with the Capacity Argument. I find significant support for this argument, and integrate it into my theory below – in the strong state context, external support is essential for

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93 He also identifies the different possible implications of material endowments – Johnston, “Geography of Insurgent Organization,” p. 118. Organizations that rapidly expand without access to technology of monitoring (radios, helicopters) tend to form factionalized M-form insurgencies, while more geographically compact groups or those with sophisticated technology are cohesive U-forms
survival and control, while under certain circumstances even drugs and natural resources can bolster group cohesion. However, there are still the cases Weinstein and others point to of depredations, opportunism, and indiscriminate violence by resource-rich groups, from Peru’s Huallaga Valley to the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization in Sri Lanka. The array of examples cutting in both directions suggests that there may be no simple linear relationship between resources and cohesion.\textsuperscript{95} There is variation across groups that are all externally sponsored, \textit{and} across groups lacking external support.

Thus there is an important puzzle that needs to be explained, but looking exclusively at the sources of guns and money cannot answer it. As Weinstein himself notes, “the dynamics of organizational change are not explicable simply in terms of changing endowments.”\textsuperscript{96} My argument will be that the effects of large-scale external aid are \textit{contingent} on prior patterns of social mobilization around which the group mobilizes. A group can receive a huge amount of external aid but still remain disciplined and socially-rooted; a group can lack external aid and still be a loose array of fractious thugs. Social incentives and institutional structures are crucial determinants of how guns and money are used.

\textbf{C. Leaders and Ideology}

Common explanations focus on the individual attributes of leaders. It is possible that this is a matter of personality, as some are simply more \textit{charismatic}, ruthless, and far-seeing than others. However, there is no clear way to systematically study charisma and quite a few apparently-charismatic individuals end up dead amidst the scattered wreckage of their groups, like Seamus Costello of the INLA in Northern Ireland or Uma Maheswaran of PLOT in Sri Lanka.

\textsuperscript{95} It is also possible that we have not measured resources properly, and that there is in fact a linear relationship. Thanks to Patrick Johnston for this suggestion.

\textsuperscript{96} Weinstein, \textit{Inside Rebellion}, p. 295
Lanka, while otherwise-boring or personally unremarkable individuals can hold pride of place in highly disciplined armed groups. As such, I do not examine this hypothesis in detail.

A very important line of argument focuses on the ideological differences among leaders between “hawks” and “doves,” with hawks being more likely to break away from organizations during or after peace processes. This theoretical approach appeals to a common-sense understanding that ideological moderates and hard-liners compete within a group. Ex ante differences in views of militancy within a group should drive patterns of cohesion and collapse, with separation occurring under specified political conditions, usually ceasefires and peace processes. Stedman relies on a typology of greedy, total, and limited spoilers, while Bueno de Mesquita and Kydd and Walter both explicitly model “moderates” and “extremists”/“hard-liners” as distinct ideological types of insurgents. As armed groups become more ideologically homogenous (in whatever direction), we should be less likely to see splits and feuds.

Problems with the Ideology Argument. However, there are three significant problems with this approach. First, it is simply not clear that most insurgents make their decisions in these contexts based on ideology. Pye’s research on Malayan communists revealed that “not a single SEP [Surrendered Enemy Personnel] cited a change in the party’s ‘line’ as the reason for his reaction of Communism. . . they were able to take in their stride great shifts in the party’s policies without letting these shifts affect their loyalty. They sensed a problem of loyalty only when new policies brought about a change in the conditions under which they had to work for the party”98; indeed, “it was only after the SEP’s had some personal difficulties with the party

98 Pye, Guerrilla Communism in Malaya, p. 324.
and were considering the advisability of defection that they began to be critical of the political nature of Communism, of its objectives and its means.99

In their influential study of the Wehrmacht, Shils and Janowitz found that “the fighting effectiveness of the vast majority of soldiers depends only to a small extent on their preoccupation with the major political value which might be affected by the outcome of the war.”100 Irish republicans upset with the course of the Provisional IRA have constantly railed against the loyalty of the group’s members and sympathizers, repeatedly pointing out the ideological contortions and betrayals of the organization’s embrace of power-sharing.101 Yet this ideological argument about PIRA and Sinn Fein’s abandonment of traditional armed struggle republicanism has had little impact. Similarly, an anthropologist notes of the Provisional and Official IRAs that “the differences in the movements seemed, at this level of organization [local], to be much more firmly rooted in the contingencies of social status, family and community allegiance than in actual revolutionary dogma.”102 Group loyalty can be a powerful force independent of high politics – trust and obligation may play a more important role than ideology.

Second, there is an underlying empirical challenge of identifying hawks and doves ex ante – hawks sometimes accept peace or even switch sides, while some apparent doves break from the organization in favor of militancy.103 There is a danger of a post hoc coding of splitters and spoilers as hardliners, and non-splitters as moderates, based on whether they split or not; the

99 Pye, Guerrilla Communism in Malaya, p. 336
100 Shils and Janowitz, “Cohesion and Disintegration,” p. 284.
101 For instance, Anthony McIntyre, Good Friday: The Death of Irish Republicanism (New York: Ausubo Press, 2008).
103 There are other empirical problems here - Bueno de Mesquita also offers a problematic set of stylized interpretations of the Irish Republican Army’s history, and it turns out that some of the ostensible puzzle about Islamist-led Palestinian violence driving Kyd and Walter’s empirical argument did not actually exist, at least according to Luca Ricolfi, “Palestinians,” in Diego Gambetta ed., Making Sense of Suicide Missions (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
dependent variable is the same as the independent variable. Stedman has been critiqued for relying on a dubious typology of spoilers\textsuperscript{104}, and in my research I find that the identity of ‘extremists’ and ‘moderates’ over time and across issues is amorphous and rapidly changeable. Deep knowledge of cases makes it clear how difficult it can be to actual nailing down who is and is not a “moderate.”\textsuperscript{105}

People change their minds in prison in favor of peace\textsuperscript{106}, or become radicalized by government abuse, or become locked into continued militancy by psychological mechanisms. We see anti-democratic groups participate in elections, while pro-election groups oppose voting. Fluidity and ambiguity, not consistency, are the rule. There are numerous dimensions along which we can measure “hawkishness,” and decisions about war and peace often involve calculations of loyalty, trust, fear, and gain across numerous issues, not just a single-dimension measure of ideological fervor. While intuitively appealing, the hawk-dove/moderate-hardliner distinction lacks clear, consistent empirical indicators of relevant preferences.


\textsuperscript{105} For instance, Daithí Ó Conaill led the split of what Bueno de Mesquita calls the “extremist Continuity IRA” in 1986 (though in fact there was no significant military split from the Provisionals – this was mainly a Sinn Fein rupture) in “Terrorist Factions,” p. 1. However, Ó Conaill was previously the leading force for the 1974-5 Provisional IRA ceasefire, and it has been suggested he even wanted to end the campaign in 1973, according to Peter Taylor, \textit{Provos: The IRA and Sinn Fein} (London: Bloomsbury, 1997).

\textsuperscript{106} This is a similar story with Yasin Malik of the JKLF and Firdous Baba of the Muslim Janbaz Force in Kashmir or Gusty Spence of the UVF in N. Ireland.
Finally, ideological models either ignore organizational power or leave it as an exogenous variable. Kydd and Walter distinguish between weak and strong moderates, but do not tell us how to empirically tell weak and strong groups apart or from where they originate. Power matters because, even if hawks and doves exist, their impulses can be suppressed by fear or lucre – the Real IRA was unable to attract many discontent Provisionals because of credible PIRA punishment for defection, while the militarists in South Armagh largely stuck with the Provos because they continued to receive prestige and smuggling opportunities, in addition to the deeply-seated small group loyalties permeating the organization. The LTTE between 1981 and 2004 avoided splits because of its robust internal control mechanisms, and the Taliban has managed to retain cohesion because of its ability to kill or exile dissenters. Ideology, if it consistently exists at all, is often overshadowed by guns and money.

Bueno de Mesquita ultimately concludes that “it is important to pay close attention to the details of the particular group one is studying.” In influential models, a lack of detailed empirical work has been yoked to extremely simple theoretical assumptions. Though there is value in an approach that emphasizes clarity and simplification, there are severe costs to explanatory power when taken out into the real world of insurgent groups. Where strong and weak insurgent groups come from and how power interacts with ideological sentiment are

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107 Kydd and Walter, “Sabotaging the Peace.”
108 One senior hawk, Michael McKevitt, left for the Real IRA, but other senior hawks like Brian Keenan, Tom Murphy, and Martin McGuinness stayed with the PIRA because of power and loyalty.
109 Bueno de Mesquita’s analysis rests on an assumption that splits and organizational disarray have little effect on the resources available to extremist factions, and that there is some exogenous level of power each faction has within the group. “Conciliation, Counterterrorism, and Patterns of Terrorist Violence,” p. 151 and p. 155. Yet my finding in the cases is that splits are destructive and divisive, as demobilizing organizations carry their manpower and fighters out of the arena and thus beyond the reach of “extremists,” and brutal feuds erupt over the distribution of prior endowments. Power thus shifts dramatically due to splits, as well as to organizational innovations and external support.

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bracketed or ignored, yet these are central to analysis. They are key questions that must be dealt with before we can offer a convincing study of insurgent cohesion.

D. State Policy

Finally, a line of theorists look to the state as a crucial determinant of anti-state armed group cohesion. Some argue that state repression can forge highly cohesive organizations because these states leave “no other way out” than armed rebellion. Indiscriminate violence provides no incentives to individuals to avoid joining an armed group, and makes the path of non-violent politics impossible. Groups should become more consolidated and robust as the opportunities for politics and safety are eliminated; grievances escalate and opportunities to non-violently redress them decline. Highly repressive states that are unable to fully annihilate their opposition should be faced by cohesive and disciplined insurgents. States lie at the heart of insurgencies. Political context is a crucial variable for structuring who joins armed groups, whether they stay in them, and whether these groups can build enduring, broad alliances against the center. This theoretical argument is often echoed in case-specific histories, which argue that insurgents have taken the trajectory they did in response to government behavior.

Other scholars focus on state divide-and-rule policies, which can take the form of decapitation, factional splitting, and other policies that lead armed groups to break apart. In this account the state is the key actor that determines the trajectory of armed groups. Lawrence, for instance, argues that organizational fragmentation in anti-French colonial resistance groups was

113 McAdam, Political Process, discusses political context.
caused by state policies of leadership repression.\textsuperscript{114} Some scholars studying leadership
decapitation argue that it can effectively undermine insurgent organizations, while others see
little evidence of that outcome.\textsuperscript{115} In case histories, there is sometimes an emphasis on
governments intentionally and strategically splitting insurgent groups to weaken opposition, or
using infiltrators to sow dissent within organizations.\textsuperscript{116}

\textit{Problems with State-centric Arguments.} There is absolutely no doubt that state policy is
important in understanding insurgent behavior and organization. However, there are good
reasons to be skeptical of placing too much faith in the explanatory power of state-centric
arguments. Just like ethnic homogeneity, political context is often too broad and static to explain
variation, while states tend to lack great dexterity in manipulating armed groups. First, war is not
a one-sided exercise and insurgents vary in their response to the same state. States are faced with
counter-mobilization, subversion, and violence by insurgent groups, which may have the power
to hold the state at bay or at least blunt its intended policies. Innovation and adaptation can
provide militants with a dynamic edge on counterinsurgents, and variation in the ability of
militants to innovate and adapt will likely drive variation across groups in the outcomes of their
struggle to stay alive and united. State-centric arguments place insurgents in a passive, reactive
mode, to simply be acted upon by state power, which is unlikely to generally be the case. The
variation we see across groups facing the exact same state at the exact same time (for instance,
Hamas vs. PLO) suggests that political context alone cannot be explaining varying outcomes.
Similarly, the decapitation literature has arrived at no compelling consensus — in some cases it

\textsuperscript{114} Adria Lawrence, “Imperial rule and the Politics of Nationalism,” (University of Chicago, 2007). This argument
cuts against Goodwin’s claim that repression forges cohesion, though they deal with quite different scope
conditions. I thank Adria Lawrence and Jay Lyall for emphasizing the need to address state-centric arguments.
\textsuperscript{115} The most recent empirical assessment is Jenna Jordan, “When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of
\textsuperscript{116} This can necessitate speculation about which leaders or factions are in fact government agents and which secret
agendas were at play, creating enormous problems of systematic evidence.
appears to shatter armed groups, but in others leadership attrition is not devastating, with new cadres simply filling the ranks.\textsuperscript{117}

Second, the state is not omniscient in counterinsurgency and its policies should not be treated as a \textit{deus ex machina}. For state divide-and-rule or manipulation policy to be systematically driving variation, counterinsurgents would need to consistently possess extremely detailed information and be able to implement fine-grained operations. Given what we know about the profound challenges of effective, discriminate counterinsurgency, this is highly unlikely.\textsuperscript{118} Instead, it more reasonable to expect states to lack good information, to face challenges in effectively coordinating operations, and to be driven by a wide variety of motivations in how forces are deployed, not just trying to split insurgent groups.\textsuperscript{119} Thus there may be variation in how insurgents are affected by COIN policy, but these effects are likely to non-systematic and certainly not driven by a grand government plan.

There must be a conditioning variable that determines differing organizational outcomes within shared political contexts, and it seems plausible to suggest that this variable is organizational structure and cohesion. If war is a clash of armed organizations, then studying only the state side of that equation is insufficient. This does not imply that the state doesn’t matter, but instead that state strength and political context is likely to act as a broad structural constraint, not as a determinant of fine-grained variation. The state policy variable can shape

\textsuperscript{117} Jordan, “When Heads Roll.”


\textsuperscript{119} In all of the cases studied in this dissertation, and consistently in the much broader historical literature, themes of surprise, unpreparedness, and organizational pathologies characterize initial counterinsurgent responses to nascent rebellions.
insurgent mobilization in general terms, but not in the crucial specifics that drive variation within conflicts or across similar wars.

**V. The Research Path Forward**

Given the empirical puzzles and conceptual difficulties outlined above, it seems clear that the valuable existing literature can be built upon and extended in a more encompassing direction. We need to develop theories that can explain a whole variety of phenomena: why popular groups falter and less popular insurgents succeed, why some resource-rich groups are undisciplined while others are highly committed, why some hardliners respect peace deals while others try to spoil, and why states can break some rebelling groups but not others. Trying to pull these different puzzles together under an overarching theoretical framework will obviously leave out important dynamics and fail to explain prominent cases, but it will represent a valuable step towards a more systematic explanation of organizational control and cohesion. It is to this task that the next chapter turns.
Chapter 3
Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Fragmentation

"the important thing is the effective uniting of power"¹

This chapter offers an explanation for armed group cohesion and outlines the research design I use to test it. The goal is to combine mechanisms based on political context, social networks, and material resource flows into an encompassing theoretical framework that can make sense of previously conflicting findings and unanswered puzzles in the study of insurgent organizations. This requires examining how state power and political context shape the constraints on insurgents, specifying which social network structures are best suited to insurgent mobilization, and predicting the effects of external material support, contingent on social structure, on ultimate organizational form.

My basic argument is that the organizational cohesion of armed groups is driven by, first, the social structures upon which insurgent groups are built and, second, the access of groups to external flows of material support from states and diasporas. Specific social networks and institutions are the crucial base of insurgent organization-building, rather than appeals to mass ideology or class solidarity, and the structure of those preexisting networks shapes the effectiveness of efforts to endogenously homogenize and integrate new recruits. External material support is a crucial source of war-fighting sustenance that both centralizes the leadership's control of resources and augments the group's capacity, thereby attracting and retaining fighters.

Organizations do not seamlessly emerge from mass aspiration and so we need to examine the specific social relationships and institutions that underpin insurgency, the mechanisms

through which social power is channeled into insurgent institution-building. The crucial question is whether the core “first-movers” who build an insurgent organization are linked through robust, preexisting social ties both to one another and to local communities. When an armed group mobilizes through this *bonding network* social structure, it provides a firm, socially integrated grounding for organization-building; when it is absent, we should see higher levels of indiscipline and fragmentation as organizations try to build themselves atop *coalition networks*. The social relationships in which insurgents are embedded determine much of their ability to construct a robust and enduring organizational structure, particularly in the face of significant and sustained state power.

This theoretical argument, however, is most powerful in contexts where a militarily capable and politically resolved counterinsurgent state pushes back against insurgent power. As state power or resolve weaken, there are more opportunities for endogenous social integration and for resource extraction within the war zone. When states both are capable of and interested in coercing, we will likely observe different processes of successful organization-building than when they are weak or unresolved. In this context, simply calling on social blocs, ethnic/class solidarity, or the will of the people is not a recipe for creating and maintaining a strong militant institution. Thus political context and state policy crucially structure the environment within which insurgents operate and shape the trajectories of militancy that emerge; armed groups cannot be studied in a vacuum, even as we examine their social underpinnings.

I then argue that the effect of external material resources is contingent on this social-organizational environment. When guns, money, and training are introduced into socially-integrated organizations, they further bolster organizational control and cohesion by creating

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2 The importance of network variables is greatest in high-risk, capable-state contexts, in which there are fewer (though not no) opportunities for endogenous “brokerage,” long-term mass politicization, or organizational indoctrination free of state repression.
military strength that attracts followers linked to a disciplined core. When these same resources flow into an internally divided or anomic social infrastructure, they will be a less effective tool of cohesion and internal control. How resources matter depends on who is using them, and what their relationship is to one another. Regardless of social integration, however, the absence of external support makes it extremely difficult to maintain a robust organization in the face of determined and violent state repression. Contrary to much the conventional wisdom, external support can be a powerful source of cohesion, particularly when linked to a robust social base.

The structure of a group’s social base interacts with the presence or absence of external support to cause four distinct trajectories of armed group organization – cohesive, state-reliant, consensus-contingent, and factionalized groups. Each has a specific pattern of internal unrest, factional autonomy, and issues that drive dissension, helping to explain the diversity in the nature of insurgent organizations. I generate predictions for each trajectory for each of the four indicators of the dependent variable outlined below, as well as triggers for change over time.

This chapter has six sections. First, I outline how broad political context shapes the opportunities for insurgent mobilization, with a focus on capable and resolved counterinsurgent states. Second, I conceptually outline the stages in which organizations are built in order to provide a shared analytic framework for understanding variation in outcomes. Third, I specify how the social base of an armed group shapes its organizational form, arguing that different structures of social networks lead to variation in the ability of group leaders to construct robust institutions. Fourth, the effects of external material support on internal organizational control are outlined. Fifth, I offer predictions about how these social and material mechanisms interact to forge different types of insurgent groups. The final section provides an overview of the research design used to assess this argument in the rest of the dissertation, combining detailed within-
conflict comparisons in Kashmir, N. Ireland, and Sri Lanka with a variety of comparisons across states, conflicts, and armed groups in Southeast Asia.

**I. The Question of State Power: Political Opportunity Structures and Insurgent Options**

One of the clearest findings in the literature on insurgency and contentious politics is that the state matters: the political opportunities it opens and closes are crucial for determining the options available to anti-state forces. As I noted in Chapter 2, however, state-centric arguments alone are too static and vague, and deal poorly with situations in which there is substantial variation across insurgent groups within a *shared* political context. Nevertheless, Lenin’s core insight that “the basic question of every revolution is that of state power” cannot be ignored. Previous studies of insurgent organizations have been criticized for doing precisely that. I argue here that political opportunity structures for insurgents are shaped by the power and resolve of counterinsurgent states in the regions in which militants are mobilizing. Rather than the excessively broad conceptualization used by others, I place my focus squarely on the presence and use of state power as the dominant constraint facing insurgent organizations.

*States and Insurgent Political Opportunities.* States can structure political opportunities in three ways that influence insurgent options. First, their power and policy influence the

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5 Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) is an excellent study of the rise of black political mobilization in the US, but his approach to political opportunities is extremely vague (just about any macro-level political changes that might affect the relative power between the state and its foes); this is similarly an issue in his seminal argument about community organization. Goodwin, *No Other Way Out*, is similarly broad in his assessment of how state strengths and policies influence both the incubation of rebellion and the outcomes of revolts. The virtue of my approach is that is specific to the state, not broad political patterns. While state capacity write large is notoriously difficult to measure (a common critique of James Fearon and David Laitin. “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War.” *The American Political Science Review* 97, no. 1 (February 2003): 75-90), state coercive power and regime types are much less so: we can examine the size and competence of security forces available for counterinsurgency, their deployment relative to population and terrain, and the nature of the political regime, at least on a case-by-case basis.
“breathing room” insurgents have. Capable, resolved states can put serious pressure on insurgent collective action by using troop deployments, intelligence operations, and population resettlement/control to identify and targets militants and their supporters. Alternatively, state weakness or indifference give space to insurgent leaders to experiment with new organizational forms, to indoctrinate and mobilize socially heterogeneous new recruits, and to target new social and economic groups for “brokered” alliances and coalitions. When states are weak or uninterested in repression, we should expect cohesion to be achieved by a wider variety of mechanisms. Even if a state is capable but grants political space to insurgents, cohesion will also be more straightforward. But when states are both capable and resolved, insurgents will face greater threats to internal trust, external social mobilization, and brokerage with other groupings. This limits the social and organizational room for insurgents to maneuver.

It thus seems reasonable to suggest that insurgents operating in a weak/apathetic-state context will be better able to rely on endogenous processes of indoctrination, brokering, and coalition-building as they construct organizations. In “liberated zones” they will be free of interference and able to consciously and intentionally focus on trying to forge cohesion through socialization and training. Similarly, if they are able to mobilize during a power vacuum amidst state failure they will have the opportunity to seize and govern territory, create and bolster institutions free of government repression, and broker new alliances between previously disparate social and economic blocs.

Insurgents operating in a strong/resolved-state context will instead be more reliant on exogenous, preexisting mechanisms of social mobilization because of the profound difficulties of creating reliable new loyalties and networks in the face of relentless state pressure. Endogenous

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6 See Paul Staniland, “Cities on Fire: Social Mobilization, State Policy, and Urban Insurgency,” Comparative Political Studies (Forthcoming) on constraints on state repression that lead to attempts to engage in “coercive governance” in areas of urban violence.
cohesion will be necessary to bring in new recruits, but I will argue below that only certain social structures can provide the monitoring and socialization capacity to effectively create new loyalties. Capable and resolved states create a Darwinian environment in which insurgent organizations unable to rapidly and reliably generate fighting power and internal discipline will be shattered or marginalized as the state brings its coercive and intelligence capacities to bear. 7 Novel brokerage of alliances, organization-building in secure liberated zones, and power vacuums will be far less common in such a political-military context. 8

Second, state policy fundamentally influences the resources available to insurgent groups. Governments with high levels of extractive and coercive capacity can limit (though not totally prevent) nascent militants from engaging in widespread “revolutionary taxation” and illicit criminality. Fund-raising within the war zone in particular will be significantly harder, putting a premium on seeking revenue sources outside of the boundaries of the conflict. Though this also will be more difficult, we would expect a strong state to have a far greater impact on its own soil than overseas. By contrast, weak governments and those with little interest in regions of emerging rebellion make militant fund-raising far easier, with fewer border guards, police stations, military sweeps, checkpoints, and tax collectors to cause trouble. Thus, state context will make external material support more or less important for insurgents as they try to put together organizations able to generate sustained violence.

7 The pervasiveness and reach of state coercive power is immediately apparent in the conflict zones where I have done fieldwork (Indian-administered Kashmir, Assam, Sri Lanka). Despite trendy talk of the decline of the state in international affairs, a committed state security apparatus can generate extraordinary levels of coercion and repression, even in poor countries like India.
8 This will be a particularly difficult challenge where state forces have at least basic knowledge of the territory under contestation and adopt a population-control approach that targets insurgent social mobilization. Enthusiasts of COIN sometimes call this a “protecting the population” approach. This is often (though not always) a delicate euphemism for states monitoring, controlling, and disciplining civilians in order to make them act in ways that state security forces want - whether civilians actually desire said protection or not.
Finally, political opportunity structures and thus insurgent organizations may be influenced by the representativeness and inclusiveness of regimes. While recent research does not suggest a major difference between democracy and non-democracy in either conflict onset or outcome, there are good reasons to think that exclusionary regimes (even those with some degree of democratic practice) may be more likely to breed intense and protracted wars because they leave “no way out” for political dissidents. Goodwin persuasively suggests that states are both exclusionary and infrastructurally weak will be the most likely to “incubate” resilient revolutionary movements. By contrast, states that provide some routes to political power through at least vaguely democratic, representative processes may be able to siphon off support for insurgents into other, non-violent channels. This suggests that states (and regions of states) with comparatively greater levels of both representation and raw state power will be unpromising environments for insurgents, and raise the costs of holding an organization together.

Explaining Hard Cases. The argument above suggests that we should not realistically expect similar processes of insurgent mobilization to lead to the same outcome across very different political contexts. However, it does suggest that there may be systematic patterns in these differences. One prediction is that there should be a much broader range of pathways to cohesion and fragmentation where counterinsurgents are weak and apathetic; there will be mechanisms of organization-building that succeed against these states that fail against more resolved, capable governments. As the barriers to collective action and political mobilization go

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11 The conclusion about state weakness encouraging conflict, while quite unsurprising, is found in Fearon and Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War.”
down, causal heterogeneity goes up. In particular, endogenous processes of cohesion may be more effective: it should be easier to “broker” new social and class alliances, to safely indoctrinate and politicize cadres, and to build new organizations while isolated from state pressure. Much of the literature, both on civil wars and on insurgent groups, focuses on this type of context.14

I focus primarily instead on the hard cases: where a government has large-scale coercive forces and the will to rapidly use them against nascent insurgent challenges. Here the political opportunities for nascent insurgent organization-builders will be scarce: collective action will be hard, resource extraction will be hard, keeping supporters from going down the non-violent political route will be hard. This challenging context should reveal some of the deepest causes of cohesion while shedding light on a set of wars that have been largely ignored by contemporary civil war scholars, from contemporary Algeria and Kashmir to Indonesia and Burma. It is difficult to exaggerate how challenging protracted insurgency is against a government that has the patience, manpower, and money to keep tens or hundreds of thousands of forces in the field for decades.

I will argue in the rest of this chapter that, in this particular context, the two key determinants of insurgent cohesion are 1) the structure of the preexisting social networks within which insurgent entrepreneurs are embedded and 2) their access to external material support.

When operating in this high-risk environment, certain types of mobilization and certain social

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15 In some cases, there may even be relatively politically open counterinsurgent regimes.
networks simply fail to forge cohesion, though they can succeed in less demanding political contexts. Instead, cohesion in high-risk circumstances is forged by insurgent entrepreneurs who are both linked to one another and to local communities through robust, preexisting “bonding” network social structures. They are the most robust social infrastructure atop which to build an insurgent organization in the face of rapid, hammer-blow government responses to rebellion. These robust institutions can then endogenously recruit and socialize new recruits from outside the initial social base.

II. Understanding Organization-Building

Sequences of Insurgent Organization-Building. Before we can assess how armed groups become socially integrated we need a clearer sense of the sequence through which insurgent organizations are built. I argue that there are three distinct stages of organization-building, providing a framework that structures the theoretical discussions below.\(^{16}\) I conceptualize organization-building as taking the following sequence:

Figure 3.1. Sequencing Insurgent Organization-Building

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>DV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Base Mobilization</td>
<td>Institution-Building</td>
<td>Mass Expansion</td>
<td>Organizational Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Preexisting social networks</td>
<td>- Formal structure</td>
<td>- New generations of fighters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any armed group can attempt to engage in this process, though the ultimate outcomes vary dramatically across cases. Insurgent entrepreneurs begin with access to some set of preexisting social networks and institutions that are the basis for their crucial early organization-building efforts. By social networks I mean "the set of social relations or social ties among a set

\(^{16}\) This is distinct from stages of war, like the Maoist theory of 3-stage war.
of actors (and the actors themselves thus linked)." In Stage 1, this social base is mobilized to get the rebellion off the ground and to provide basic, informal functions of command, control, and recruitment. Nascent militants are likely to try to mobilize the key social networks within which they are embedded, falling back on family, school, religious, and political party links in an effort to summon enough collective action to evade and defy state power. In the next section, I will discuss the consequences of different types of social bases, but here we simply need to keep in mind that this is the formative phase of the group. These core mobilizers and their social networks (the “first movers” or “first actors”) are likely to form the leadership cadres of the organization: their role in building the organization will provide status and influence. The initial network structures provide the underpinning for the organizational form that will emerge from mobilization, and thus contribute to variation in the robustness of the institutions that emerge.

In Stage 2, insurgent elites try to build formal institutions that can engage in recruiting, training, resource procurement and distribution, and decision-making on a more robust, bureaucratic basis. Formal roles are assigned and duties specified, with the hope that the organization can reproduce itself over time even in the face of attrition. This is the stage in which different levels of institutional robustness emerge, ranging from essentially personalistic/sultanistic cults of personality to legal-technical bureaucracies that operate with little regard to personal ties or social background. Institutions need flows of resources to fund their operations and so institution-building will also require a search for money and relevant materiel that can fuel war-fighting; to the extent that these resources can be found, the more likely it is that a well-institutionalized armed group will emerge. Institutionalization, like

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collective action, is hugely difficult in the context of state repression and infiltration and this causes separation in outcomes. The organizational form that emerges then structures the expansion in Stage 3.

Finally, in Stage 3 we see mass expansion of new recruits into the organization. The organization tries to move beyond its social base to expand in order to deal with the constant attrition imposed by the state and to take advantage of new grievances and incentives generated by the process of warfare. Though this can place alongside institutionalization, the effects of mass expansion are likely to hinge crucially on emerging institutional structures. Organizational leaderships aim to take new recruits and mold them in their image, to homogenize them and make them loyal, obedient, and risk-acceptant. Like organizational form, the success of mass expansion in creating new generations of loyal fighters will vary quite dramatically: some organizations will be marked by the transformation of new fighters into loyal adherents while others will see little change in the orientations and behaviors of new fighters and factional leaders.

III. The Social Origins of Armed Group Cohesion: Social Bases

A. Social Integration and Social Bases

Social Integration. One of the biggest challenges of organizations as they go through the above process of mobilization, institutionalization, and expansion is inducing members, both elites and foot soldiers, to accept the authority and goals of the leadership. Deep uncertainty about future outcomes and low levels of information create ambiguity that can breed distrust and suspicion. In order to overcome these hurdles, historical institutionalist and “classical”

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organization theories argue that social integration lies at the root of disciplined and well-coordinated organizations\(^{20}\) - shared purpose, cooperative elites, and new recruits who become loyal to the existing structure are characterized by “a spontaneous regularity of response.”\(^{21}\) Research in this tradition has examined corporate culture and organizational culture to understand how internal cooperation is maintained in fluid and uncertain environments.\(^{22}\) Social integration must be reproduced through “the asymmetries of power associated with the operation and development of institutions.”\(^{23}\) A highly socially integrated organization will be one that emerges from this process with a cooperative core of leadership elites, robust institutionalization, and an ability to homogenize new generations of self-consciously loyal fighters who value membership in the organization. This will provide the “tight organization . . . that is the master weapon of modern warfare.”\(^{24}\)

How do we get (or not get) to this outcome? Social integration needs to be explained if we are to understand why some insurgent organizations hold together while others, in the exact same war, at the exact time, succumb to pervasive centrifugal threats – in other words, “what accounts for the emergence of an organizational structure strong enough to enforce strategic

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decision by the leadership?"25 I argued in Chapter 2 that many organizations can point to some level of social support: popular mobilization and mass appeals to civilians are insufficient to forge enduring organizations in the face of determined state repression.26

What we need instead is specification of how different structures of social support lead to different levels of social integration. Particularly when battling effective state apparatuses, the social networks in Stage 1 will be crucial in shaping the context in which new institutions will be built and fighters will be homogenized. The problem with existing social network/institution-based accounts is their underspecification: social networks of some sort are absolutely pervasive, and if any of them are sufficient for building rebellion then we are left without much explanatory value.27 A reliance on local networks or networks broadly defined is too vague to be helpful. We plausibly suspect that there is some link between society and armed organization28; the crucial puzzle instead is specifying the mechanisms that connect (and, just as importantly, do not connect) social mobilization to insurgent institutions.29 I argue that the “embeddedness”30 of insurgent entrepreneurs in different types of social structures can account for important organizational characteristics of the groups that emerge.31 We must examine both the

26 This conclusion is in accord with sociologists who argue that “one can never simply appeal to such attributes as class membership or class consciousness, political party, age, gender, social status, religious beliefs, ethnicity, sexual orientation, psychological predispositions, and so on, to explain why people behave the way they do,” Emirmayer and Goodwin, “Network Analysis, Culture, and the Problem of Agency, p. 1415.
27 Darden, “Resisting Occupation.”
28 This broad assumption is rooted in almost all frameworks for the study of civil war and insurgency: in some way, the population, or at least parts of the population, matter in determining what happens when rebellion is met with counterinsurgency.
29 Selznick notes that “the more precise an organization’s goals, and the more specialized and technical its operations, the less opportunity there will be for social forces to affect its development” (Selznick, Leadership in Administration, p. 16). Insurgent groups often have vague goals and encompass a wide variety of tasks across varying levels of sophistication, which makes this is a likely case for social forces to be important.
31 This approach takes up Stinchcombe’s call to move “towards the study of mechanisms that connect variation in social structure to variation in organizations, practices and other entities and flows at a lower level of analysis,”
relationships between local communities and insurgent organizers, and across communities between insurgent organizers: these are the ties that unite or divide social power.

Examining these links between social origins and organizational trajectories can offer significant value even over long periods of time, as "knowing how institutions were constructed provides insights into how they might come apart." The social base helps to determine both the institutionalization of the group and whether or not new recruits are effectively socialized into compliance and obedience, and thus the organizational nature of the "combat machine" of a militant movement. I make a major assumption about armed groups moving forward—that their cadres are drawn from a fairly geographically-distributed area within the region of rebellion, rather than isolated to a small village or neighborhood. This distinction matters because, in the context of a capable state, "pocket" rebellions are unlikely to succeed; thus I generally ignore localized networks in this thesis. They can be important objects of study for other purposes, however.

*Types of Social Base.* There are different possible social-structural building blocks upon which to construct an armed group; rather than relying on social support writ large, insurgents

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34 Most studies of networks and social structures examine their effects on individuals, but "it is much rarer that the overall configuration of networks linking individual activists is assessed in order to evaluate the potential for collective action in a given collectivity." Mario Diani, "Networks and Social Movements: A Research Programme," in, Mario Diani and Doug McAdam, eds., *Social Movements and Networks: Relational Approaches to Collective Action* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 8.

35 *Localized* networks are geographically-restricted - within the area of ethnic settlement, the command elites are drawn almost entirely from a specific city, sub-region, or village. Localized networks can be based on robust but highly concentrated sources of collective action. In the literature on social network they would be "enclaves" or "cliques" within an overall identity category.

36 For instance, Petersen's study of insurgency in Lithuania (*Resistance and Rebellion*) examines localized enclaves of uncoordinated rebellion that were not able to form a coherent organization, and were eventually crushed by Soviet power. Even strong local communities were disconnected from, and unable to coordinate with, other resisting enclaves. However, the distinction between weak and strong localized networks is important in explaining where rebellion occurred, so it can be used to explain other phenomena.
are embedded in specific networks of social relations and obligations that shape their ability to engage in different types of collective action. As ideal-types we can think of distinct types of social base for a non-state armed group, along multiple dimensions:

Table 3.1. Types of Insurgent Social Base

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong Extra-Local Ties</th>
<th>Weak Local Embeddedness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Bonding Network</td>
<td>II. Foco-ist Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Coalition)</td>
<td>(Coalition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Parochial Network</td>
<td>IV. Anomic Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Coalition)</td>
<td>(Coalition)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The focus of this dissertation is on two types of (geographically-dispersed) social structures – *bonding* and *coalition* network social bases, both of which can be used to generate large-scale rebellion within a broader, shared context of political grievance and unrest. These social bases are differentiated by the structure of social ties within each network, *both across* local communities and within them. Table 3.1 introduces the different types of social structures we can see, along two dimensions. I focus on the broad distinction between bonding and coalition networks, but then offer more specific fine-grained predictions for the patterns we should see emerge from different types of coalition networks. These may take a whole variety of empirical forms: religious organizations, political parties, kinship and caste groups, veterans’ networks professional associations. Each empirical manifestation can be abstractly broken down into the set of social relationships that characterizes it and then compared to other conceptually similar or different social structures.

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37 Note that the brief discussion of localized networks above does include the possibility that a localized network could be an insurgent social base, though I do not focus on that here.

38 We can identify a social structure in a variety of ways – ex ante, by looking at the relationships of all people within a particular category/set or examining a (non-insurgent) formal institution or informal network; ex post, studying the relationships between the core founding leaders of an insurgent organization. What I do in the cases is both – outlining the overall structures of political mobilization in a society, and then studying in more detail the networks that end up underpinning new insurgent organizations.

39 “Many different kinds of groups, relations, and institutions that putatively organize or structure social processes can be understood in, or ‘translated’ into, network terms,” Emirbayer and Goodwin, “Network Analysis, Culture, and the Problem of Agency,” p. 1418.
The emphasis here is on preexisting structures of collective action, what I call “social bases,” that form the underpinnings for militancy. As wars escalate, in Stage 1 insurgent entrepreneurs scramble to mobilize a variety of preexisting social structures. The social sinews upon which organizations are built are hard to forge anew; thus, the networks and institutions within which insurgent entrepreneurs are embedded will be the source of their crucial initial base of fighters and supporters. As Martin notes, “large structures can only be quickly assembled using strong preexisting components with certain structural properties.” This approach draws from Selznick’s analysis of communist “combat parties” and from political process theories of social mobilization.

We can now return to Table 3.1’s framework with this argument in mind. When states are relatively weak and political opportunities open, robust institutionalization at Stage 2 may be possible even with a fairly diffuse social base in Stage 1, and it may even occur alongside mass expansion in Stage 3. Thus endogenous social integration will be possible and even dominant in the weak/apathetic state context. In a more capable state/restrictive political opportunity context that is our focus, however, we should expect the crucial link to between Stage 1 and Stage 2,
since institution-building in this context is far more challenging. We need to focus on the core networks upon which insurgent entrepreneurs are drawing as they mobilize a nascent organization: the structure of the insurgent social nucleus in Stage 1 profoundly affects the institution-building in Stage 2 and thus ultimately determines whether and how mass expansion occurs in Stage 3. Unlike existing studies, I look within ethnic and class categories, examining variation across networks and structures in a shared category.

Measuring Social Bases. We can identify a set of ideal-types of social structures that travel across contexts and provide a conceptual baseline for comparison and explanation. The specific manifestations of insurgent social bases vary dramatically by society, but I use an abstract typology in the hope of identifying a "deep structure to human conflict that is masked by observable cultural variation." Network-based arguments are notoriously difficult to empirically operationalize, particularly in data-poor contexts. Rather than delving into abstract modeling or pleading data poverty, I use two observable indicators to differentiate between types of networks within each comparative case. I focus on previous patterns of collective action (or its lack) by the social network/institution in question, focusing on whether there are recurrent,

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46 As McAdam notes in his classic study of African-American political mobilization, "networks function as the organizational locus of a variety of resources supportive of insurgency. . . . the existent organizations of all but the most deprived groups represent an important source of resources that, when mobilized for political purposes, has been proven capable of generating organized insurgency." McAdam, Political Process, 32. He outlines the specific functions which preexisting networks provide, pp. 44-48: preexisting social structures matter because they provide members, established structures of solidary incentives, communication network, and leaders
47 For instance, Michael Findley and Scott Edwards, "Accounting for the Unaccounted: Weak-Actor Social Structure in Asymmetric Wars," International Studies Quarterly 51, no. 3 (September 2007), pp. 583-606 offer a very insightful account of "institutionalized conflict systems" but they rely heavily on macro-level ethnic variables without examining intra-ethnic variation and division. McAdam similarly keeps his level of focus on the "minority community" which is not helpful for studying different groups within that community.
49 "even the most careful social analysis of a particular locale can only discern group-level structure." David A. Siegel, "Social Networks and Collective Action," American Journal of Political Science 53, no. 1 (2009): 122-138, p. 131. There is a network modeling literature that I lack the formal skills to directly contribute to. Instead, I draw on insights from this literature, adapting and borrowing from it to construct a theory that relates both to the specific of network modeling and the substance of research on collective action, insurgency, and organization theory.
strong links between members within and across local communities. This is certainly rough, but much better than nothing. If they are both present in the core set of nascent insurgents in Stage 1, I code the social structure being studied as a bonding network.\(^{50}\) If one or more indicators are absent, I code it as a coalition network, and then assess which specific type of coalition network the social structure seems to best represent. The indicators are:

1. **Local institutions and networks**: robust and regularized family, neighborhood and town/village-level associations and patterns of social interaction.\(^{51}\) These tie together families and individuals at the local level. Examples: kinship and family networks, caste professions; local mosque; veterans’ club; party branch office.

2. **Routinized national/regional social ties**: Events and interactions that regularly tie together local networks into a broader structure of mobilization and identity. This process builds and reproduces supra-local identities and loyalties. Examples: annual commemorations and marches; party conventions; religious meetings and rituals.

These layers of social identity and mobilization determine the overall density and strength of the social structure in question. If both exist, we have a fairly robust and deeply-rooted social community, a bonding network, that is simultaneously embedded both in and across local communities.\(^{52}\) Figure 3.4 at the end of this chapter provides a simple heuristic network map of this social structure.\(^{53}\) Individuals are socialized and monitored in the home and local institutions, but are also tied into a broader organizational and social milieu through regularized interactions with other network members from beyond their community. Members of

\(^{50}\) Tarrow highlights this importance of this type of social interaction: “the most effective forms of organization are based on partly autonomous and contextually rooted local units linked by connective structures, and coordinated by formal organizations,” Sidney Tarrow, *Power in movement: social movements and contentious politics*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 124.

\(^{51}\) A number of bonding networks I study resemble a supra-village variant of Lily Tsai’s “solidary groups,” which she defines as “collections of individuals engaged in mutually oriented activities who share a set of ethical standards and moral obligations,” Lily Tsai, *Accountability Without Democracy: Solidary Groups and Public Goods Provision in Rural China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 12. This is a particularly resonant concept when applied to religious-political organizations in the Middle East and South Asia, and to the militant republican social milieu in Ireland. Tsai notes the possible links to militant mobilization on p. 256.


\(^{53}\) Figures 3.4-3.6 are extremely sparse and non-technical heuristic devices. Each represents the social links of a set of first movers (those building to organization), both to one another and to secondary networks (local communities, family networks, and other localized networks or cliques). The number and location of nodes in each network structure is exactly the same: what varies is simply who they are connected to.
the bonding network are socially embedded from local levels all the way up to national or regional mobilization, creating a social enclave that can sustain high-risk collective action. They act as highly-embedded “brokers” and “first movers” who can coordinate and encourage cooperative behavior between and within local communities. When mobilized for war, I will argue, these overlapping social networks can effectively coordinate and discipline violence.

If one or more of these indicators is absent, we have a coalition network social base. This is a social underpinning that lacks local embeddedness and/or extra-local patterns of social interaction; in other words, core insurgent entrepreneurs are loosely linked to one another, or lack strong ties to local communities. As noted in Table 3.1, coalition networks can take at least three forms, though two are the most common (parochial and foco-ist). First, there can be amalgamations of elites and factional leaders who dominate local enclaves but who have weak social ties and loyalties to the other insurgent entrepreneurs in the broader network upon which an organization is based, even if they agree on political goals. This is a “parochial” coalition network, localized and socially diffuse in relations across particular pockets of collective

54 There is a loose but intriguing link here to the discussion of structural holes in Ronald Burt, Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992). In the bonding network case, the key movers in the center of the network lack structural holes between one another, and rely on strong links to key contacts in local clusters/cliques on the ground. Strong ties are more helpful than weak ties because of the high-risk collective action context. The network structure on page 22 represents the social structure I refer to: a tight core of contacts at the center, linked to more local, specific clusters through at least one connection to the core. The local contacts can generate information (and in my context, cooperation) that allows the network coordinate behavior across space without suffering serious degradation.

55 Brokerage is discussed in McAdam et al, Dynamics of Contention. By “embedded” brokerage I refer to brokers who have deep and routinized ties to communities, not simply people who can point out shared interests. The latter may be effective in a weak/apathetic state context, but when the state cares and can deploy coercion, strangers bearing ideological gifts may not be welcome or effective in local communities. First-movers are people who have unusual willingness to accept risk and cost in order to mobilize. Their ability to successfully trigger broader cascades of mobilization hinges on the structures in which they are embedded. For an empirical example of this dynamic from 19th century China, see Kuhn’s discussion of multiplex village mobilization through informal networks of gentry, Kuhn, Rebellion and its Enemies, especially pp. 71-2 and pp. 180-4 but throughout.

56 This draws on Roger Gould, Insurgent identities: class, community, and protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); “Collective Action and Network Structure.” American Sociological Review 58, no. 2 (April 1993), pp. 182-196; and “Multiple Networks and Mobilization in the Paris Commune, 1871” American Sociological Review 56, no. 6 (December 1991), pp. 716-729, but with a focus on broader questions of organization.
action. Figure 3.5 at the end of this chapter provides a simple heuristic network map of this social structure.

Second, we see situations in which there is a tight core of individuals who nevertheless lack ties to the local communities in which they are operating. For instance, students spreading out into an alien countryside to engage in political mobilization fit this social structure. Network members in this situation are not socially embedded, and I refer to this as a “foco-ist” coalition social base – socially-robust among (self-anointed) leaders and activists at the top, but lacking strong ties on the ground. Figure 3.6 at the end of this chapter provides a simple heuristic network map of this social structure. Finally, we can identify “anomic” social bases in which insurgent leaders are neither embedded in local communities nor characterized by strong extra-local ties to one another. Groups built around anomic networks should resemble the stereotypical “mob.” Empirically, this does not seem common in the conflicts I study, probably because some level of collective action at some level is necessary to put an insurgent organization together in the first place when mobilizing against a capable counterinsurgent state.

B. Exogenous and Endogenous Social Networks

The discussion above implies that social networks are fixed and exogenous, ready to be measured at any given point in time. This is clearly too static to be a truly accurate account of how networks emerge and shift over time. Prior to war, social structures are intentionally constructed and shaped, while during war, fighters find themselves pulled into war by new

57 A network map of this structure would involve a set of dense local cliques linked through weak ties (and in some cases, absent ties) to one another.
58 This phrase is drawn from Che Guevara’s (failed) “foco” strategy of insurgency in which small groups of radical youth try to stir rebellion in the countryside.
59 As Siegel, “Social Networks and Collective Action,” notes, “If elites cannot control their networks, therefore, their power to effect change may be greatly lessened,” p. 123. The network structure here would be a dense core of first movers with weak or absent ties to the local communities they are trying to turn into revolutionary forces.
60 It is crucial not to push this analogy far since ostensible “mobs” are often strategically instigated and led by small groups of organized specialists in violence; Paul Brass, The Production of Hindu-Muslim violence in Contemporary India (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003).
motivations and shaped by the organizations they enter. For our purposes, however, if there is fairly deep continuity that is not endogenously driven by ideologies or events clearly linked to the outbreak and course of the future conflict, then we can take these structures as social facts. When and why might they not be social facts? And when does that undermine the central theoretical argument of this thesis?

*Reverse Causality Prior to Wars.* The first obvious concern is that these networks are endogenous to the onset of a conflict or to an ideological blueprint in expectation of conflict. Some work argues that groups are forged by the grievances of their community amidst war or “brokered” during mobilization. In this framework, cooperation and consolidation follow mobilization both causally and chronologically. Alternatively, but similarly endogenously, before conflict onset we can see conscious adoptions of “organizational weapon” ideologies by communists, Islamists, or nationalists, creating social or institutional structures that are built specifically to be hurled into violent conflict. The diffusion of organizational ideologies and doctrines across and within societies has led to attempts to endogenously create new political structures with precisely the structure of social ties that I emphasize above. Thus the very process of mobilization can create networks, and organizational ideologies can intentionally forge new networks. This would reverse or alter the causal arrow. As Goodwin notes, “social networks, after all, do not simply fall from the sky.”

We thus need to consider these possible endogeneity issues. First, are ideologies and organizational blueprints the systematic causes of social networks? The reasons that we should

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62 Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action*, for instance, highlights the process of mobilization as creating new bonds and commitments in El Salvador. Relatedly, Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Christia, “Closest of Enemies” emphasize “endogenous polarization,” in which war itself creates new grievances and mobilization opportunities. While this is true to an important extent, I also find deeply-rooted historical continuities in terms of the core social networks that lead rebellions.  
63 McAdam et al., *Dynamics of Contention*.  
65 Goodwin, *No Other Way Out*, p. 56.
not view organizational ideologies as a systematic cause of social structure are two-fold. First, there are many important social structures that were simply not forged by adherents of particular organizational ideologies, from caste networks in Sri Lanka to families in Belfast. Second, there is dramatic variation in the actual ability of entrepreneurs to create parties and social loyalties in line with organizational ideologies. For every cohesive, embedded Indochinese Communist Party or Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, we can find a fractious, un-institutionalized Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam or Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist). Moreover, some such constructed structures are not built for war, but instead for other types of (non-violent) political and social mobilization, which means that social structure was not endogenous to expectations of conflict.

There are a variety of contingent social and political variables necessary for ideological aspiration to be turned into organizational achievement. It is difficult to find a tight correlation between ideas about organization-building and actual organizational outcomes. That does not mean that constructed communist or Islamist parties cannot be crucially important bonding network bases (indeed, we will rely heavily on these in cases below), but it does mean that these social bases are not solely the outcomes of ideological visions. Their actual implementation is likely to be a difficult labor of years or decades driven by access to sufficient social capacity, a favorable political context, good luck, and dedicated leadership.

Is mobilization itself instead the cause of networks? There are two reasons why a brokerage/endogenous-grievance approach is not hugely worrisome, though it is important. First, there is huge variation across networks and organizations even when all are mobilizing in the exact same political context: mobilization and conflict in of itself do not appear to have a

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66 Even in cases like Vietnam where communist ideology was clearly important (fused with nationalism) in party-building, as late as the early 1930s there were three distinct, feuding communist parties which had splintered from one another. William Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power in Vietnam* 2nd ed. (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1996).
homogenous effect. For instance, different Catholic groups in N. Ireland, faced with the same state, grievances, and political events, took very different mobilization paths. Second, the social structures underpinning new insurgent groups often pre-date conflict onset by decades. They are independent entities that can exist prior to the war under study, and can be identified as such ex ante. Social bases often, though certainly not universally, tend to form when the major political cleavages that structure a society’s politics are established. We know that there are powerful continuities in political cleavage structures over time, and there is no reason to expect militant mobilization to be dramatically different. Like party identification in American politics, network membership may be passed on over generations through family ties, as well as through ascriptive traits and membership in local organizations like churches and political parties. Social bases are endogenous to deep history, but so is just about everything interesting.

The important question is whether social bases are sufficiently exogenous to be considered social facts prior to the emergence of the mobilization signaling the onset of a revolutionary crisis. This does not mean that all insurgent social bases are somehow totally

67 The more capable the state, the deeper and more robust bonding networks will need to be in order to underpin insurgent organization; as the costs and risks of rebellion increase, so does the need to rely on a robust preexisting form of social mobilization. There is significant variation in the actual robustness of bonding networks, but for the sake of theory-building I focus on ideal-types in this chapter.

68 In Kashmir, the era just before and after Partition; in Ireland, the period of insurgency and civil war in the 1910s and 1920s; in Sri Lanka, the solidification of caste and linguistic differences in the 19th century. See Darden, Keith. “Resisting Occupation: Mass Schooling and the Creation of Durable National Loyalties” (New Haven: Yale University, 2010) for a broader argument about the formation of enduring political loyalties during the stage of initial mass schooling, and Jason Wittenberg, Crucibles of Political Loyalty: Church Institutions and Electoral Continuity in Hungary (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006) on partisan endurance even during dictatorship.

69 Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, eds. Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives. New York: Free Press, 1967. What is different is that some of these networks do not seem to provide access to political patronage and representation given their unwillingness to persistently engage in “normal” electoral politics.

70 See Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler Partisan hearts and mind: political parties and the social identities of voters (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002). Wittenberg, Crucibles of Political Loyalty, p. 51, argues that institutions can operate as socializing devices “by maintaining a social identity that serves as a source of loyalty and by facilitating repeated social interaction that permits the formation and preservation of a political consensus.” Darden, “Resisting Occupation,” shows that schooling and family socialization can maintain embedded political loyalties for generations.
randomly exogenous to conflict onset, but does mean that there is frequently significant separation between what causes and maintains a social base, on the one hand, and the causes of a civil war, on the other. For serious endogeneity problems to occur, we would have to systematically and consistently observe political entrepreneurs looking forward in expectation of insurgency onset and then successfully creating appropriate new social structures; the fact that wars and revolutions are often highly unpredictable and that even intentionally-created social structures dramatically vary strongly suggests that this is not a debilitating problem.  

Nevertheless, this concern must be examined in every empirical test of the argument: did the core networks upon which groups were forged emerge as a result of the same causes driving militant mobilization, or are they rooted in prior historical periods?

**Conscious Solidarity-Building in the Heat of War.** A distinct, though related, question is whether it is possible for insurgent (and more broadly, political and social) entrepreneurs to self-consciously construct new networks and social ties in order to augment mobilization efforts during war. The obvious answer is that new solidarities can endogenously emerge in the heat of war, as new loyalties and grievances are created in combat, prison, or shared experience. This is important, since many new fighters join or remain in groups because of experiences during the actual conflict. However, these endogenous processes are not necessarily sufficient for creating a robust bonding network social base that is embedded both in and across communities. Shared experiences in war are often highly local and specific; rather than pulling together multiple pockets of collective action together, they may simply strengthen particular sites of mobilization.

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71 Timur Kuran, "Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989." *World Politics* 44, no. 1 (October 1991), pp. 7-48, persuasively argues that the timing of revolutions is fundamentally uncertain even on the part of future participants. Michael D. Ward, Brian D. Greenhill, and Kristin M. Bakke, "The perils of policy by p-value: Predicting civil conflicts." *Journal of Peace Research* (March 19, 2010), pp. 1-13, among many others, point out the limitations of even the most sophisticated quantitative models in predicting onset. The historical narratives of many conflicts highlight the contingency and fluidity prior to wars, and make it hard to suggest that far-sighted insurgent entrepreneurs are systemically constructing appropriate social networks. Instead, and as I found in case work, surprise and mistakes are par for the course.
Many insurgents spend time in jail or being shot at, but many insurgent groups lack strong structures of internal loyalty and obedience.

A more important source of endogenous cohesion is a conscious organizational strategy aimed at creating new solidarities among recruits through training and indoctrination. This is hugely important for organizations in wars trying to remain cohesive while dealing with losses, and it represents the successful implementation of a Stage 3 mass expansion program. I discuss the roots of successful mass expansion below. To briefly preview, I argue that this process of endogenous cohesion-building may be quite easy in weak/apathetic-state contexts, but in the capable/resolved state context, it is most likely when underpinned by a bonding network social base that can create a social infrastructure with high levels of monitoring, consensus, and value infusion. Endogenous cohesion is made easier by powerful prior social networks that make the instillation of new loyalties easier and more potent, though these exogenous previous networks are neither necessary nor sufficient for successful endogenous cohesion.\footnote{Henderson notes in the conventional warfare context that “cohesion can be achieved far more quickly and to a far greater extent within a unit if a basic similarity has previously existed among soldiers’ attitudes, values, and beliefs,” William Darryl Henderson, \textit{Cohesion, the human element in combat: leadership and societal influence in the armies of the Soviet Union, the United States, North Vietnam, and Israel} (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1985), p. 75.}

C. The Organizational Consequences of Bonding Network Mobilization

The nature of armed organizations reflects the characteristics of the social bases atop which they are constructed. \textit{Bonding networks} (see cell I in Table 3.1) best overcome the specific challenges of building and maintaining organized militancy in the face of a capable and determined state counterinsurgency apparatus.\footnote{As McAdam argues, when able to tap into a robust preexisting network “insurgents have been spared the difficult task of inducing participation through the provisions of new incentives of either a solidary or material nature.” McAdam, \textit{Political Process}, p. 46.} Insurgent entrepreneurs are linked to one another through solidaristic bonds, while also being embedded in local communities from which
they can generate and control manpower.\textsuperscript{74} These social bases are a form of what Putnam views as the evil form of social capital: exclusive, limited to within an identity category or sub-category, “good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity,” and for bolstering “our narrower selves.”\textsuperscript{75}

It is centrally-positioned network members, bound by ties of reciprocity and solidarity, who form the command core of cohesive militant organizations, and it is their sons, party colleagues, and neighbors who heavily fill out their fighting ranks on the ground.\textsuperscript{76} Social relationships lay the basis for consequent institution-building – they provide a crucial initial stock of social integration within the organization to overcome organizational challenges, deep uncertainty, and the possibility of multiple equilibria.\textsuperscript{77} The centrality of bonding networks in insurgency explains Leites and Wolf’s observation that “R [rebel group] does require a core – but only an extremely small one – of fervent supporters.”\textsuperscript{78} While ideologies (nationalism,
Marxism-Leninism, Islamism) and social services can be layered atop or combined with these structures, their causal core lies in the mobilization of dense social networks with deep historical roots linked to new processes of endogenous recruitment, even if the political ideologies advanced by these social groupings represent a minority viewpoint. Mass popular support is helpful, but disciplined collective action is even more helpful when organizing to kill. ⁷⁹

Mechanisms of Cohesion. We can now ask specifically how mobilization on the basis of a bonding network should augment organizational control. The argument I advance is diagrammed in Figure 3.2. Bonding networks provide the crucial stock of core leaders and local loyalists in Stage 1 of insurgent mobilization who then form the basis of robust institutionalization in Stage 2 and successful, socially-integrated mass expansion in Stage 3.

**Figure 3.2. Bonding Networks and Social Integration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bonding Network Social Base</th>
<th>- Belief Formation - Obligation - In-Group Policing</th>
<th>- Socialization - Indoctrination</th>
<th>- Mass Incorporation Institutionalization</th>
<th>Institutionalization</th>
<th>Social Integration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Leadership Ties and Institutionalization. A bonding network social base involves a socially-connected set of first movers and initial leaders who embedded both on the ground and with one another in Stage 1 of mobilization. This early command core will be the key players in trying to forge robust institutions. A focus on leaders is bolstered an empirical observation – often, the command cadres and first movers of an organization can be clearly identified, even if they are nevertheless enmeshed in more local processes of war and mobilization. A well-

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Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 12. ⁷⁹ The characteristics of a bonding network align with Hechter’s discussion of the roots of group solidarity – dependence is heightened by strong social ties, while control mechanisms can operate informally within the community. Hechter’s argument on its own terms, however, cannot explain variation in organizational solidarity, since the collective goods to be provided are roughly constant across groups. Michael Hechter, *Principles of Group Solidarity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).
integrated command elite is crucial because it can coordinate local movements; a great danger of revolts is localism on the ground that pulls apart the organization or intra-elite feuding.\textsuperscript{80}

I argue that the social composition of an organization’s command cadres helps to determine the level of institutionalization that leaders can create. When the organization’s middle- and high-level commanders are predominantly drawn from a bonding network, high-risk institutionalization is bolstered through three distinct but reinforcing causal mechanisms – belief formation, normative obligation, and in-group policing. A bonding network provides a “center from which influence may radiate,” in the form of a homogeneous, socially integrated elite and leadership core that robustly links particular local factions to one another.\textsuperscript{81} This provides the social capacity to agree on and then implement particular organizational forms; social embeddedness allows for institutional robustness.\textsuperscript{82} At the same time, the presence of linked organizers across different communities allows for an escape from localism.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{80} Scott, James C. “Revolution in the Revolution: Peasants and Commissars.” \textit{Theory and Society} 7, no. 1/2 (March 1979): 97-134. For instance, Timothy P. Wickham-Crowley, \textit{Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America: A Comparative Study of Insurgents and Regimes Since 1956} (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1992) shows that Latin American insurgent leaders (with the exception of FARC) were drawn from autonomous university campuses and major left-wing political parties (pp. 33-42), there were “deep historical links between political parties and guerrilla movements,” (p. 41), and they were “drawn from the urban middle and upper classes and from rural elites,” (p. 23). In Northern Ireland, “tiny hermetic republican elite” has controlled the Provisional IRA, even as the fighting ranks have exhibited greater social heterogeneity, Kevin Toolis, \textit{Rebel hearts: journeys within the IRA’s soul} (London: Picador, 1995), p. 313.

\textsuperscript{81} Selznick highlights the effects of an elite core in other contexts, writing that “particular values or policies find a social base in the group structure of the enterprise. But more general policy also needs a social base, a source of more than formal support, a center from which influence may radiate, a training ground for loyal and self-conscious adherents.” Selznick, \textit{Leadership in Administration}, p. 94.

\textsuperscript{82} Selznick, \textit{Leadership in Administration}.

\textsuperscript{83} Scott Radnitz, “It takes more than a village: mobilization, networks, and the state in Central Asia,” (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2007), p. 50 argues in the Central Asian context that “Because individuals are bound by mutual obligation within communities, it is not difficult [to] organize mobilization, yet localism and isolation mean that such ad hoc mobilization is unlikely to spread beyond that community or be of great political significance. Only when regional elites who possess both vertical and horizontal ties also take up the cause and ally with other elites, is mobilization likely to spread beyond its local origins.”
The first mechanism of elite cooperation is belief formation, specifically the worldview shared by individuals with a common social/political background. Socialization over time within a network encourages convergence (though not unanimity) of preferences and perceptions of group identity. As militant mobilization surges, common assessments of political goals and boundaries of membership reduce internal divisions about the aims of the group, its constituency, and the strategies through which it should pursue these goals. Symbols and focal points are shared, inducing a common response to certain kinds of events. Rather than battling over the aim of the struggle, preexisting political socialization establishes goals and boundaries that makes decision-making and institution-building easier.

The second mechanism is normative obligation. People embedded in a bonding network have been socialized into cooperation by their upbringing, families, and daily life. Bonds of normative obligation provide a shared commitment among members of the network that reduces the threshold of risk at which they are willing to engage in high-risk cooperation towards violent ends. These bonds also allow cadres to shift their goals as circumstances demand; trust, not just ideology, underpins the party line and the organizational superstructure through which it is promulgated. Thus “not only do social networks provide channels for information and the possibility of sanctioning nonparticipants, but the affective bonds between members motivate participation even if the calculation of tangible costs and benefits does not.”

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85 For an Irish republican, the British Army entering Belfast in 1969 could only mean one thing, even if other Irish Catholics completely disagreed.
86 Weinstein notes that “a similarity of outlook, interests, and preferences reduces the costs of organizing cooperation and punishing non-cooperation.” Weinstein, Inside Rebellion, p. 99; also p. 139.
87 Petersen, Resistance and Rebellion.
The third, nastier, mechanism of elite cooperation is in-group policing. Networks provide shared information about the behavior of others within the network.\footnote{James Fearon and David Laitin, “Explaining Interethnic Cooperation,” \textit{The American Political Science Review} 90, no. 4 (December 1996), pp. 715-735; and James Habyarimana, Macartan Humphreys, Jeremy Weinstein, and Daniel Posner, “Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?,” \textit{American Political Science Review} 101, no. 4 (2007), pp. 709-725.} This is the underpinning for the internal security operations to prevent and punish defection that are essential to preventing government infiltration and organizational splits. Dense networks are generally conduits for information about what other members of the network are doing and where their loyalties lie.\footnote{Granovetter argues in favor of weak ties for information transmission, but his puzzle is explaining how information from a wide variety of sources (about jobs) diffuse, not about how information about a particular individual’s behavior diffuses to a particular source. The realm of possible useful pieces of information is vastly larger in the Granovetter case, and thus weak ties more valuable, while there is no need to worry about defection or infiltration, so weakness is not a liability. The insurgent context is very different, with relatively more focused targets of interest and a far greater emphasis on secrecy and trust; the insurgent milieu must be impermeable to the state but permeable to the insurgent leadership. Information cannot seep out and defection cannot be widespread, lest the organization be ripped apart. Mark Granovetter,“The Strength of Weak Ties,” \textit{The American Journal of Sociology} 78, no. 6 (May 1973), pp. 1360-1380} Since political socialization and normative obligation are far from foolproof, there is always a substantial chance that key elites will be considering defection – becoming state agents, launching a coup, or splitting their faction from the organization. Intelligence is the key to deterring and punishing defection, and thus underpins institutional creation and endurance.\footnote{Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf Jr. \textit{Rebellion and Authority: an Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts} (Chicago: Markham Pub. Co., 1970).}

The most cohesive organizations will resemble something like a “militant mafia” of leaders linked by a variety of overlapping ties, many of them traceable to prewar patterns of cooperation and socialization. There will still be disputes, rivalries, and the possibility of severe internal unrest, but it will take a much greater shock or set of changes for violent feuding and organizational disintegration to occur than in a more anomic situation. “Social appropriation”\footnote{McAdam et al., \textit{Dynamics of Contention}. A similar dynamic is discussed in Chong, \textit{Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement}, with African-American churches providing the organizational basis for the civil rights movement.} of robust preexisting social structures transforms mundane relationships into the underpinning of
institutionalized militant discipline – deeply-rooted parties, families, tribes, and other bonding networks provide the crucial leaders and mobilizers whom Selznick, in the communist case, calls “the steeled cadres upon whom the continuity and the basic power of the party rest.”

Local Ties, Institutionalization, and Mass Expansion. A focus on social bases in Stage 1 of insurgent mobilization does not mean, however, that cohesive groups simply lie atop a bonding network perpetually. New recruits must be incorporated into the group if it is to overcome the constant attrition imposed by state power; teenagers need to be turned into disciplined war fighters who will follow orders in situations of high risk and responsibility. Local communities are essential to keeping the struggle alive. However, this creates the dangers of expansion, as an influx of new recruits may undermine internal trust and discipline. Individuals join armed groups for a variety of reasons – ideology, friendship and family ties, revenge, and material gain, among others. Leaders cannot assume that new recruits will obey their orders or that local communities will implement decisions from above. How can institutionalization be sustained and reproduced in the midst of the mass expansion that accompanies Stage 3 of insurgent mobilization?

I argue that bonding network-based organizations solve this problem through local ties – network members tap into local secondary networks (families, patronage networks, etc), and then funnel this mobilization upward into the organization through their preexisting links to the broader organization. The presence of loyal cadres on the ground who can manage and control

93 Selznick, *Organizational Weapon*, p. 84.
94 This is the problem of “devising special measures for the reorientation of personnel whose origins may raise doubts as to reliability and utility.” Selznick, *Organizational Weapon*, p. 60.
95 Scott notes precisely this problem in the communist context: “if there is a case for a Leninist party, then, its rationale must be as much to restrain the peasantry’s revolutionary impulses as to create them – or, more ominously, to ensure that the revolution which is made is the revolution that the elite intends rather than the revolution that the peasantry might make on its own.” Scott, “Revolution in the Revolution,” p. 115. In conventional armies, “the dispersion, confusion, danger, and hardship that characterize modern battlefields have made it essential to gain control of the individual soldier through the process of internalizing values and codes of behavior that cause the soldier to act as a reliable member of the unit in combat.” Henderson, *Cohesion*, p. 107.
local recruitment and control while overlapping with other organizers and first movers clearly bolsters both institutionalization and mass expansion. As long as local insurgent entrepreneurs are embedded in community networks, they can (endogenously) homogenize and command new recruits.\textsuperscript{96} Shared experiences of combat and prison also layer on social ties and obligations over time, but are built around this core social structure that underpins organizational "mechanisms of reproduction."\textsuperscript{97} The social base we find in Step 1 of Figure 3.1 underpins the institutions (formal and informal) in Stage 2 that can then help to incorporate the mass expansion of Stage 3.

Successful mass expansion occurs through \textit{indoctrination} (formal training, political education) and \textit{socialization} (informal shared experiences in daily life, jail, combat). These correspond to Barnard’s "method of persuasion."\textsuperscript{98} Insurgent-linked local networks and their organizational manifestation allow for both coercion and preference change, as indoctrination and socialization rely heavily on a mix of reward and punishment. Local leaders and network members maintain a looming presence in the daily lives of members through family links, interactions at the drinking club, mosques, prison experiences, and local meetings.\textsuperscript{99} A mixture

\textsuperscript{96} "Although the tapping of local sentiment and values may risk, or indeed court, the tensions of a revolution in the revolution, the alternative risks are far more serious – an isolated, if doctrinally pure, radical intelligentsia reduced to putschism or sterile debate." Scott, "Revolution in the Revolution," p. 116). In a very different methodological vein, Costa and Kahn use sophisticated quantitative techniques in a study of a massive dataset of US Civil War combatants in the Union Army to show that desertion was far less likely among units built around homogeneous local communities. Dora Costa and Matthew E Kahn, \textit{Heroes \& Cowards: The Social Face of War} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

\textsuperscript{97} McAdam argues in the context of Freedom Summer in 1964 that "the image of the activist as a lone individual driven only by the force of his or her conscience applies to very few of the applicants. Rather, their involvement in the project seems to have been mediated through some combination of personal relationships and/or organizational ties." Doug McAdam, \textit{Freedom Summer} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 50. Thelen discusses mechanisms of reproduction in "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics," p. 392.

\textsuperscript{98} The "process of changing subjective attitudes." Barnard, \textit{Functions of the Executive}, p. 141. This includes "(a) the creation of coercive conditions; (b) the rationalization of opportunity; (c) the inculcation of motives." Barnard, \textit{Functions of the Executive}, p. 149.

\textsuperscript{99} Bonding network members play a role similar to what Shils and Janowitz refer to as the "hard core" of the Wehrmacht, the minority of committed followers that "was a disproportionately large strengthening factor in the integrity of the military primary group." Shils and Janowitz, "Cohesion and Disintegration," p. 287. Note that this argument is somewhat in tension with their argument that the primary group is found at the level of "squad or section" on p. 281. Similarly, in Latin America, "might give extra force to the guerrillas’ attempts to mobilize peasants behind a revolutionary movement. Guerrillas might be superordinate to peasants as landlords or the
of weak and strong ties in secondary networks embeds organizational mobilizers in the community and allow for the aggregation of local communities and networks without splintering. People of all types can be powerfully re-shaped by socialization and indoctrination. Weinstein argues “these methods of recruitment [socially-embedded] can be employed only by groups rooted in shared identities or belief systems with networks that connect them to the civilian population.” But this alone is insufficient, since most groups have some links to the population. Strong, not novel, social networks that are embedded both in and across local communities must be in place for mass expansion and indoctrination to actually work. New generations will not form the basis for a vertical split or violent feud, having been incorporated into the organization under the watchful eyes of bonding network members. Institutionalization can be maintained on the ground, and mass expansion can take place without fracturing: endogenous processes of recruitment and commitment are yoked to prior organizational and social networks.

G. Coalition Network Social Bases

children of landlords; as officers in political parties in which peasants are rank-and-file members; or as officers in peasant federations or formal peasant movements. Any kind of patron-client relation would clearly fall into this category... there might be peasants who wield considerable influence, rather than power, in a region, and whose opinions and decisions about supporting guerrillas carry local weight.” Wickham-Crowley, Guerrillas and Revolutions, pp. 139-140.

100 This is a bleaker view of insurgent mobilization than Weinstein’s, one in which agency and autonomy are broken down by intense socialization and punishment. He argues that there are only two types of recruit – investors and consumers. The former do not need indoctrination because they are already committed; the latter cannot be indoctrinated because they are only in the group for loot and short-term payoffs. Wood argues that this overemphasizes the differences between preexisting types – socialization and training make a larger difference. Elisabeth Jean Wood, “Armed Groups and Sexual Violence: When Is Wartime Rape Rare?” Politics and Society 37, no. 1 (March 1, 2009), pp. 131-161


102 “an initial homogeneous staff... can, when matured in this role, perform the essential task of indoctrinating newcomers along desired lines.” Selznick, Leadership in Administration, pp. 105-6; emphasis added. He also notes that “a controlling group attempts to transform the nature of participation so that partial adherence may become total involvement.” Selznick, Organizational Weapon, p. 79.

103 “personal commitment to the group is reinforced in the course of mutual support in action and as lives are organized around the group as a focal point.” Selznick, Organizational Weapon, p. 11.
Table 3.2: Types of Coalition Network

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong Extra-Local Ties</th>
<th>Strong Local Embeddedness</th>
<th>Weak Local Embeddedness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Bonding Network</td>
<td>II. Foco-ist Network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Coalition)</td>
<td>(Coalition)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Parochial Network</td>
<td>IV. Anomic Network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Coalition)</td>
<td>(Coalition)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now we can examine coalition network social bases and their consequences. Coalition networks, even if representing a popular political ideology, appealing to class/ethnic solidarity, or engaging in grassroots politicization, present major problems for organizational survival and cohesion.\(^{104}\) If nascent insurgent leaders are weakly linked either to one another or to local communities, cohesion is threatened because of weak monitoring, loyalty, and political agreement. Socially-diffuse groups of factional leaders (parochial networks) have no compelling reasons to hang together in the fluid and risky world of high-end insurgency. When leaders do not have strong ties to local communities (foco-ist networks), their attempts to recruit new fighters accentuate indiscipline, since the introduction of new fighters leads to the rise of disruptive “young Turks.” Building an armed group around a coalition network of this sort is a path to fragmentation, all else being equal, and particularly when facing a capable counterinsurgent state. The social divisions present in Stage 1 undermine institutionalization at Stage 2, which then contributes to unsuccessful mass expansion and social integration in Stage 3.

*Origins of Coalition Network-Based Mobilization.* So why do so many organizations end up relying on a coalition network social base? As Barnard notes in a different context, "successful cooperation in or by formal organizations is the *abnormal*, not the normal, condition

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\(^{104}\) This is a subcomponent of a broader tradeoff in social mobilization: “even when increasing average network size might initially produce additional participation, adding too many ties—particularly weak ties (Centola and Macy 2007)—may begin to discourage participation. This is due to a fundamental trade-off between encouraging participation via tightly connected enclaves, which possess “bonding” social capital, and spreading participation to other individuals via weak ties, which possess “bridging” social capital (Putnam 2000). Both are necessary to achieve significant levels of participation, but which has the more positive effect depends on the type of network in place, and the distribution of motivations in the population.” Siegel, “Social Networks and Collective Action,” pp. 136-137.
... most cooperation fails in the attempt, or dies in infancy, or is short-lived.” Barnard’s "condition of communion" is far from universal - instead, many armed organizations that try to aggregate localized enclaves or plant an unembedded leadership atop alien communities end up annihilated or riven by internal distrust, fear, and rivalry. We need an explanation not just of social integration, but also of its lack. There are at least two reasons that groups end up reliant on a coalition social base – first, choices about the best strategy to pursue, and, second, structural barriers to the social appropriation of bonding networks by insurgent entrepreneurs. Either way, the lack of a bonding network social base leads to internal social division.

First, choices have consequences. Insurgents and leaders operate in an incredibly information-poor environment in which numerous courses of action may appear likely to succeed, and so mistakes are very easily made. They take gambles that they hope will pay off in the face of pervasive uncertainty - and they often fail. They may have bad information about their own networks, miscalculate state resolve and power, or find themselves unexpectedly caught up in feuds or accidents that undermine their strategy. It is difficult to overstate the pervasiveness of uncertainty in this context. We often see a conscious decision to engage in a

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106 As Thelen notes in a different context, “to argue that the groups institutionalized first were the ones that ‘stuck’ is to beg the question of why some were institutionalized and others not.” Thelen, “Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics,” p. 391.
107 Findley and Edwards, “Accounting for the Unaccounted,” note how difficult it can be to predict social structure *ex ante*, though they focus on counterinsurgents and latent insurgent reactions to external threat. Like governments in the international system, armed groups can do many things – but their actions will be rewarded or punished, creating patterns of outcomes independent of motivations. On selective pressures, see Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979). Here I focus on the consequences, not the original decision.
108 Indeed, large-scale uncertainty about capabilities and resolve *continues* to exist in both Kashmir and Sri Lanka decades after onset. Tangentially, much recent literature focuses on the puzzle of protracted civil wars, such as James Fearon, “Why Do Some Civil Wars Last so Much Longer than Others?” *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 3 (May 2004), pp. 275-301; and Barbara Walter, “Does Conflict Beget Conflict? Explaining Recurring Civil War,” *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 3 (May 2004), pp. 371-388. They assume that information about capability and resolve should be fairly quickly sussed out by the process of fighting and bargaining. In my protracted cases, however, I find that uncertainty is endemic, driven most dramatically by 1) organizational innovation that unpredictably unsettles military balances, 2) leadership turnover among both insurgents and the state that makes resolve hard to reliably learn about, and 3) external interventions that can lead to massive shifts in military balances but that also sustain uncertainty about the extent to which external actors will continue providing aid.
larger project of building social solidarity and mass political mobilization. Transcending a narrow social core is appealing for leftist groups trying to build a cross-ethnic class coalition and/or organizations that believe the state will fall under the impact of a single “big push.” Groups may also try to rapidly expand in order to outcompete their rivals.109

Prominent theorists of contentious politics argue that this kind of mobilization can forge enduring shifts in the scale of contention through “the creation of social ties that encourage the recognition of commonalities on a scale considerably broader than would be expected on the basis of informal social networks alone.”110 McAdam et al term this kind of linkage of interests “brokerage,” which “creates new boundaries and connections among political actors.”111 However, in the capable-state context, coalition network-based group built around brokerage will find it enormously difficult to maintain unity when the state and rivals push back. Newly-brokered social ties are sundered by the state’s ability to flip informants and raise the costs of cooperation. Elite trust is shattered while undisciplined local mobilization exacerbates factionalism from below. Broad fronts, mass politicization, and alliances are likely, in this context, to be bloodily broken back down into their components when the heat is turned up.112


110 Gould, Insurgent Identities, p. 22.

111 McAdam et al., Dynamics of Contention, pp. 141-2. Radnitz finds that brokerage led to the emergence of protest waves in Central Asia, and Weinstein argues that group leaders can consciously create new organizational cultures in the midst of war. Radnitz, “It takes more than a village.” Weinstein places great faith in political education, consultative decision-making, and other such mechanisms of brokerage and trust-building. Weinstein, Inside Rebellion, pp. 136-138.

112 This is the crucial difference with the weak-ties literature’s positive view of weak links: high-risk collective action is most vulnerable precisely at the level of weak ties, in which individuals come into information about people whom they have no great normative or rational fear of informing on. Insurgent leaders seem quite happy to trade off knowledge about distant parts of a social structure in exchange for the robust insulation from state forces that comes from dense networks. While it might be useful for members of the Provisional IRA to learn about job opportunities among Protestant gardeners if they were seeking employment, the logic of insurgency suggests that they would rather make their social constituency impermeable to counterinsurgent penetration, since getting a job or learning about social trends in parts of society they do not care about are lower priorities. I hypothesize that the ideal
Second, it is very structurally difficult to mobilize an appropriate bonding network even if group leaders want to, for at least two reasons. First, there are simply not that many bonding networks in any given society that can be plausibly yoked to a specific politics. There are only two real cadre-based political organizations in the Kashmir Valley - and one of them has been pro-India for decades. There are relatively few traditionally republican families and sectarian ghettos in Northern Ireland, and the Catholic Church has been hostile to IRA ambitions since 1922. Robust social networks with locally-embedded leaders who are also tightly tied to one another cannot be summoned out of thin air, and so people trying to mobilize for revolution will face scarcity. These are social formations that are only slowly built up over decades; promises of commitment and cooperation are not substitutes for deep and exclusive social ties.

Finally, because of this scarcity bonding networks are objects of intense competition between militant groups appealing to a broadly similar constituency. Coercion, first-mover advantages, and privileged ties must be used for a group to embed itself; there will always be losers. Access is everything, and it will not be widely or evenly distributed. Mobilizers centrally located in the network will likely win out in the battle for the network’s loyalty (or the loyalty of large portions thereof), while those at the fringes will fail to even get off the ground or will be forced to rely solely on a localized network.\textsuperscript{113} If a bonding network’s leaders privilege one organization over another, the former will be far more likely to reap the benefits than the latter.

\textit{Consequences of Coalition Network-Based Mobilization.} For these reasons, we often see groups that cannot build around a social structure that is embedded on the ground but also dense location of weak ties is within local secondary communities, rather than among organizational leaders and key mobilizers: the damage that could be done to the latter by the profusion of weak ties would be devastating.\textsuperscript{113} Centrally-located first movers will be more likely to trigger cascades because of the multiplicity of social links, strong and weak, that they are embedded in: if they are motivated to move, they can begin tipping dynamics both at the core and the periphery. On the periphery, a local secondary clique may be mobilized, but this will not flow out into the center if centrally positioned network members are opposed to mobilization. See Granovetter Mark Granovetter, “Threshold Models of Collective Behavior” \textit{The American Journal of Sociology} 83, no. 6 (May 1978): 1420-1443; Kuran, “Now Out of Never”; and Petersen, \textit{Resistance and Rebellion} on cascades and thresholds.
across key leaders and their localities. Insurgent organizations built around coalition networks in Stage 1 find themselves riven with internal unrest because of feuds between leaders and/or an inability to discipline local mobilization. Organizations built on a coalition base are likely to suffer from high levels of distrust, defection, and internal contestation. Consequently, institutionalization in Stage 2 will be far more difficult and the organization will be unable to move into the realm of robust bureaucracy. Mass expansion in Stage 3, if the organization reaches that point, is likely to exacerbate existing social divisions as there are weak processes of monitoring, socialization and indoctrination.

Depending on the specific nature of the coalition network, we should expect to see somewhat different patterns of organizational form. Foco-ist networks will be unable to implement institutionalization on the ground or to manage mass expansion. The leadership may be able to agree on how to structure the organization at the top, but imposing their will at the local level will prove difficult in the face of COIN because of the lack of strong local ties.\(^{114}\) Parochial networks will face serious problems in agreeing on how to structure institutions at the top, actually imposing institutional decisions on recalcitrant factional leaders, and homogenizing new recruits into a single core organizational ideology. The disparate local pockets of mobilization upon which the organization is built lack social embeddedness to one another and thus form a weak basis upon which to forge robust institutions, even if there is strong recruitment and control within local factions. Groups built around anomic social bases will be essentially free of any institutionalization or controlled mass expansion.

\(^{114}\) "The weakest link in any revolutionary chain of command is that between the urban cadre and the villagers. Only a very few revolutionary movements, the Chinese and Vietnamese among them, have managed to forge a durable bridge across this chasm. Even under the best of circumstances, however, the link is a tenuous, subject [sic] to suspicion and continual renegotiation and the middle cadres, brokers between the little traditions of the village and a national revolutionary party, walk in treacherous terrain" Scott, "Revolution in the Revolution," p. 120. This is an example of the weakness of weak ties I noted above.
When the leaders of groups built around coalition networks know that they should forge
tighter cooperation and reform the organization, they find it difficult to actually do so - distrust
and disobedience are deep structural obstacles to change. This can even be the case when the
political goals the group is advancing are broadly popular, since “warm feelings’ are of precious
little value to a social movement.” In the face of a powerful state apparatus, we should expect
clear path-dependence: fixing past facing mistakes is extremely difficult under the consistent
pressure of counterinsurgency. When the state provides breathing space due to weakness or
disinterest, endogenous mechanisms of recruitment and commitment may allow an armed group
to recover from prior social divisions, but even in this situation social-structural problems should
present serious challenges to institutionalization and mass expansion.

The Mobilization of Bias: Cohesion and Representation. The argument I have advanced
here implies that the most socially integrated insurgent groups will tend to be dominated by a
specific, ex ante-identifiable social grouping that uses its advantages in cooperation to
outcompete its rivals and remain unified in the face of the state. Imbalances in capacity for
collective action within an identity category, not mass popularity and class or ethnic solidarity,
determine who ends up winning the battle for supremacy. This is because “thorough organization
and effective coercion can enjoin or engender particular modes of behavior by the population,
notwithstanding popular preferences that would lead to different behavior if a purely voluntary
choice could be made.” Bonding networks provide a dedicated core of personnel who can

115 On the power of path-dependence, see Paul Pierson, Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis
Economy of Skills in Germany, Britain, the United States, and Japan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
2004). Once basic organizational structures have been established, especially if they are socially embedded, it is
hard to rapidly change them even in the face of intense selective pressures.
116 Wickham-Crowley, Guerrillas and Revolutions, p. 53.
117 Leites and Wolf, Rebellion and Authority, p. 149.
exploit the “vulnerability of broad segments of society to manipulation by elite groups.” If organization is “the mobilization of bias,” then the use of violence in civil wars will tend to be biased in favor the most robust bonding network within an ethnic or class group, and the vanguard organizations will not necessarily (though may) be representative of the people in whose name they claim to speak. Insurgency is not about the median citizen/voter, but instead about a competition in organized violence.

IV. The Material Origins of Armed Group Cohesion: State and Diaspora Support

A. Insurgent Fighting Power and the Importance of External Support

Social integration is important, but on its own not sufficient to keep a group going if there are armored personnel carriers on the streets and soldiers kicking in doors. As Barrington Moore writes, “it is the state of the army, of competing armies, not of the working class, that has determined the fate of twentieth-century revolutions.” Military power is essential for groups to hold themselves together as organizations. If the group is to survive, much less win in any sense, the capacity to consistently impose lethal costs is essential. This a particularly pressing issue when facing a capable state – though the material needs of guerrilla warfare are fairly low, a militarily-powerful and resolved state can reduce domestic sources of revenue and impose significant attrition on the capabilities of the insurgent.

There are many potential sources of war-fighting sustenance, from state sponsors to drug economies to illicit diamond trade. There are also many arguments about the effects of different kinds of resources on armed group organization. This debate is important, but thus far

\[118\] Selznick, *Organizational Weapon*, p. 7. This explains why “as a source of critical inputs needed by R [rebel group] in its growth and progress, the proportion of the population that is important can be a small minority, rather than a plurality or majority.” Leites and Wolf, *Rebellion and Authority*, p. 45.


\[120\] we must necessarily lay to rest the illusion that such ‘popular support’ guarantees victory against an opponent. It does not . . . military power is of critical import: a shattered guerrilla army can achieve nothing.” Wickham-Crowley, *Guerrillas and Revolutions*, p. 57.
inconclusive. Instead of getting into this debate, I put my focus on whether or not the bulk of a group’s military resources flow through the organization’s leadership and in what quantity. As noted above, in capable/resolved-state contexts it is very difficult for armed groups to generate large scale resources from the conflict zone because the government can establish a significant presence on the ground. Moreover, in some contexts lootable and natural resources are scarce.

Instead, the primary way to generate large-scale resources in contexts like these is a combination of fundraising (donations and crime) in the combat zone with extensive diaspora and/or state sponsor support from outside. State sponsorship can play a crucial role in improving an organization’s material fortunes, thus keeping it in the fight against a much stronger state. Leites and Wolf and Trinquier made the argument that external support is crucial nearly four decades ago and more recent research suggests that this intuition is largely correct. Salehyan argues that “access to external bases was shown to have a significant effect on the prolongation of conflict.” Other recent quantitative studies find that external support is one of the most

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121 For instance, drugs encouraged parts of Shining Path to split and become apolitical warlords in Peru’s Huallaga Valley, yet drugs also fuel a moderately cohesive and political Taliban resurgence in southern Afghanistan. Weinstein, Inside Rebellion; and Vanda Felbab-Brown, Shooting up: counterinsurgency and the war on drugs (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2010).
122 See Ross, “How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War?” for an excellent overview.
123 In South Asia for instance, lootable resources, accessible oil, diamonds, and poppy are rare – parts of Afghanistan and India’s Northeast are exceptions, but in Kashmir, Punjab, NWFP, Balochistan, Karachi, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal there simply aren’t the resource endowments that we see in places like Colombia or Congo.
124 “while substantial exogeny is neither necessary nor sufficient for successful R, an ambiguous history seems to suggest that R has never been suppressed unless external help has previously been terminated. R may win without external support; A [Authority; the state] is unlikely to win if R continues to receive it.” Leites and Wolf, Rebellion and Authority, p.24. “as long as this considerable war potential [outside the war zone] is not destroyed or neutralized, peace, even if completely restored within our own borders, will be precarious and in continual jeopardy.” Trinquier, Modern Warfare, p. 77.
robust indicators of insurgent success across space and time.\textsuperscript{126} Byman et al. argue that “state support has had a profound impact on the effectiveness of many rebel movements.”\textsuperscript{127} Christia finds that external sponsors can pick and choose winners in civil war.\textsuperscript{128}

Diasporas of ethnic kin have also become a crucial source of support. Byman et al argue that “diasporas play a particularly important role in funding and, although precise figures are unavailable, have probably surpassed states as the main financial sources for insurgencies today.”\textsuperscript{129} They note that “the Palestinian, Irish, Tamil, and Kurdish diasporas, for example, have helped foster strong insurgencies that have weathered concerted attacks of dedicated states.”\textsuperscript{130} Other analysts similarly highlight the role of diasporas in keeping armed groups alive in the face of counterinsurgency, from Kosovo to the Indian Punjab.\textsuperscript{131}

It is often easy to overemphasize the importance of external support as a way of minimizing the domestic political and social issues driving an insurgency. I hopefully adopt a reasonable approach – social mobilization, as discussed in detail above, fundamentally matters, but guns and money from abroad can also be very important because resources are essential to shaping the nature and extent of institutionalization and mass expansion.\textsuperscript{132} External support can bolster insurgent institutionalization in Stage 2 by centralizing control of resource and create


\textsuperscript{129} Byman et al., \textit{Trends in Outside Support}, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{130} Byman et al., \textit{Trends in Outside Support}, pp. 2-3.


\textsuperscript{132} This is a core insight of resource mobilization theory. John D.McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory,” \textit{The American Journal of Sociology} 82, no. 6 (May 1977): 1212-1241.
incentives for recruits to join and remain in the organization as part of mass expansion in Stage 3. This is especially the case when fighting a capable government and its security forces because of the difficulties of generating sufficient resources in the combat zone. My contribution is to tie the broad but vague findings on the effects of external support to the specific and important question of how it influences organizational form, which helps us understand the broader findings to causal mechanisms. International dynamics are integral to civil wars, and can be integral to the structure of insurgent organizations.

**B. Logics of External Support**

I have argued above that bonding networks are historically-rooted social structures largely exogenous to the onset of a particular civil war and difficult to radically transform once in conflict. But external support is far more dynamic, less fixed in the past and more responsive to the present. The danger for my theory is that external sponsors essentially “follow the leader” – providing resources to the group that is already the most cohesive and disciplined, thus making external support *endogenous* to social structure. External support would be tightly correlated with preexisting cohesion driven by bonding network mobilization, undermining the independent power of the mechanism. But we can also imagine a different dynamic of external support, in which external support is provided to insurgents because they represent a more palatable ideology and/or strategic partner to the sponsor or diaspora. When the latter logic of external support is at work, it is *exogenous* to preexisting cohesion and not problematic for my theory to focus on the interaction of distinct mechanisms. States and diasporas may support groups with

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133 Byman et al. note that “state support is vital when the insurgent is facing a powerful enemy.” Byman et al, *Trends in Outside Support*, p. 10.

134 The literature on irredentism has clearly shown, for instance, that state sponsors are not myopic supporters of ethnic kin; instead they are highly strategic, balancing off both domestic and international interests. Saideman, Stephen M, and R. William Ayres. *For Kin or Country: Xenophobia, Nationalism, and War*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008. The literature on diasporas shows that they are often quite ideologically-driven (and generally more radical than the co-ethnic population still living back home).
little chance of winning or with weak organizational structures, as long as that better advances the strategic and ideological interests of the external actor.

Which logic dominates is largely an empirical question. In some conflicts regarding some groups there is significant endogeneity of external support; when this is the case, the causal priority is on social mobilization and the external angle simply augments this preexisting variable. Nevertheless, just because one variable’s effect is conditional on another variable does not make it unimportant – we should still be able to observe a further increase in cohesion once the external support kicks in. I examine this issue in the empirics by looking at the timing, sources, and motivations for external support. In general I actually find an exogenous, strategic logic of support – states and diasporas tend to back the group which shares its war aims, even if fractious. However, there is some endogeneity in diaspora support, since diasporas tend to be less unitary and strategic than states. Nevertheless, there is variation in the ability of diasporas to deliver, even if their willingness to support is endogenous to organizational cohesion: host state policy and international context can severely disrupt or eliminate diasporic support, making actual flows of resources contingent on far more than just diaspora preferences and insurgent organizational capacity.

C. Material Mechanisms of Cohesion: Capacity, Centralization, and Military Strength

I have argued that external support can keep organizations alive in the face of the state, but what are the specific mechanisms that maintain group unity? Existing literature leaves the question open. I argue that there are two mechanisms that link external aid to organizational control and cohesion – material capacity and resource centralization lead to coordinated military strength. Military strength provides material incentives for cooperation and obedience that can

\[135\] Diasporas are often “latent”: they can be mobilized around salient events and by political entrepreneurs, but usually lack the centralization and bureaucratization of states.
help to hold the group together, all other things being held constant, while weakness encourages internal feuding, defection, and infiltration.

**Military Strength and Cohesion.** First, external support provides guns, training, and money in a tumultuous war-fighting environment, which provides high levels of *material capacity* to a group. Leites and Wolf note that inflicting damage on the state and preventing damage to oneself are the key aims of warring actors in insurgencies, and this is true for the members of armed groups. Elites and foot soldiers want to join a group that can kill soldiers while protecting its members. The motivations of many insurgents are simple – to be in the group that is best able to impose damage on the government and to control the community it claims to represent. Guns, cash, and training are all common to external support and have clearly powerful effects on the ability of armed groups to accomplish military tasks. Success breeds success, and capacity makes a group more attractive to prospective recruits and fighters.

Second, external support creates *resource centralization* in the hands of the top leadership of the organization – they are the link between diasporas or state sponsors and actual military operations on the ground. Unlike lootable resources or drugs that can be autonomously acquired by foot soldiers and factional elites, external support tends to be top-down in character, improving the ability of commanders to provide for their supporters, withhold from potential foes, and make combatants dependent on the high command for the resources necessary to fight. External support gives leaders material leverage over their ostensible subordinates, improving the likelihood of cooperation and obedience. This encourages strong institutionalization in Stage

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136 Leites and Wolf, *Authority and Rebellion.*
137 Overseas training can also have the effect of increasing social ties, thus bolstering the networks underpinning the organization.
138 Christia, "Closest of Enemies," argues that this can lead to fragmentation as over-sized coalitions break down to form minimum-winning coalitions. In my cases I find less evidence of this dynamic – there are increasing returns to scale and clear organizational mechanisms of discipline that mitigate against defection.
2 of organization-building: resources are integral to forming and maintaining strong organizational structures.

*Military strength* is thus a function of the centralization of resources and the presence of military capacity. The greater the level of military strength, the more likely foot soldiers and elites are to join and remain with an organization. They are less able to defy the incumbent leadership, which both controls the distribution of guns and money and possesses coercive power with which to make defectors and splitters pay a heavy price, and the organization is attractive because of its ability to supply and coordinate guns and money to its fighters.

*Military Weakness and Fragmentation.* The absence of external support, on the other hand, makes it enormously difficult for groups in these environments to build robust institutions or to attract loyal adherents during mass expansion. First, this autonomous, disorganized method of raising resources leads to low material capacity compared to rivals with external support. The internal ranks grow dissatisfied and alarmed by their inability to impose costs on the state or to defend themselves against rivals and the government. Inability to either inflict or prevent damage becomes internally corrosive and signals lack of resolve and skill externally. If alternatives present themselves, factional leaders and fighters will consider defecting as internal unrest simmers.¹³⁹ This clearly undermines the process of institutionalization. Moreover, when assessing possible groups to join and remain in, new recruits are likely to take into account which organizations will provide them with the guns, money, and training necessary to achieve whatever goals they are pursuing. Weakness will not attract or retain new recruits.

Second, a situation of resource diffusion ensues because local units are not dependent on the higher levels of command. Not only is the group militarily weak, but the apex of the

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¹³⁹ Restlessness with the lack of “action” is pervasive in poorly-armed groups, and badly damaging to internal morale and discipline.
organization has little to offer in the way of guns and money, so the vertical ties within the group are much weaker. There is no particular reason to listen to the high command – they neither provide nor withhold war-fighting resources. A diffused distribution of resources encourages fragmentation, all else being equal. Institutionalization is undercut because there are no routinized flows of resources that bind local units to higher ranks in the organization.

This combination of low capacity and diffused internal control leads to military weakness. Weakness in turn breeds discontent and defection at both Stage 2 and Stage 3 of insurgent organization-building.

**Figure 3.3. External Support and Group Cohesion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant External Support</th>
<th>Resource Centralization</th>
<th>Military Strength</th>
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<tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimal External Support</th>
<th>Resource Diffusion</th>
<th>Military Weakness</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimal External Support</th>
<th>Low Capacity</th>
<th>Military Weakness</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>

**V. Building Rebellion: Explaining Trajectories of Militancy**

**A. Patterns of Armed Group Cohesion and Fragmentation**

So now we need to put these social and material mechanisms together to generate predictions. Based on the interaction of social base and external support, we see four broad types of armed groups – *cohesive, state-reliant, consensus-contingent, and factionalized*. I argue that each trajectory of militancy is characterized by a specific pattern in the frequency of internal unrest, its intensity, the issues over which unrest occurs, and the level of strategic autonomy enjoyed by fighting factions. These outcomes reflect the varying abilities of different groups to engage in institutionalization and mass expansion without experiencing internal pressures on control and cohesion. The predictions are below:
Table 3.3. Trajectories of Armed Group Cohesion: Patterns of the DV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Base</th>
<th>Bonding network</th>
<th>Coalition network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External Material Support</td>
<td>Significant Cohesive [I]</td>
<td>State-reliant [II]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Consensus-contingent [III]</td>
<td>Factionalized [IV]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4. Specific Predictions for each Trajectory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohesive [I]</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Political-Military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-Reliant [II]</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensus-Contingent [III]</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Political-Military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factionalized [IV]</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section outlines predictions for four trajectories of organization. Our focus remains on relatively capable counterinsurgent states, with the focus on variation in social bases and external support. The basic argument I make is that, rather than determining the nature of group organization, the effects of external resources are contingent upon the nature of the social base upon which a group lies. In turn, the ability of socially integrated organizations to generate and control military power hinges on whether or not they can acquire significant resources from outside the combat zone. Bonding network-based, socially integrated groups that possess external support exhibit comparatively high levels of institutionalization and successful mass expansion, and are thus cohesive. Groups that rely on a coalition network base and lack external support tend to be factionalized. These two outcomes represent the extreme values on the dependent variable, from the most disciplined and robustly institutionalized to the very least.

There are also groups that fall into an intermediate category, and these can be differentiated by the mechanisms holding the groups together and the consequently distinct triggers for unrest that characterize them. Being able to distinguish between types of intermediate organizations is crucial, since it is likely that many groups will lie between the extremes.

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140 For reasons discussed above, I exclude localized groups from this analysis.
Organizations with external aid but without a bonding network base tend to be state-reliant proxy armies, held together by the material lures of state or diaspora patronage but lacking social integration.\textsuperscript{141} Consensus-contingent groups can maintain broad unity by relying on shared social solidarity but are highly sensitive to politico-military shocks due to their diffused resources and military weakness. These varying “economies of incentives” lead to different triggers for internal unrest.\textsuperscript{142} These trajectories will be most clearly observable in the capable/resolved-state context.

B. Bonding Network/External Support: Cohesive [I]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohesive [I]</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Political-Military</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The combination of bonding network mobilization and external support creates cohesive groups. Mobilization occurs through a social structure that is embedded across and within local communities, providing a robust underpinning for both institutionalization and, if desired, mass expansion. External material support from states and/or diasporas provides a large proportion of the group’s resources and makes the organization more powerful and centralized. The tight leadership core and centralization over resources builds robust institutionalization in Stage 2, while local ties and military strength broaden the group’s recruiting base without degrading internal unity in Stage 3. This combination forges a socially integrated organization that expands through and builds upon preexisting social ties, relies on military strength to attract and retain fighters, and incorporates new members on the ground through socialization and indoctrination. The ability of homogenize new recruits is bolstered by the social environment within the group.

Cohesive groups rarely suffer serious internal unrest because the command elites are cooperative, new recruits are incorporated into the group, and the leadership controls the guns

\textsuperscript{141} I use “state-reliant” as convenient shorthand for “state and diaspora-reliant.”

\textsuperscript{142} Barnard, \textit{Functions of the Executive}, Chapter XI. Thelen notes that “different institutions rest on different foundations, and so the processes that are likely to disrupt them will also be different, though predictable.” Thelen, “Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics,” 1999, 397.
and money. Internal discussions may be vigorous, but the use of violence to settle feuds is rare due to internal consensus and policing. Internal unrest will be low-intensity when it does occur because the incumbents quickly shift resources to minimize the split or end the feud\textsuperscript{143}; firewalls are put in place that “cauterize” internal unrest while the bulk of the elites hang together. Internal unrest is most likely to occur over large issues of war, peace, and military strategy. Peace processes and ceasefire discussions strain internal consensus, leading to unrest that reflects the group’s departure from the political aims around which members have been socialized for much of their lives. Personal rivalries and feuds over loot will \textit{not} lead to large-scale internal unrest.

\textbf{C. No Bonding Network/External Support: State-Reliant [II]}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State-Reliant [II]</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Distribution</td>
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There are two kinds of ‘intermediate’ outcomes of the DV – state-reliant and consensus-contingent groups. Both lie somewhere between cohesive and factionalized groups in the frequency and severity of internal splits, but each has a distinct pattern of this unrest. We begin with \textit{state-reliant} organizations.\textsuperscript{144} Armed groups that are heavily backed by states can maintain a certain level of unity even in the absence of social integration. If a state sponsor or diaspora pumps resources into an organization lacking a bonding network social base, this sponsorship provides material incentives for cooperation that allow the construction of a coalition between factions bound by a common desire for guns and money. Since the high command controls which factions receive resources, factional autonomy will be low. Yet there will be little spontaneous discipline or commonality of purpose beyond gaining access to material that can

\textsuperscript{143} I am excluding ‘official’ internal violence as part of disciplinary procedures; rather, this refers to two-sided violence between different parts of the organization.

\textsuperscript{144} These can also be diaspora-reliant; I use state-reliant primarily for brevity, and because there appear to be more states involved in active insurgent sponsorship than diasporas.
fulfill factional imperatives.\textsuperscript{145} State support can provide sufficient incentives for factional insurgent elites to operate under a group’s banner, and we will see both Stage 2 institutionalization and Stage 3 mass expansion driven by the lures of material patronage.

There are two causes of internal unrest within state-reliant groups, both linked to the distribution of external resources. The first is internal feuding over the distribution of guns and money – the factional commanders cooperate with one another and the high command because of the materiel they can get, but that is all that binds them. If unrest develops and side-payments cannot be forged to overcome this dissension, we are likely to see feuds and splits develop as members struggle for goods.\textsuperscript{146} However, these should not be particularly intense – the external backer will support its favored side and there will not be deeper political issues driving enduring feuds. Splits and feuds will be fairly clean and quick. The second cause of internal unrest is state manipulation, in which state sponsors bolster internal factions against the ostensible central leadership to weaken the group, find a more pliable client, or pursue a new objective with a new armed group. This can take the form of a coup or a split driven by shifts in state sponsorship. Both internally-driven feuds over distribution and state manipulation are likely to be fairly quick, and marked by rivalry and clashes over who gets what, in contrast to cohesive groups.

\textbf{D. Bonding Network/No External Support: Consensus-Contingent [III]}

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<th>Frequency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Consensus-Contingent [III]</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>High</td>
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<td>Political-Military</td>
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\textsuperscript{145} These are the opportunistic groups Weinstein focuses on. My theory subsumes this category of armed groups as part of a broader theoretical framework than he uses.

\textsuperscript{146} The specific manifestation of unrest over material resources will depend on the structure of the network underpinning the organization. A parochial social base is likely to see direct elite-on-elite conflict, as the warlords sitting atop dense factions battle for primacy. A foco-ist base is more likely to see feuding from below, as unhomogenized rising generations of fighters challenge the incumbent leadership over the distribution of guns and money.
Some organizations mobilize through bonding networks without access to external support. These are consensus-contingent groups that are held together by social solidarity due to a bonding network social base in Stage 1. They rely on the bonding network base in initial mobilization as the underpinning for both institutionalization and mass expansion. Groups heading both towards and away from cohesion can spend significant time in this value of the DV. But there are some cases of a long-run trajectory of consensus-contingent unity, with the Ulster Volunteer Force and Official IRA, for example, sitting in this intermediate category over time. The challenge for consensus-contingent groups is keeping the organization together in a chaotic political-military environment with minimal ability to distribute guns and money to subordinates. Social solidarity, local embeddedness, and shared commitments are the underpinning for institutionalization and expansion, but without the centralizing or capacity-boosting effects of external resource flows.

These organizations, like state-reliant groups, will have an intermediate frequency of internal unrest. Their level of factional autonomy is high because of the diffused resources. The overriding imperative for consensus-contingent groups is maintaining a fairly straightforward and uncontroversial political-military line (hence consensus-contingent); they have to leverage solidarity for all it is worth because of the possibility of enduring internal unrest. However, solidarity will be threatened (as in cohesive groups) by major political-military shifts on the part of the leadership that threaten the core values around which the organization mobilized. This political-military change may be necessary to achieve a peace settlement or ceasefire, but will also be the most likely trigger for significant internal unrest. There is relatively little materiel to battle over, so internal distributional concerns will not be very salient either in Stage 2 or 3.
When internal unrest occurs, it is likely to be fairly intense because the diffused nature of resources means that neither the incumbents nor their challengers will have sufficient power to best the other. The internal mechanisms of material control are too weak to forestall armed defiance of the central leadership, but the localism of splitting/feuding factions means that they too are weak. Feuds/splits will be long-lasting and fluid, and thus high intensity, with no actor able to deploy state- or diaspora-provided resources to decisively win the day.

**E. No Bonding Network/No External Support: Factionalized [IV]**

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<th>Frequency</th>
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<td>Factionalized [IV]</td>
<td>High</td>
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Organizations are factionalized when they lack privileged access both to a bonding network and to external sources of material support. The trajectory of factionalized groups is generally chaotic – repeated and prolonged internal unrest, frequent splits, and low levels of military power. Their origins lie in coalition social bases in Stage 1 and a lack of significant external support, which combine to undermine institutionalization and to make it difficult to structure and control mass expansion. Multiple distinct sub-groups exist under the overall aegis of the organizations, undermining elite cooperation and encouraging horizontal splits and feuds. The lack of centralized resources and material capacity encourages the rise of factional autonomy and dissension on the ground, weakening vertical bonds of command and control. Factions operate freely and effective central command is lacking; either there will be some sort of loose decision-making council or highly personalized individual rule at the apex of organizational power.\(^{147}\) Factionalized groups can survive over time, but are also most likely to be killed off decisively, being wiped out by rivals, suppressed by the state, or withdrawing from armed struggle because they are losing.

\(^{147}\) Again, the details of organizational form will hinge in important ways on the structure of the social base.
There are many triggers for internal unrest in factionalized armed groups. While the other trajectories have fairly identifiable causes of major splits and feuds, whether material or political, factionalized groups are thrown into disarray for numerous reasons. This includes military setbacks, political changes, personal rivalry, disagreements over distribution of criminal proceeds, idiosyncratic events, and numerous others. All we can readily predict is that the internal conflicts will overlap strongly with the lines of cleavage arising from the coalition social base – enduringly distinct sub-groupings, along regional or personalistic lines, will be the key actors in feuds and splits over time. These were distinct groups before they decided to fight together, and remain so even after this decision.

E. The State, Strategic Interaction, and Change Over Time

An obvious problem with studying organizations over time is that they are strategically interacting with other organizations and dealing with broader political contexts. In this context, that means that insurgent organizations are battling a fairly motivated government that is actively seeking to fracture insurgents.\(^{148}\) Fragmentation and internal feuding are precisely what states want under most circumstances.\(^{149}\) Change, adaptation, and evolution are common in armed groups.\(^{150}\) Yet the theory outlined above is fairly static and path-dependent.

Here I use my theoretical approach to generate a set of mechanisms that are likely to lead to changes over time. There will be endogenous dynamics that I simply cannot explain, but they should be shaped and constrained in important ways by the prior social and organizational structure of the armed group in question. I would expect that continuities in social composition to

\(^{148}\) They may also be battling other militants. Metelits, *Inside Insurgency*, suggests that organizational competition can radically change insurgent organizational structure. To preview empirical findings, I do not find a similar pattern, which I suspect has a lot to do with the scope conditions Metelits focuses on (weak/failed states in which there is more flexibility to shift organizational form without the constant pressure of state power).

\(^{149}\) An exception is if the state has identified a group to cut a deal with; then it may try to bolster the prospective partner.

endure but diminish in importance over time as new actors and new incentives are introduced into play. The initial social base will thus be something of a “wasting asset,” but one with hugely important effects because of its role in determining the shape of institution-building in the crucial early years of a war. It is far easier to adapt and reform while atop a socially-robust organization than when relying on a more internally divided one, regardless of political context or state policy. Thus there should be deep but diminishing continuities over time. Nevertheless, there will be significant changes, and it is some of the likely causes of change we now turn.

**Political Context.** The argument about networks and external support is primarily intended for the hard cases of insurgent mobilization against a government that cares and that can kill. But this context can shift dramatically, both in terms of resolve and even capability, opening up political opportunities for organization-building. Most importantly, softening of a previously clear commitment to policing and population control should lead to more, and easier, endogenous cohesion-building by insurgents. Vacuums of power, rapid shifts in state policy away from repression and counterinsurgency, or international shocks to the state’ structure will all lower the hurdle of collective action.\(^{151}\) Organizational innovation, ideological imperatives, smart leadership, clever strategies, and contingent events can all build stronger social networks and organizational structures when the state is unwilling or unable to repress. Exogenous shocks should lead to a particularly noticeable and rapid increase in mobilization.

**External Sponsor Policy.** The gain or loss of external support can be crucial in changing groups’ organizational forms. Very simply, put if a state sponsor “drops” a group or a diaspora is cut off, and the group doesn’t have other external options, we should expect a shift towards greater fragmentation, all else being equal. Alternatively, if the organization gains external

\(^{151}\) The importance of international dynamics is emphasized in Skocpol, Theda. *States and Social Revolutions: a Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) and retains validity for the study of insurgency.
support we should expect a shift towards centralization, cohesion, and increased military strength. Because external support is far more dynamic than social structure, it is likely that this will be a prime driver of change, along with unexpected shifts in state and political context.

**Endogenous External Dynamics: Interaction with the State.** Leaving aside broad changes in the balance of capability and resolve, the theory above suggests that some specific state COIN policies will be more effective than others in defeating insurgent organizations via fragmentation. Specifically, COIN policies that selectively target the key ‘nodes’ and brokers within the insurgent organization’s social base will most effectively undermine group cohesion. The use of targeted assassinations and abductions, pro-state paramilitaries, and extended intelligence operations are all characteristics of this approach. By somewhat alarming contrast, and in opposition to the dominant COIN dogma, a policy aimed at “providing security” and addressing political grievances may not have any significant effect on an insurgent group if 1) the organization wants to keep fighting and 2) the government is not able to target its underlying networks. Similarly, mass indiscriminate violence will only shatter armed groups if it is truly massive, relying on sheer force and population displacement to sunder underlying social ties.

152 However even state brokering of a very socially divided group may be insufficient to pull a group together if rivalries emerge between factions, and other potential sources of support exist. If internal factions have outside options other than the original state sponsor, we see fragmentation as local elites defect in pursuit of patronage from another sponsor or another source of funds.

153 The ability of a security force to implement this strategy is extremely variable, and even adopting this policy is no guarantee of successful COIN. Jackson and Long persuasively outline and explain key challenges that militaries have in pursuing appropriate counterinsurgency policies. Colin Jackson, “Defeat in Victory: Organizational Learning Dysfunction in Counterinsurgency” (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2008); Austin Long, “First War Syndrome: Military Culture, Professionalization, and Counterinsurgency Doctrine.” (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2010).

More likely is the careful and sustained targeting of core networks that slowly but surely undermine the organization’s social integration and ability to reproduce itself.\textsuperscript{155}

We should also expect there to be variation in insurgent responses to shifts in state policy. Cohesive armed groups should be able to reform and adapt, even if the state makes radical changes; factionalized and state-reliant groups will be more vulnerable, since they lack appropriate trust and social integration to institute difficult organizational reforms on the fly. Some groups will thus be more vulnerable to government divide-and-conquer and infiltration policies than others. While these dynamics are likely to be shrouded in mystery and opacity, we need to look closely at the timing and motivation of splits and feuds to see whether there is any evidence of a significant government role.

\textit{Endogenous Internal Dynamics: Coups and Coalition Shifts.} Finally, there are a variety of possible endogenous dynamics within a group that could lead to a shift in cohesion. These are unpredictable, but their outcomes should be at least loosely shaped by the social and material structure of the organization. First, we can imagine a decisive internal \textit{coup} by a sub-faction that annihilates its rivals and installs its loyalists in the key units and communities the group encompasses. Second, there can be circumstances in which the bulk of the command elite are removed from the scene by security forces and are replaced by a more cohesive set of leadership cadres. These would substitute a bonding network for the previous coalition network base, changing the value on the social base variable and leading to cohesion.\textsuperscript{156} The social base is not

\textsuperscript{155} This is precisely what happened, for instance, in the Indian Punjab. None of the core root grievances claimed by the insurgency were settled; the root causes remained. But the Indian police and military slowly but surely ripped apart the militant factions from within, shattering the networks and relationships on which the organizations were built. Once organizations were broken, the mass populace was easy to control and bargain with. See C. Christine. Fair, “Lessons from India’s Experience in the Punjab, 1978-1993,” in Sumit Ganguly and David P Fidler, eds., \textit{India and Counterinsurgency: Lessons Learned}, London: Routledge, 2009), Chapter 8.

\textsuperscript{156} This would also have to occur with state/diaspora support in order to out-gun and out-pay internal rivals; to truly change the social underpinning would require a rapid and thoroughgoing purge of the other networks and blocs.
totally locked in place. Through both of these endogenous, hard-to-predict mechanisms, a previously fractious elite may be swept aside and replaced by more socially-embedded command cadres who can foster greater levels of cooperation. The possibility of successful improvisation will nevertheless be constrained by history and structure.

VI. Research Design

How should we go about researching this argument? As Gould writes, “it is risky to make generalizations about the impact of network structure in the absence of detailed information about collective action settings.” This requires fine-grained information. But we also want to find significant variation in our dependent variable with enough observations to offer empirical findings. To achieve this I use sub- and cross-national comparisons that combine micro-level and comparative-historical approaches to studying insurgency. The first approach is to look at cases with a fairly capable state apparatus alongside dramatic variation across insurgent organizations. These within-conflict comparisons in Kashmir, Northern Ireland, and Sri Lanka form the empirical core of the project (Chapters 4-6), allowing a detailed study of how social networks and external support shape organizational trajectories within and across similar political contexts.

The second layer of research (Chapter 7) mixes three different types of comparisons, with a focus on Southeast Asia. I examine communist groups across different political contexts in Malaya, the Philippines, and Vietnam, secessionist groups within the same political system but different wars in Indonesia, and armed groups within the same conflict in the southern Philippines. This takes the theory traveling to very different states, groups with different war

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157 Wood, “Social Processes,” also discusses the transformation of war-time networks; in my cases I tend to find fairly strong elements of both continuity and change in cohesive groups.

aims, and varying geopolitical dynamics. The value of this exercise as an external validity check is bolstered by my lack of prior knowledge of Southeast Asia.

A. Core Within-Conflict Comparisons: Capable States and Sub-National Variation

Within-Conflict Comparisons: Militarily Capable States. The empirical core of this project is a detailed study of three broadly similar wars – Northern Ireland (Chapter 4), Kashmir (Chapter 5), and Sri Lanka (Chapter 6). These should be among the most difficult contexts for armed group cohesion as protracted conflicts of 20 or more years between a capable state and multiple armed groups fighting for secession from the incumbent state on ethno-sectarian grounds. The broad similarities between the three wars allows a (heavily caveated) “pooling” of the cases through cross-national comparisons between groups that might bring out some general patterns. Obviously we should not expect the war in Sri Lanka to look exactly like that in Kashmir or N. Ireland. However, the processes leading to the wars bear clear resemblances.159

Given that these conflicts are compared to one another in studies of ethnic conflict, it is reasonable to think that there are also similarities in the pattern of their insurgent organization.160

The British and Indian armies are two of the simultaneously largest and most experienced counterinsurgency forces in the world, bolstered by a massive array of internal security and intelligence agencies. The United Kingdom had extensive experience in countermilitancy operations prior to the onset of the Troubles.161 By the time of Kashmir’s insurgency in 1988 and

159 We see non-violent political mobilization for rights or representation in the name of the minority group, the existence of a radical fringe within this movement, aggressive and violent overreaction by the state that indicates sectarian bias, a consequent undermining of non-violent political parties, and initiative passing into the hands of militant groups who then escalate the conflict into war.


161 In Aden, Malaya, Greece, Kenya, and the Palestine Mandate.
intervention in Sri Lanka in 1987, Indian security forces had dealt with numerous rebellions.\textsuperscript{162} Though obviously much weaker, the Sri Lankan military and police have been built up since the 1971 JVP rebellion. The Sri Lankan security forces decisively defeated an intensely bloody second JVP rebellion in 1987-89, and have been able to impose extremely high costs on Tamil militant groups to point of ultimately annihilating them.\textsuperscript{163} They also prop up several pro-state Tamil paramilitaries in a context of pervasive state militarization. The force-population ratios in each conflict have been high in comparative perspective.\textsuperscript{164} All of these governments repeatedly and publicly proclaimed their commitment to maintain control of their territory.\textsuperscript{165} These cases clearly satisfy the condition of capable, resolved counterinsurgent forces.

Within-Conflict Comparisons: Organizational Variation. In addition to cross-national similarities within my scope condition, there is variation across the non-state armed groups in their level of cohesion within each conflict. Focusing on detailed comparisons follows a growing trend in recent civil war literature.\textsuperscript{166} These three wars are marked by dramatic internal variation, with some groups collapsing and others cohering. This strategy allows for tightly-controlled sub-national comparisons, holding broadly constant at any given point in time per capita GDP, state

\textsuperscript{162} Sikh militancy in Punjab, Marxist insurgency in Telangana and West Bengal, and ethnic/tribal militancy in Nagaland, Mizoram, Assam, and Manipur. India has never allowed a successful secession, and has decisively destroyed or contained to a level of acceptable violence each of the insurgencies mentioned above.

\textsuperscript{163} Particularly since 2005 the Sri Lankan security forces have been massively increased and modernized, leading to conventional victory on the northeastern battlefields.

\textsuperscript{164} N. Ireland is a classic high-ratio case, as is Kashmir (though numbers are very fuzzy on the actual number of SFs on the ground, even lower bound is high). Sri Lanka is lower but rapidly increased over time.

\textsuperscript{165} There is another similarity between these three cases. Each has offered at least some opportunity for political involvement in the areas under question - major political parties represented each ethnic minority prior to war onset and afterwards. Politics have been biased against these ethnic communities, but throughout the conflicts there have been large numbers of co-ethnics willing to forsake militancy for elections, showing that many regard democratic politics (of some sort) as a plausible alternative to violence. Sri Lanka has seen the least democratic opportunities, and the weakest military power, so its dynamics will likely look rather different than Northern Ireland and Kashmir.

military strength, social heterogeneity and salient cleavages, political regime type, overall terrain, technology, and the nature of the political economy. Within cases there is certainly some variation in each of these (for instance, urban vs. rural areas), but I do my best to hold them constant and to identify when I cannot.¹⁶⁷

This combination of tight comparisons and detailed historical research lets us to avoid drive-by case studies and "stylized facts," a reliance on one or two observations, and/or having to accept opaque codings in a dataset. The research design thus follows the model Leites and Wolf recommend: “one is especially concerned with how R [rebel group] operates within that environment, and with the difference between a successful and less successful R in such operations (that is, an ‘interfirm’ contrast).”¹⁶⁸ We can get very deep into the political and military environments of these wars, using them as comparative laboratories within which to examine the mobilization of violence.¹⁶⁹

In the dissertation I am comparing five republican insurgents in Northern Ireland; five Tamil insurgent groups in Sri Lanka; and six indigenous Kashmiri and three Pakistani insurgent groups in the Kashmir conflict. This involves nineteen insurgent groups in the three wars, and reduces my degrees of freedom challenges both within and across cases. The variation within wars means that that we can study some of the most prominent and disciplined armed groups in the world (Provisional IRA, Tamil Tigers, Lashkar e Taiba) directly alongside their significantly (Eelam People’s Revolutionary Liberation Front, Official IRA) or extremely (Irish National Liberation Army, Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, and Tamil Eelam Liberation

¹⁶⁷ As Wood argues, “to explore the force of potential causal processes, within-case contrasts should be explored to as the simplest way to control for many otherwise confounding variables.” Wood, “Variation in Sexual Violence,” p. 334.
¹⁶⁸ Leites and Wolf, Rebellion and Authority, p. 40.
¹⁶⁹ This allows us to explain “differences in the mechanisms of reproduction that sustain different kinds of institutional arrangements,” with almost everything else held roughly constant. Thelen, “Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics,” p. 391.
Organisation) less cohesive contemporaries.

B. External Validity: Comparisons across Countries, Conflicts, and Organizations

The core wars and organizations at the heart of this dissertation may, however, be outliers or unrepresentative in important ways. We also run the risk of assessing a theory based on a small set of cases that in turn inform the theory, making it hard to independently evaluate the value of the theory. Moreover, chapters 4-6 focus on trying to isolate the effects of social bases and external support given a shared political context, but it is important to compare cases across contexts. One way of mitigating concerns about external validity is to apply the theory to new cases that were not in any way part of the theory-building process. In Chapter 7, I take the argument traveling to Southeast Asia, and use three clusters of comparisons to explore whether my theory can persuasively help to explain organizational trajectories. This is a largely new region to me, and so the comparisons examined in SE Asia were simply not included in my empirical knowledge base when I developed the theory.

The first set of comparisons I make is between communist armed groups in Malaya (MCP), Vietnam (ICP/Viet Minh), and the Philippines (Huks) through the mid/late-1950s. There was significant variation across these wars in the ability of communist entrepreneurs to construct and maintain armed “organizational weapons,” as well as some variation over time within each group. This comparison takes out of the ethnic-secessionist category that constitutes the core within-conflict studies in Chapters 4-6. The second comparison is of two ethnic secessionist groups in Indonesia, GAM in Aceh and Falintil in East Timor, which both rebelled against the same New Order regime at roughly the same time. These groups were both fighting for secession against the same regime and then, more briefly, its democratic successor, but GAM was a traditional ethno-linguistic armed group appealing to past myths while Falintil initially had a
more explicit left/national liberation front ideology. I compare these cases to see whether similar causal processes underpin the two groups’ somewhat varying organizational trajectories. Finally, I examine variation between two separatist armed groups based on the Muslim population in the southern Philippines. This returns us to the realm of within-conflict comparisons, trying to understand the greater cohesion of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) over its parent organization, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

C. Structuring the Empirics

The burden of the four empirical chapters is to provide convincing ex ante evidence of variation in the social bases of the armed groups at war, connect the structure of the pre-war social base to organizational outcomes during the conflict, examine the causes and consequences of external support, study when and why local incorporation succeeds, and examine the available history of each group with these processes in mind.

Data Sources. The evidence I use is from field interviews, written primary sources (oral histories and organizational documents), secondary literature, and press accounts. I also draw on case-specific writings from political science, history, sociology, and anthropology to make these codings. Often journalistic accounts are the best I can do, and when that is the case I try to show evidence from multiple sources to make up for the limited reliability of each source. The available information about some of these organizations is extremely sparse or unreliable, meaning that there is variation in the quality and extent of evidence across and within conflicts. I am explicit about the origins and reliability of the sources I use.

Measurement: Social Bases. A crucial issue is how I empirically differentiate between bonding and coalition network social bases; the risk of tautology is obviously high, as is the possibility of blatant obfuscation in the hope that non-experts will be persuaded. To try to make a
credible argument, I do a “social net assessment” of the organizations and networks mobilized by prominent armed groups during war onset and ask whether they are heterogeneous, socially-diffuse coalition networks, or whether they are bonding networks identifiable ex ante using the criteria of overlapping local and extra-local social identity and mobilization specified above. I identify the local leaders and central figures in these networks and organizations – who they are, what positions in the community they hold, what kinds of mobilization they can engage in, and how popular their ideology is among the broader population. There are likely to be a number of ambiguous, unclear, or “in-between” cases, forcing me to justify codings and to acknowledge problems in the data.170 Extensive historical background is necessary to show that bonding networks are not endogenous to the start of the specific war in question. This means longer chapters, but also hopefully more persuasive arguments.

**Measurement: External Support.** In addition to knowing about social mobilization, we need to know whether a group relies on external states and diasporas for a difficult-to-replace proportion of its guns and money. This is made tricky by our lack of knowledge about the overall wealth and supply channels that these kinds of secretive groups rely on.171 But we should be able to get a sense of how important external aid is to the refilling an organization’s coffers – does it appear to provide a significant proportion of the organization’s resources, and does the group itself see this support as crucial? Are external resources used for central organizational tasks like weapons procurement and personnel payments? To the extent that the aid received from abroad forms a major proportion of the resources used for central tasks of equipping and paying fighters, the group is coded as receiving significant external support. If it receives some external aid, but


171 Sponsors often want deniability, and diaspora money is often routed through numerous fronts, not to mention the intrinsic opaqueness of insurgent groups themselves.
this does not constitute a major part of the organization’s overall resource base and, especially, is not crucial to sustaining military and organizational functions, then I code this as minimal.

**Process: Causal Mechanisms.** Finally, it is important to search for specific strands of cause and effect that we should be able to observe linking independent and dependent variables. In the cases I need to provide what causal-process observations - “[a]n insight or piece of data that provides information about context, process or mechanism, and that contributes distinctive leverage in causal inference.”\(^{172}\) We want to find evidence on actual processes of mobilization, discipline, and fragmentation. This is important because we can easily imagine spurious correlations.\(^{173}\) So I look for examples of processes and speech evidence from participants and analysts to highlight how my hypothesized relationships are (or are not) working.

**Conclusion: Dissertation Road Map**

The rest of the dissertation examines the explanatory power of my theory against its competitors. Chapter 4 takes up Northern Ireland’s “Troubles,” tracing the rise and fall of five republican armed groups between 1962 and 2008 in great detail. Chapter 5 shifts our focus to Kashmir’s intense insurgency. I compare ten insurgent organizations in both Kashmir proper and in Pakistan. Chapter 6 examines the varying trajectories of Tamil militancy in Sri Lanka from 1972 until the military defeat of the Tamil Tigers in 2009. Chapter 7 takes the theory traveling to Southeast Asia. Finally, Chapter 8 concludes with implications for scholarship and policy.

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Chapter 3 Appendix: Network Structures

Here I offer a crude, heuristic conceptualization of the three major network structures that constitute social bases. The first movers who build the organization and constitute its crucial early array of leaders are in the bolded dashed central box, and the secondary networks that are not first movers (local communities, families, party branches, etc) but that could become involved are in lighter dashed boxes. The basic structure of social relations can be discerned, though this is a simple non-technical visualization. Bonding networks involve dense social connections within the first movers and between first movers and secondary networks. There is a clear overlap of networks. Foco-ist coalition networks retain the dense connections between first movers, but with more diffuse ties to local secondary networks. Parochial coalition networks retain dense connections linking secondary networks to key first movers, but the ties between first movers are diffuse. Note that the number of nodes is exactly the same across structures: what matters is not how many people are involved, but how they are linked to one another.

Figure 3.4. Bonding Network: Dense Social Ties Within Local Communities and Across First Movers
Figure 3.5. Parochial Coalition Network:
Dense Social Ties Within Local Communities; Diffuse Ties Across First-Movers

Figure 3.6. Foco-ist Coalition Network:
Dense Social Ties Among First Movers; Diffuse Ties To Local Communities
Chapter 4
Killing for Ireland: Republican Insurgency in Northern Ireland, 1962-2008

Introduction

While most of western Europe surged towards political integration and economic prosperity over the past four decades, a small corner of the continent was instead wracked by violent, seemingly intractable ethnic conflict. Northern Ireland is the most enduring legacy of British rule in Ireland, a Protestant-majority province of the United Kingdom constituting the six northeastern counties of the island. To many Catholics it is an artificial entity, a relic of colonialism that continues the sectarian oppression of empire. To Protestants it is a legitimate site of British identity stretching back centuries. After the Irish Civil War of 1922-23, the southern Irish Republic has largely accepted the partition of the island through the Anglo-Irish Treaty as a fact of life that cannot, and should not, be changed by force. The insurgent force that fought for Irish independence from the British, the Irish Republican Army, split in two over accepting partition. In the Irish Civil War, the anti-partition forces were soundly defeated, and many of the anti-Treaty leaders moved into the constitutional mainstream.

But to some, partition was unacceptable. For these remnants of the anti-Treaty IRA, a British presence on the island negated Irish freedom, and was a blot that could only be removed by armed struggle. This “physical force” tradition of Irish republicanism would re-emerge in the late 1960s with a vengeance, launching and sustaining a low-level but destructive insurgency that lasted for decades. Irredentist militarism would clash not only with the British state, but also with a brutal campaign by Protestant paramilitaries to maintain the political status quo at the point of a gun. Between 1969 and 1998, Northern Ireland was a place of death, fear, and political deadlock. It never remotely approached the carnage of Bosnia or Rwanda; rather, it became remarkable for the ability of its various warring actors to sustain violence within a rich and powerful First World
country, and for the cruel intimacy of a conflict among only 1.5 million inhabitants. Now a
settlement appears to have been reached, but distrust remains embedded in society and politics.

I approach this complex civil war through the lens of its armed groups, the non-state
organizations that produced and sustained the violence that kept “the Troubles” alive. In
Northern Ireland, the cohesion and discipline of armed groups fundamentally affected their
ability to pursue and achieve political aims. Most dramatically, the high level of control within
the Provisional IRA (PIRA) was a precondition for ceasefires, the 1998 Good Friday Agreement,
and the consequent de-mobilization that ended the conflict. By contrast, the factionalized Real
IRA (RIRA) and Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) linger on as divided bands of criminals
and zealots, unable to reap either political gains from negotiation or major gains from violence;
at the extreme, the factionalization of the Irish People’s Liberation Organisation (IPLO) led to its
destruction. The inability of the Official IRA (OIRA) to hold its factions together while pursuing
a political path reveals the tight relationship between organization and strategy.

This chapter studies and compares five republican insurgent groups within this shared
political, military, and social context. The chapter has five sections. First, I briefly introduce the
conflict, outline the relevant variation on the dependent variation, and preview my theoretical
explanation. Second, I offer a historical overview of the origins of ethnic division in Ireland until
1962, setting the stage for analyzing dynamics of militancy once the conflict began to escalate in
the late 1960s. Third, I examine in detail (down to the level of specific neighborhoods, families,
and individuals) the social bases, evolution, and emergence of republican insurgent groups from
1962 until 1977. Fourth, I study how different insurgents dealt with the “long war” between
1977 and 1990. Fifth, I compare the trajectories of militant groups during the Irish peace process
between 1990 and 2008, specifically examining why the Provisional IRA was able to maintain
cohesion as it abandoned militancy, and why the Real IRA failed to build or sustain a robust organization despite advancing similar ideological goals to the 1969 PIRA. Each of the three empirical sections studying the period between 1962 and 2008 is preceded by my theoretical predictions, and concludes by assessing the explanatory power of my argument.

I find that variation in the social base of and external support for organizations explains significant variation in group cohesion. The centrality of traditional republican families and local elites, whose loyalties stretch back to political cleavages born in the 1910s/20s, in both the Official IRA and (especially) Provisional IRA provided these groups with a bonding network base. The PIRA’s links to Libya and Irish-America then provided crucial flows of guns and money that allowed it to gain and attract recruits and factional elites. Diasporic support was provided extremely early in the war before there was any evidence of prior organizational cohesion; instead, the PIRA’s more traditionalist ideology was seen more favorably by Irish-America than the Official IRA’s left-republicanism. The INLA, IPLO, and RIRA, by contrast, failed to mobilize the support of bonding network elites and lacked external linkages, dooming them to internal ruptures and marginalization. While the theory does well, there are some important “misfires” regarding factional autonomy that show the limits of my argument.

The Northern Ireland experience is unique in many ways, but it allows an extraordinarily detailed reconstruction of a prolonged insurgency. The historical record is vast, helping to account for the length of this chapter, but analytical and comparative studies of the conflict’s armed groups are rare – the Provisional IRA attracts the most attention, but is usually either used as a quick “drive-by” case to illustrate a theory¹ or becomes the object of mystical appeals to the

¹ This is often very problematic. For instance, Abrahms and Bueno de Mesquita both make problematic interpretations of the Irish case that undermine their arguments. Max Abrahms, “What Terrorists Really Want: Terrorist Motives and Counterterrorism Strategy,” International Security 32, no. 4 (Spring 2008), pp. 78-105; and
Irish psyche. Even the best studies lack a comparative perspective that would help us understand why PIRA went in one direction, while others groups, whether in N. Ireland or elsewhere, took a different trajectory. Rather than taking for granted the convulsions of the Official IRA, cohesion of the Provisional IRA, and collapse of the Real IRA, for instance, I try to explain these differences. I hope to bring the Northern Ireland case into dialogue with other conflicts, but without adopting a dubious “stylized facts” approach. It should be possible to combine deep, detailed history with comparison and explanation.

I. Cohesion and Fragmentation in Northern Ireland: An Introduction and Preview

Northern Ireland’s civil war provides an excellent comparative laboratory within which to study armed group organization. The conflict pitted five significant republican insurgents against one of the most powerful governments in the world on its own soil. While there were some changes over time, the politico-military context did not shift dramatically. Throughout, the British state maintained a massive military advantage, loyalist paramilitaries targeted Catholics, and republican insurgents attempted to raise the costs of British rule to the point at which the British public would lose the will to fight. The variation I examine is in the ability of different armed groups to survive British counterinsurgency and the lures of electoral politics over three
decades. This section summarizes the case and the variation under study in order to provide a quick roadmap to the empirically dense chapter to come.

An Introduction to the War

Here I offer a brief overview of the military, social, and political nature of the Troubles between 1968 and 2008 to provide context for the empirical analysis. The Troubles pitted part of the Catholic minority of the British province of Northern Ireland against the British state and its Protestant supporters. Northern Ireland is made up of six counties, with the two eastern counties of Down and Antrim Protestant-majority, and the four western counties of Londonderry, Armagh, Fermanagh, and Tyrone Catholic-majority. The conflict that emerged from political mobilization and rioting in 1969-70 was a three-way armed struggle, between republican insurgents, loyalist paramilitaries, and the British security forces. The war lasted until 2005 – 1998 saw the signing of the Good Friday Agreement/Belfast Agreement, but the 2005 decommissioning of the Provisional IRA’s weaponry was the crucial endpoint of the conflict. However, even into 2009 there remains some lethal republican dissident violence.

The conflict was waged in a variety of locales, both urban and rural, with the British security apparatus able to deploy and sustain extraordinary levels of manpower, firepower, and

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4 Before continuing I need to offer a basic discussion of terminology. I follow standard practice in my use of words. “Republicans” are those who believe that armed struggle is both necessary and morally justified to reunite Ireland. Until its abandonment of armed struggle, the Irish Republican Army (and then Provisional IRA) and its Sinn Féin political wing have been the premier advocates of republicanism. “Nationalists” are those (almost always Catholic) who support the reunification of Ireland but abhor the use of violence to do so. These represent the two primary tendencies of Irish approaches to partition, with nationalists generally in the dominant majority. The leading parties in the Republic of Ireland and the Social and Democratic Labour Party in Northern Ireland are nationalist. “Unionists” are Protestants who support the maintenance of partition, and look to the official security forces and political institutions of the British state for protection and representation. This refers to the Ulster Unionist Party and in most forms to the Democratic Unionist Party. “Loyalists” are Protestants who support partition but feel that non-state violence is appropriate to protect the Union. Their modern successors are the new-look UVF and the UDA. I refer to Northern Ireland as Northern Ireland, but in quoted sources the reader will note it sometimes being referred to as “the Six Counties,” “the North,” and “Ulster.” Readers will also notice that republican armed groups are often referred to as “paramilitaries” in the literature on the conflict; to avoid confusion across cases I call refer to them as insurgents. The Provisional IRA is often referred to simply as “the IRA” in other writing but I maintain the distinction between the IRA in its pre-1969 form and the Provisional IRA, Real IRA, and Official IRA after various splits. These were distinct organizations and for comparative purposes need to be treated as such.
electronic assets. The loyalist paramilitaries targeted innocent Catholics and, less successfully, Sinn Féin party members and IRA men. The republican insurgents mixed attacks on civilians and representatives of the state. The primary axis of the conflict involved the contest between the security forces and the republicans, primarily the Provisional IRA, but the loyalists were important during significant periods of the 1970s and 1990s.\(^5\)

The military areas of contest were primarily in traditional republican parts of N. Ireland - “A number of areas are regarded as heartland communities of the republican movement. . .there is west Belfast, which itself divides into parts of different character; there is north Belfast; there is Derry’s Bogside and Creggan, and there are the rural areas of south Armagh and mid-Tyrone.”\(^6\) These places recur again and again in the study below, for, while the republican groups could find support in many places, it was these strongholds, either working-class Catholic neighborhoods or rural farming communities, that sustained the struggle. Belfast was the most bitterly divided (and lethal) area, with demographically intermixed areas of North and West Belfast, and enclaves of both loyalist and republican persuasions in South and East Belfast.\(^7\) Derry, by contrast, is a Catholic-majority city with the River Foyle providing a clear dividing line between the ethnic communities. Sectarian divisions are also found within and, more commonly, between villages in rural areas.

The Troubles’ relatively low intensity in terms of deaths badly understates the effort put into this war by, and the sophistication of, the warring actors. The high level of state capacity and

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\(^7\) East Belfast, the Shankill area of West Belfast, several enclaves in North Belfast and South Belfast, and parts of the “murder triangle” between Craigavon, Portadown, and Lurgan southwest of Belfast are traditional loyalist (as opposed to unionist) strongholds. Sectarian-geographical divisions have only deepened in Belfast since 1998. See Peter Shirlow and Brendan Murtagh, *Belfast: Segregation, Violence and the City* (London: Pluto Press, 2006).
the consistent existence of democratic alternatives make Northern Ireland a “least likely” case for armed group cohesion. As O’Leary writes, “the conflict of the last thirty years has therefore been extremely intense given that it took place in a small region, in the presence of moderately amicable relations between the relevant neighboring states and regional powers, and in the absence of operational superpower rivalries.”

There is now a Northern Ireland Assembly, with a power-sharing Executive on which the four major political parties sit. These parties are, on the Protestant side, the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), and, on the Catholic side, the Social and Democratic Labour Party (SDLP), and Sinn Féin. Sinn Féin is the political wing of the Provisional IRA. The Provisional IRA has partially demobilized into Sinn Féin, with a number of senior former PIRA members now part of the party.

Variation on the Dependent Variable: Republican Insurgents

Briefly, what is the variation in the dependent variable that this chapter aims to explain? In their strategic worldview, Irish republicans have historically faced two foes — the military might of the Crown forces and their Protestant allies, and the lures of electoral politics. The latter is in some ways the more insidious threat, a path to nonviolent constitutionalism that betrays the cause of Irish nationalism. Michaeals Collins’ and Eamon de Valera’s willingness to break from IRA violence in favor of constitutionalism highlights a deep tension between the elite militarism of the republican movement and its claims to represent the true will of the people — the people often seemed quite happy to support leaders that republicans viewed as traitors and sell-outs.

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9 Since the 1998 Good Friday Agreement the DUP and Sinn Féin have become the largest parties within each communal bloc, despite the UUP and SDLP being the dominant pre-1998 parties.
10 The only other armed group-linked party in the Assembly is the People’s Unionist Party (PUP), which has ties to the UVF, but holds a single seat.
During the Troubles in the north, both the might of the state and the appeals of the ballot box put enormous strain on republican insurgents. In the end, these combined to decisively deny the republican movement a victory, resulting in a power-sharing, electoral settlement.

But the various republican armed groups dealt with these twin challenges of coercion and democratic politics with dramatically different levels of success, despite operating within a similar macro-level constituency, political economy, and set of social cleavages, and facing the same enemy at the same time in the same places. All of these variables are held constant across these groups, posing the obvious puzzle of explaining the dramatically different trajectories that ensued. I get into more detail in each empirical section, but here want to give a sense of the broad trajectories taken by the five major organizations under study.

The Official IRA was ripped apart by its embrace of an electoral, cross-sectarian path, unable to survive intact the leadership’s shift in strategy in the context of political tumult in Northern Ireland. There was an important social core at the heart of the OIRA held together by a mix of personal loyalty and leftist ideology, but it was diminished over time and ultimately decided to abandon the gun. The Provisional split of 1969 and INLA split of 1974-5 were militarily devastating to the Officials. While the Officials were able to adopt a political/electoral focus without disintegrating, their inability to keep key northern factions on board destroyed the leadership’s original 1960s strategic vision.

The IPLO, INLA, and RIRA were all factionalized groups that pursued an undisciplined militarism, were riven by splits and feuds, and ended up marginalized or annihilated. The INLA’s internal feuds are notorious, most dramatically the elite-on-elite fratricide of 1987 and 1996, but there was consistent feuding and factional autonomy throughout its existence. The IPLO, a 1987 splinter from INLA, followed an eerily-similar trajectory, finally falling apart in a
lethal 1992 feud that led PIRA to wipe out the group. The Real IRA broke away from PIRA in 1997 but, despite advancing a traditionalist militarist physical force line identical to the 1969 Provisionals, soon found itself torn by factional autonomy and distrust after its creation in 1997, and by a 2002 split that badly ruptured the organization.

The Provisional IRA maintained far higher levels of internal cooperation and compliance than the extremely fragmented IPLO, INLA, and RIRA and the troubled OIRA, though it was eventually forced by the balance of forces into an embrace of electoralism. Crucially, PIRA has done so without suffering a major split or internal fissure that would have kept the war alive. There are numerous assessments of the wisdom of the Provisionals’ war, many of them negative, but there is no doubt that they were dramatically more cohesive than their contemporaries. In the words of the British Army, “PIRA developed into what will probably be seen as one of the most effective terrorist organisations in history. Professional, dedicated, highly skilled and resilient, it conducted a sustained and lethal campaign.”

Internal dissension occurred, but there were no major splits or violent feuds – the 1975 ceasefire caused unrest but not organizational collapse, a 1985 internal challenge was bloodlessly put down, the 1986 political break by Republican Sinn Féin did not involve an IRA split, and the 1997 Real IRA split was managed with little violence. The latter was the only significant split between 1969 and 2008. Factional autonomy was higher than my theory predicts, but nevertheless quite moderate. An ex-PIRA veteran, and Adams critic, notes of the PIRA leader that “Gerry Adams has managed to do something no republican leader has ever done. He has brought the republican movement down a road of political compromise with the British state

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without causing any serious split.”12 The group held together through military setbacks, controversial ceasefires, the 1998 Good Friday Agreement/Belfast Agreement, and weapons decommissioning in 2005 - “the [P]IRA’s organizational endurance was impressive.”13

The table below gives a sense of the different courses taken by these organizations. Quantitatively, the INLA suffered two very severe splits, a variety of smaller ones, and numerous internal feuds (at least four gunpoint changes of senior command) during its three decades, IPLO and RIRA suffered each suffered one severe split during short existences (5-10 years), OIRA suffered two significant, though not disabling, splits during 14 years, and PIRA only suffered one significant split over 33 years. Qualitatively, a continually high level of factional autonomy characterized INLA, IPLO, and RIRA, while OIRA autonomy was medium, and PIRA autonomy low-to-medium (depending on the time period). PIRA and OIRA internal unrest was primarily about politics and military strategy, while INLA, IPLO, and RIRA internal unrest fused politics, personal rivalry, and battles over material distribution.

Table 4.1. Patterns on the Dependent Variable in Northern Ireland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Major instances of internal unrest and fragmentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Official IRA 1962-76</td>
<td>- falling away of units during 1960s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Significant Provisional split in 1969 (mostly non-violent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Significant INLA split in 1974-5 (command ranks targeted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 1985 internal challenge by Ivor Bell (no feud or split)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 1986 political split by Republican Sinn Féin (no IRA split)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Significant Real IRA split in 1997 (mostly non-violent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish National Liberation Army 1975-2008</td>
<td>- Pervasive rivalry, gunpoint coups, and factional autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Severe 1987 INLA vs. INLA-Army Council/IPLO feud/split (command ranks decimated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Severe 1996 INLA-GHQ vs. INLA feud/split (command ranks decimated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Minor splits in 1980 (O’Doherty), 1987 (O’Hare)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 Alonso, *IRA and Armed Struggle*, p. 160. Alonso is something of the flipside of Robert White; Alonso is profoundly skeptical and critical of the PIRA (unlike White) but similarly provides extremely helpful oral history from former Provisionals.

Irish People’s Liberation Organisation 1987-1992

- 1992 IPLO-BB vs. IPLO-GHQ feud/split ends in group destruction
- Pervasive factional autonomy

Real IRA 1997-2008

- Factional unrest after 1998 Omagh bombing
- 2002 split between Campbell and McKeivitt factions
- Pervasive factional autonomy

Preview of the Argument: Explaining Republican Insurgent Cohesion in Northern Ireland

I will argue that this variation can be fruitfully explained using the theory advanced in Chapter 3. Only the Provisional IRA had both significant external support and a bonding network social base, composed of traditional republican families and veterans who provided both elite cooperation and local incorporation in the PIRA’s crucial formative phase. Deep continuity at the command levels would endure from the 1970s on, while intense socialization and coercion homogenized new recruits under the watchful eyes of local elites. Irish-America and Libya fed the material needs of the armed struggle. While the Official IRA maintained control of a large part of the traditional republican bonding network, and thus a social core, its lack of external support made it vulnerable to internal challenges and splits when it tried to change strategy – OIRA lacked both the resources to incentivize obedience and the capacity to persuade or coerce doubters. Coalition network social bases (primarily parochial) and absence of external support left INLA, IPLO, and RIRA with pervasive elite defection, recurrent challenges from younger generations, and spasmodic, inconsistent resources flows that weakened internal control.

Table 4.2. Theoretical Predictions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant External Support</th>
<th>Bonding network</th>
<th>Coalition Network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provisional IRA (1972-2005)</td>
<td>Cohesive [I]</td>
<td>State-reliant [II]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official IRA (1962-76)</td>
<td>Consensus-Contingent [III]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisional IRA (1969-72)</td>
<td>Factionized [IV]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish National Liberation Army (1974-)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real IRA (1997-)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish People’s Liberation Organisation (1987-92)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Sources of Evidence

Finally, what is the material below based on? Northern Ireland has a rich empirical literature. I rely heavily on historical and journalistic sources, which are often extremely detailed. I also use oral histories, internal documents, and organizations' publications and propaganda. Several remarkable resources have become available due to the peace process, especially the reports of the Independent Monitoring Commission that tracks patterns of paramilitary disarmament and activity and the transcripts of testimony in the Billy Wright Inquiry, which is examining the killing of the Loyalist Volunteer Force leader. Both provide insight into how the British state and independent observers assessed, and still assess, the republican and loyalist groups. The Northern Ireland Political Collection at Linen Hall Library has an extraordinary collection of sources, including militant publications stretching back to the 1960s and, in the case of the INLA, even some internal documents.

In addition to written sources, I did over 40 interviews in Belfast and Derry that I used to sort through possible hypotheses and get a sense from people on the ground which variables and processes seemed most important. I met with journalists, academics, former militants, politicians, and security force officials. I gained access to representatives from the Provisional IRA/Provisional Sinn Féin and the UVF/PUP, as well as those in a position to understand the trajectories of the UDA, OIRA, and INLA. Interviewing was enormously valuable in learning about the conflict in depth and detail. I have maintained strict confidentiality unless I received explicit permission to quote a source – though the war is over, there are still risks to saying certain kinds of things in public.

Some readers will be disappointed by the paucity of quantitative data. While some of the variables are quantifiable, and were just quantified above, the most persuasive evidence is
provided by extremely fine-grained historical reconstruction of the origins and evolution of the armed groups. Northern Ireland’s empirical richness lets us delve deep into these groups and their environments, meaning that for each coding of the independent variable I can offer extensive historical evidence down to the level of individuals. Correlation is combined with process and detail over the space of nearly forty years and across five different groups. I have hopefully presented sufficient evidence that the reader does not feel like he or she needs to take my word for it on my codings, and that the dry theoretical mechanisms outlined in the previous chapter are brought to life by primary source accounts.

II. The Roots of Unrest in Ireland, 1100-1962

This section briefly walks through the history of the “national question” in Ireland, from the origins of British colonial rule to the legacies of the 1922-3 Irish civil war that solidified the partition of the island. The civil war created and reinforced a republican bonding network of overlapping families, veterans, and organizations that (while small and organizationally weak) would later underpin the Official and Provisional IRAs’ wars. Their inability to attract substantial numbers of local elites from this network would doom the IPLO, INLA, and RIRA. The deep continuities in the PIRA and OIRA command elite are grounded in the cleavages produced by the 1922-3 civil war, while the macro-politics of the conflict lie in the disagreements over partition.

A. British Colonial Rule

The British political presence in Ireland stretches back to settlement and conquest beginning with Anglo-Norman invasion in the twelfth century. A colonial administration emerged to rule Ireland, but while the Protestant Reformation took hold in England, the colonial metropole, it did not on the periphery – “the state was now Protestant but most people
emphatically were not.” In the late 16th and 17th century, a policy of “Plantation” was enacted that settled Protestant farmers and landlords in Ireland.

Catholic uprisings against British rule broke out in the 1640s and 1690s that planted an image of siege and defiance in the mind of Ireland’s Protestants. The sectarian slaughters of 1641 in the northern province in Ulster in particular left a deep imprint in the Protestant psyche, while Cromwell’s brutal campaigning in the late 1640s through mid 1650s were seen by Irish Catholics as vicious reprisal. The Battle of the Boyne in 1690, where William of Orange’s army decisively defeated James VII of Scotland and his Jacobite supporters, has entered Protestant lore as a clear symbol of Protestant superiority and dominance.

The 18th century involved attempts by the British administration to regularize its rule in Ireland in the wake of the bloody upheaval of the 17th century throughout the British Isles. The 1770s and 1780s saw political reform that created a more defined Protestant Irish political middle class seeking autonomy from English rule, as well as agitation by Catholics against the discriminatory Penal Laws. In 1798, however, a deluge broke which swept away, at least for awhile, the strands of relatively nonviolent political mobilization that marked the 18th century. The United Irishmen revolt of 1798 marks the emergence of a kind of Irish republican nationalism that has been enormously influential ever since.

The 1798 uprising aimed to unite “Protestant, Catholic, and Dissenter” in a form of Irish nationalism against dominance from London. The presence of many Ulster Presbyterians in this rebellion would hold open the chance for a cross-ethnic politics of Irish nationalism. The 1798 uprising was quickly crushed at great loss of life, and included both sectarian Protestant-Catholic

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15 Even though the contending armies were in fact religiously mixed, reflecting the complex alliances that formed around the Glorious Revolution. The July 12 marches of the Orange Order in Northern Ireland commemorate this victory.
violence and intra-Catholic killings that cloud any rosy image of cross-ethnic cooperation.\textsuperscript{16} The United Irishmen “failed spectacularly.”\textsuperscript{17} It joined the pantheon of glorious failures, creating a powerful set of republican symbols and ideological lodestars despite its messier and more complicated reality. The reaction to 1798 was swift and fierce – in 1800 the Act of Union removed the Irish House of Commons and placed Ireland under the Westminster Parliament. In the context of the ongoing Napoleonic wars, Ireland was seen as England’s Achilles heel, and was thus yoked closely to London.

For the bulk of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century the primary action would be constitutional and (mostly) non-violent – the mobilization of the Catholic masses for emancipation and Home Rule under Daniel O’Connell and then Charles Stewart Parnell. In 1829, Catholic emancipation allowed Catholics to become members of parliament and hold many positions of state. This assertion of Catholic power unsettled previous patterns – while Protestants had largely opposed Union in 1800 (for it took their power away to Westminster), by mid-century they would look to retain Union in the face of a mobilized Catholic population.

The emergence of a revolutionary organization, the Fenians or Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), had much to do with the growth of a massive diaspora in America caused by the famine of the 1840s. Here the legacy of 1798 and its insistence on armed struggle would find a voice even as constitutional nationalism dominated the polity. Formed in 1858, the Fenians launched an uprising in 1867, with hopes of reinforcement and support from Irish America. This was easily crushed, but the republican ideology endured. The Fenians were a sideshow to the real game in late-19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} century Irish politics – the quest for Home Rule and the return to

\textsuperscript{16} While inspiring a non-sectarian nationalist ideology, the rebellion also presaged two of the most persistent questions to face republicans over time – how to deal with Irish Protestants not sold on crossethnic identity, and the implications of disagreement \textit{within} the Catholic community.

\textsuperscript{17} English, \textit{Irish Freedom}, p. 91.
Ireland of the power now resting in Westminster, linked to struggles over land ownership. Limited legislative autonomy, in a context of Catholic enfranchisement and a more equal distribution of land ownership, was the goal. Parnell and his Irish Parliamentary Party skillfully used the competition between Liberals and Tories in the Parliament to gain leverage.

From the 1880s into the 1910s, the battles over Home Rule would define Irish politics, and the politics between Dublin and London. But two issues lingered—first, whether Protestants could be reconciled to Catholic-majority Home Rule, and, second, the endurance of a physical force republican ideology that viewed Home Rule as a continuation of British imperialism.

B. Home Rule and Civil War: The Birth of Ireland’s Political Cleavages

*Ethnic Mobilization and World War.* From 1912 onward, these tensions would rip Ireland apart. By 1912, Home Rule was on the table as a legitimate possibility. Appalled by the prospect of being subsumed under a Catholic tide, the Protestants of Ulster mobilized under Edward Carson. Carson and his supporters, many of them elites, formed the Ulster Volunteer Force in January 1913 as a paramilitary opponent to Home Rule. In response, the Irish Volunteers emerged in November 1913 as a Catholic paramilitary for Home Rule, but also with links to the republican Fenians/IRB. A civil war was avoided by World War I. Carson’s UVF joined the British Army and the bulk of the Irish Volunteers, under the encouragement of constitutional leader John Redmond, joined the British Army in the expectation of a short war.\(^{18}\) The Irish Volunteers split, with a few thousand staying with an IRB-dominated splinter (the Redmond-led group had changed its name to the National Volunteers).

The remnant, splittist Irish Volunteers were the early kernel of what became the Irish

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\(^{18}\) The Catholic constitutionalists believed that shedding blood would earn Ireland its Home Rule; the Protestant unionists believed their own sacrifice would forestall precisely that outcome.
Republican Army. As World War I dragged on, republicans felt that Irish blood was being spilled for the sake of Britain. The Easter Rising of 1916 emerged from the mobilization of a few Irish Volunteers by radical republicans. Concentrated in Dublin, the rising was crushed but the executions of its leaders by the British caused deep ill-will towards Britain. This combined with the possibility of mass conscription in 1918 to generate a groundswell of pro-independence feeling that was captured by the Sinn Féin ("Ourselves Alone") political party in the 1918 elections. Rather than Home Rule, the new cry was for independence. War broke out in 1919, with the Irish Republican Army combining a coalition of Volunteers, World War I veterans, and local groups against British security forces in a guerrilla conflict reaching into 1921.

Intra-Catholic Civil War. In 1921, a stalemate had been reached and negotiations were offered by the British. In 1922, Michael Collins and the bulk of the IRA accepted the Anglo-Irish Treaty as an imperfect but necessary compromise. The Treaty partitioned Ireland into 26 counties in the south forming the Free State, and the 6 counties in the northeast forming Northern Ireland and remaining in the UK. The Treaty badly split the IRA, which had been a fairly loose coalition of regional units in its war against Britain, and pitched Ireland into the civil war of 1922-23. The conflict was deeply socially-embedded, and the warring factions within the IRA were generally determined more by personal and social loyalties than by ideologies or by centralized organizations. In other words, contingent decisions by commanders and loyalties to particular social blocs "sorted" between the republicans who continued to fight and those who accepted the partition. This means that there was not a systematic underlying driving force that

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20 According to Richard English, Armed Struggle, it was "much less a centralized army than an aggregation of varied local groups" (p.17) and "throughout the country, personal allegiance frequently mattered more than strict attachment to ideological principle" (p. 34). Hart's authoritative account refers to the "loose, localized nature of the organization." Peter Hart, The IRA at War, 1916-1923 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 246.
21 "for the majority of Volunteers, the decision to join was a collective rather than an individual one, rooted more in
determined which factions and families would fall into which camp. Lines of authority and control during both the 1919-22 and 1922-3 periods were shape by social ties not formal organization: “it was the communal networks that counted, not the chain of command.” These networks would remain in place over time, providing the social residue for later collective action despite large changes in political and economic context. In the end, the pro-Treaty forces were both more politically popular and more militarily powerful (they received material aid from Britain), crushing the IRA in 1923. The IRA tried to maintain its structures, but was increasingly marginalized as many of its key leaders decided to enter constitutional politics from 1926 onward.

Former anti-Treatyite Eamon de Valera’s acceptance of constitutionalism through the founding of Fianna Fail “marked the beginning of the death of the southern IRA as a serious political force.”

C. Keeping the Flame Alive: The IRA and Republican Bonding Network

Persistence of a Republican Bonding Network. The IRA was actively repressed in the south in the 1930s by Eamon de Valera, who had formerly stood with the anti-Treaty forces, and pushed to the sidelines of Irish political life, both north and south. During the “1920s and 1930s Irish republicanism in the north was frequently characterized by defeat and disillusionment”

local communities and networks than in ideology or formal political loyalties . . . the most important bonds holding Volunteers together were those of family and neighbourhood.” Peter Hart, The I.R.A. and Its Enemies: Violence and Community in Cork, 1916-1923 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 208. This was also a very socially-embedded war: “these informal networks and bonds gave the IRA a cohesion that its formal structure and drills could never have produced. On the other hand Volunteer units also inherited the local rivalries, factionalism, and territoriality that went along with these loyalties.” Hart, The I.R.A. and Its Enemies, p. 213. For instance, in Behagh, “the number of members with brothers in the unit was never less than half the total.” Hart, The I.R.A. and Its Enemies, p. 222.

22 “the Treaty itself and republican ideology were rarely debated within their ranks: ‘the politics of it was second place at times’. . . these decisions were shaped, as always, by group loyalties and rivalries. Factional divisions became political battle lines. . . officers usually took their personal networks with them.” Hart, The I.R.A. and Its Enemies, pp. 264-265.


24 An excellent discussion of the evolution of the organization during this period is Brian Hanley, The IRA, 1926-1936 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002).

25 English, Armed Struggle, p. 45.

26 English, Armed Struggle, p. 67.
while “every decade after 1916 seemed destined to produce a split in the Republican movement.” However, the violence of the 1910s and 1920s left a powerful social legacy, on two levels. First, the Irish party system revolved around pro- and anti-Treaty cleavages for decades to come, with Fine Gael, the descendant of pro-Treaty IRA forces, and de Valera’s Fianna Fail being the respective political parties - “the formative years of Irish politics were therefore the crucial years, setting a pattern which has since proved almost impossible to shift. It is in this sense that people still continue to speak of the maintenance of ‘civil war’ politics.”

Second, and more relevant to our story, enduring loyalties to the republican cause were passed on through families that had been deeply scarred by the war against British and Free State forces – “from Republican homes spring future Republicans.” The cruelty of these conflicts left an extraordinary mark on Irish political loyalties, on both sides – those who ended up supporting the Free State viewed the IRA as subversives who would undo all that had been achieved; those who held to the republican faith rarely forget nor forgive the sell-out. Republicanism endured through families, schools, and veterans deeply affected by these conflicts, providing the transmission belt of republicanism even as the IRA as a formal organization decayed and the political cause receded further from view. Within these “political homes,” a broad ideology was propagated, with two lessons – first, “that the connection with Britain is the cause of Ireland’s troubles” and, second, that “the connection with Britain could be broken only through

27 Robert W. White, *Provisional Irish Republicans: An Oral and Interpretive History* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1993), p. 36. White’s clear sympathy for the armed struggle undermines his analysis, but the rich oral history and quotes from republicans in his work are extremely valuable.
29 White, *Provisional Irish Republicans*, p. 38.
31 Hart notes of the anti-Treaty militants “their militant elitism and general contempt for ‘politics; in any form had already them apart as an increasingly separate caste within the movement” (Hart 1998, 268) which continued after the end of the war.
32 White, *Provisional Irish Republicans*, p. 41.
physical force."

While these networks were endogenous to the war of independence and civil war (though some stretched back to the IRB of the 1860s), they took on a life of their own, and were a largely fixed “given” by the 1960s – they were a fact of life, if viewed by most Catholics as anachronistic and irrelevant. Traditionalism republicanism “was transmitted by republicans who had formed part of the movement at a time when they hardly obtained any support from the wider society” and “kin networks, therefore, became the dominant conduit through which the message was passed. In the manner in which they were raised, the children of the 1916-22 Republicans were made aware of a common grievance stemming from an identifiable, British source, and they were made aware that the only effective solution to this grievance is IRA violence.” Socialization and belief formation occurred through immediate and extended family networks — “the IRA before August 1969 was an organization kept going by family tradition.”

Just as the Irish party system came to reflect the enduring legacies of war, so too did the social structure of republicanism — “the family atmosphere in which future members grew up and were educated was an important means of transmitting the traditional ideals of Irish republicanism to a new generation.” In South Armagh, “a handful of families... kept the republican tradition alive.” We know from the literature in political behavior that families form a crucial underpinning of political socialization, reproducing ideology and party identification over time, and Ireland proved no different. These family ties would be bolstered by the rituals of Sinn Féin and the IRA, most notably the marches and meetings for specific occasions (like

33 White, Provisional Irish Republicans, p. 41.
34 Alonso, The IRA and Armed Struggle, p. 15.
35 White, Provisional Irish Republicans, p. 42.
36 Moloney, Secret History, p. 80.
37 Alonso, The IRA and Armed Struggle, p. 38.
Easter gatherings and party conventions) every year that brought people together both within and across local communities. These extra-local ties reflected the formation of ties across communities during the war that persisted even in a very different post-war context. Born of the civil war, a geographically dispersed but socially dense republican sub-culture emerged and persisted over decades.

In Northern Ireland, sectarian violence erupted in 1920-22 and then again in the 1930s, but partition was engineered so that there would an enduring Protestant/unionist majority. The province was ruled by its own parliament at Stormont near Belfast, and the security forces were dominated by Protestants. Catholics were treated as second-class citizens, as were many poor Protestants. The IRA in the north was very weak during the “interwar years” between 1923 and 1968 (leaving aside Operation Harvest, discussed below).

An IRA bombing campaign against the British during World War II was an embarrassing failure that involved the sordid spectacle of the IRA trying to ally with Nazi Germany. The IRA emerged from World War II in terrible shape. The republican bonding network that had emerged and solidified in the traumatic formative experiences of 1916-26 still stood, but these networks lacked both significant military organization and broader political support. A period of retrenchment occurred, with a new generation of militants restocking IRA weapons and trying to expand recruiting with an eye to launching a campaign against British forces in the north. This offensive, “Operation Harvest,” would be focused on the rural border counties (hence

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40 These other organizations included the National Graves Association and Republican Welfare Association.
43 Paul Bew, Henry Patterson, and Peter Gibbon. Northern Ireland 1921-2001: Political Forces and Social Classes (London: Serif, 2002), p. 27 notes that “if there is one field which exemplifies the specific characteristics of state formation in Northern Ireland it is the constitution of the security forces.”
becoming known as “the border campaign”). This meant that the organization and urban networks in Belfast in particular would continue lying quiescent - “considering that it was the first city in the territory that republicanism was sworn to liberate, the Belfast IRA had played remarkably little role in the activities of the movement. . . . Belfast had been excluded from the border campaign.” Belfast was simply not involved in the border campaign in any serious way. Operation Harvest focused on small operations against police forces in rural areas along the border, killing six Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) officers and losing eight IRA men. After six years of operations, the campaign had clearly failed by 1962. Much of the IRA was locked up or unable to engage in successful attacks. With no upsurge of popular support north or south, and no appreciable change in Stormont’s political or military stance, the IRA command issued the order to dump arms and called off the campaign.

III. Into the Maelstrom: The Origin and Evolution of Republican Insurgency, 1962-1977

This section examines the rise and/or fall of three republican insurgent groups (the fourth and fifth, the IPLO and RIRA, are examined in later sections) – the Official IRA, Provisional IRA, and Irish National Liberation Army between 1962 and 1977. To preview the empirical argument, I claim that the consensus-contingent nature of the Official IRA left it extremely vulnerable to internal unrest in the face of the massive and unexpected shocks of the late 1960s and 1970s. While it continued to be undergirded by a (shrinking) set of local bonding network elites, OIRA’s lack of military power and activity led to significant factional autonomy and internal unrest over political and military strategy. I argue that the first major group to emerge from this split, the Provisional IRA, was able to build itself around a major portion of the

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45 The campaign was also triggered by the actions of a small splinter group, Saor Uladh, an anti-abstentionist armed group led by former IRA man Liam Kelly. Patterson, Politics of Illusion, pp. 90-91.
46 Why? “According to veterans of the period who stayed with the ‘official’ camp after the movement divided, this was a deliberate policy to avert the prospect of a sectarian bloodbath.” Bishop and Mallie, Provisional IRA, p. 89.
traditionalist bonding network and, unlike OIRA, acquire significant external support from the diaspora. This combination provided the structural basis for PIRA to build cohesion over time, even when it expanded its cadre base beyond the initial bonding network. By sharp contrast, the other insurgent group to emerge from internal political dissent within the OIRA, the Irish National Liberation Army, lacked both bonding network mobilization and external assistance. Driven by the vagaries of its feud with OIRA into a rapid, coalitional expansion strategy, INLA never acquired a social core of local elites, setting the stage for a brutal existence of repeated internal strife. My theoretical framework helps us explain these wildly divergent outcomes, despite the tightly shared structural context within which all of these groups operated. Table 4.3 outlines predictions for the three major periods within this section – the prewar/escalation phase of 1962-69; the rise of insurgency from 1969 to 1972; and the blunting of the militant onslaught by British security forces from 1972 to 1976. During each period I argue that the groups will be characterized by a pattern of internal cooperation and control driven by their social base and external support.

Table 4.3. Predictions: Republican Insurgency, 1962-1977

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<td>INLA</td>
<td>$SB$: Coalition</td>
<td>$ES$: No</td>
<td>Factionalized</td>
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$SB =$ Social Base; $ES =$ External Support; Prediction = pattern on DV predicted by my theory

A. Failure and Reassessment: The IRA Looks Left, 1962-69

Between 1962 and 1969, both the IRA and Northern Ireland would experience profound changes. I argue that during this period the IRA was clearly a consensus-contingent organization – though there was some leavening of the traditionalist social core by new leftist elites, the group
still drew its leadership from the 1910s/20s-based networks of the independence and civil war period. However, the organization also very significantly diminished its weapons acquisition and fund-raising activities, leaving the high command with dangerously little to compel obedience and cooperation if internal dissension arose. Diaspora support was minimal, and external state sponsorship nonexistent.

The new IRA Chief of Staff after the border campaign was Cathal Goulding, a Dubliner from a traditional republican background who has been imprisoned during much of the 1950s. He was joined at the apex of the organization in the early 1960s by Sean Garland, Liam “Billy” McMillen, Tomas MacGiolla, Seamus Costello, former Chief of Staff Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, and Sean MacStiofain, among others. The leadership cadres were mostly, but not exclusively, drawn from the traditional networks that had survived through the IRA’s marginalization, and so I code the group as based on a bonding network. The assessment of the border campaign was brutal and frank – the IRA had miserably failed, and the future of traditional armed struggle was bleak. “Goulding in 1962 inherited an IRA that was in a weak condition. Funding had dried up, they were short of weapons and there were not enough Volunteers.” 47

The left-wing intellectual milieu of the 1960s had a deep effect on the IRA’s new senior leadership, who also drew on a republican socialist tradition. The “new-look” IRA decided to embark on a broader project of political radicalization and mobilization that would ally with other oppressed classes to form a united opposition to both British imperialism and to the capitalist system in Ireland. The Goulding leadership “were ready to abandon militarism and to shift toward recognition of Ireland’s parliament and the abandonment of principled abstentionism.” 48 This meant de-emphasizing the military side of the organization, though it was

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47 English, *Armed Struggle*, p. 83
not abandoned. Weapons acquisition dropped from its already low level, with some being sold off to an obscure Welsh nationalist group. There were no major initiatives to reach out into the diaspora, arms markets, or criminal activities that could centralize resources in the leadership’s hands. Military plans were plotted out for a renewal of armed struggle but for a distant, unspecified date. Resource centralization dropped as the central command focused on a new set of objectives. Given the political environment, this was not an unreasonable change of emphasis – but it would mean that if this context shifted and internal dissensions exploded, the leadership had few material incentives to keep its fighters loyal or tools with which to prove its potency.

Recruitment continued— in both Belfast and overall, the IRA actually grew in size between 1962 and 1969. Military training diminished significantly, in favor of a greater focus on political education (of a Marxist bent) and popular agitation – “the new Chief of Staff did attempt a certain shift away from the emphasis on violence. . . . there was less emphasis during the 1960s on military training, and more on a leftist definition of republican struggle.” This involved a conscious decision to move toward a cross-ethnic coalition that would bring the Catholic and Protestant working classes together. A focus on military affairs was reduced for fear of triggering sectarian confrontations that would polarize along “artificial” ethnic lines.

The national question became linked to the class issue, with British influence being seen as primarily economic and not isolated to Northern Ireland. The shift in strategic worldview moved the IRA’s focus even further away from the north – Dublin and its growing working class was seen as the future, not the sectarian fanatics of West Belfast and South Armagh. The IRA was weak in the north deep into the late 1960s - “in 1969 there were fewer than sixty men in Belfast

49 English, Armed Struggle, p. 84.
50 English, Armed Struggle, p. 84.
51 As McCann pithily, if perhaps unfairly, puts it, “stated briefly the theory sounds crazy; and indeed it is” – a serious examination of the nature of unionism was wholly lacking from the IRA’s favored ideologues. Eamonn McCann, War and an Irish Town (London: Pluto Press, 1993), p. 296.
who would regard themselves as members of the IRA. At least half of these were lapsed: dropouts after the border campaign for whom republicanism was now mainly a social event,"\(^{52}\) while in Derry "according to Eamon McCann there were perhaps ten people in Derry who regarded themselves as members when the troubles broke out."\(^{53}\)

**Civil Rights and Unexpected Consequences.** Terence O’Neill, the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland between 1963 and 1969, introduced some reforms aimed at rectifying discrimination and modernizing the province. This opened opportunities for a nascent Catholic middle class to get better access to state resources. The IRA linked up with a group of left-wing students and middle-of-the-road reformers to embark on a campaign of agitation and demonstration. The leftist IRA command partnered with civil society groups to form the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA). NICRA embarked on civil rights marches in 1968 that triggered a growing Protestant backlash, led by firebrand preacher Ian Paisley.

The marches were met with increasing loyalist violence, a process that continued into 1969 as a radical civil rights group, People’s Democracy (PD), engaged in more provocative marches (the backlash often involved the B Specials, a Protestant-dominated auxiliary police force). Northern Ireland was sinking further into a violent spiral – "deliberately aimed at undermining Northern Ireland. . . . the Goulding strategy helped, in the end, to intensify sectarianism"\(^{54}\) by aggressively pushing civil rights. We know from above that the IRA as a formal organization was very weak, and, at least according to Bishop and Mallie, "by 1969 all military activity had ceased. No drilling or arms training had taken place for years, and little attempt was made by the traditionalists to get into a more military posture."\(^{55}\) Indeed, "at the time of the [1969-70] split

\(^{52}\) Bishop and Mallie, *Provisional IRA*, p. 90.

\(^{53}\) Bishop and Mallie, *Provisional IRA*, p. 102.

\(^{54}\) English, *Armed Struggle*, p. 108.

\(^{55}\) Bishop and Mallie, *Provisional IRA*, p. 90-91.
there were no more than forty to sixty IRA members in the whole of Belfast." 56

B. Building the Provisional IRA

"The Split": Riots, Mobilization, and the Birth of the Provisional IRA. In the months leading up to the outbreak of pivotal riots in August 1969, discontent within the IRA had been growing, led by northern and southern traditionalists concerned about the leftist shift in the leadership. The key emerging issue prior to the outbreak of serious violence had been the issue of “abstention” – whether or not Sinn Féin candidates should take seats in the Irish parliament, the Dáil Éireann, at Leinster House, the Northern Ireland parliament at Stormont, and the UK parliament at Westminster. Sinn Féin had abstained from taking seats in these parliaments, arguing that they are illegitimate. But the new wave of IRA thinkers found this approach to be a strategic anachronism that hindered the republican movement. The move towards electoral participation was controversial and there had been slow bleeding-away of support for the IRA, with small de facto factions establishing autonomy on the ground.57 The leadership had been unable to forestall all dissension but inertia had kept the bulk of the organization together – the incentives to defect were fairly weak as long as major sectarian unrest did not arise, and as long as the political strategy appeared to be succeeding through the civil rights movement.

Nevertheless, the kind of fluid, protracted fragmentation we expect from a consensus-contingent group was arising in the 1967-69 period, presaging the major break to come. Small splits, the resignation of personnel, and expulsion of branches of the movement (for instance, in north Kerry) “signaled that the movement was starting to splinter.”58 “Goulding moved too early. . . having decided upon a strategy of open confrontation, Goulding set the stage for a series of

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56 Moloney, Secret History, p. 87.
57 Saor Éire split in the late 1960s. For background, see Sean Swan, Official Irish Republicanism: 1962 to 1972 (Lulu, 2008).
58 White, Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, p. 135.

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damaging rows within the IRA during the mid-1960s that were destined to end in a damaging and, as it turned out, bloody split. . . senior Northern IRA figures were forced out or left in disgust at the tactics being used against their friends. Among them were men who would play key roles in the formation of the rival Provisional IRA.  

Some units in Belfast and Derry had begun to assume that the Dublin GHQ would be of little help; in Derry, for instance, “early in 1969 IRA units and individuals had stopped expecting any encouragement from Dublin and prepared to fight.” The high command was uninterested in escalation, fearing a sectarian conflagration. At a May 1969 meeting in Dublin, “when asked by O’Bradaigh how much weaponry and material the Belfast units could lay their hands on Billy McMillen [the Belfast Officer Commanding] replied there was ‘enough for one operation’ – that is a pistol, a machine-gun, and some ammunition.” English writes that “the IRA’s weapons were far from impressive; a prominent member of the organization said in 1966 that any they obtained were ‘generally obsolete.’” Patterson reports that “in the Lower Falls – the heart of [soon-to-be-Official] IRA resistance and strength – there were thirteen weapons in all.”

The Protestant backlash against the NICRA and PD marching campaigns climaxed in the outbreak of sectarian rioting in Belfast in mid-August 1969. Catholic West Belfast in particular was victimized, with pitched street clashes between Catholic civilians on the one hand, and Protestant mobs and the “B Specials” on the other. Eventually the British Army was called in to restore order. Many in the Catholic community refer to these riots as pogroms, and there is no doubt that “violence in Catholic Belfast in August 1969 was crucial to the development of Irish republican history. . .in the immediate circumstances of that summer, the division of opinion

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59 Moloney, Secret History, pp. 59-60.  
60 Bishop and Mallie, Provisional IRA, p. 94.  
61 Bishop and Mallie, Provisional IRA, p. 93.  
62 English, Armed Struggle, p. 84.  
63 Patterson, Politics of Illusion, p. 124.
within Irish republicanism – between innovators and traditionalists – became more sharply focused." The IRA was “unable to offer any kind of meaningful defense” and August “had shown beyond any doubt that the IRA was incapable of protecting the Catholics of Northern Ireland.” Ultimately, “when the North exploded in August 1969, the IRA had no response, no gear, no volunteers to deploy, nothing but an absence that exposed the secret army to be ineffectual and irrelevant to events,” and “there was a desperate shortage of guns.”

This was the final straw for the IRA’s unity, as these dramatic events fractured an already-fragile internal consensus, the leadership’s lack of resources gave it little leverage with which to impel obedience in the face of sectarian war, and clear military weakness created incentives for defection. “These were the events that finally forced the festering divisions within the IRA into the open. The riots and gunfire, the threat to their neighborhoods and communities, had brought back into circulation republicans who had quit in disgust at the Goulding-Johnston leadership.”

As a consensus-contingent group, the IRA was poorly positioned to deal with major shocks in the midst of an already-controversial policy shift.

After the August riots, a number of republican notables, several of whom had opted out of the IRA in the previous years, launched a challenge against the Belfast command of Liam “Billy” McMillen (Officer Commanding) and Jim Sullivan (Adjutant). The key August 24, 1969 meeting by the dissidents in Belfast that crystallized discontent included Billy McKee, John Kelly, Joe Cahill, Seamus Twomey, Gerry Adams, Dáithí Ó Conaill, and Jimmy Drumm. This group included several future PIRA Chiefs of Staff and senior leaders. From this small core a

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64 English, Armed Struggle, pp. 103-4.
65 English, Armed Struggle, p. 104.
66 Bishop and Mallie, Provisional IRA, p. 119.
68 Bishop and Mallie, Provisional IRA, p. 108.
69 Moloney, Secret History, p. 68.
70 English, Armed Struggle, p. 105.
command elite was born—"those present were to become the nucleus of the Provisional leadership that was to dominate the events of the next twenty-five years."71 Interestingly, "Apart from O'Connell, Adams was the only serving member of the IRA present"72— the organization was not simply hiving off from the Officials, but instead launching a significantly new group. This elite core agreed that IRA had failed in its primary task of defense, an argument made more compelling by graffiti that began adorning walls claiming that IRA stands for "I Ran Away."

A month later, after confronting IRA Belfast commanders McMillen and Sullivan at gunpoint, a tenuous compromise was reached in which Belfast would be autonomous from Dublin for three months (during which Dublin GHQ was expected to set up a Northern Command) and the dissidents would be given a place on the command staff. Billy McKee, who had largely abandoned the IRA in the mid-1960s, was seen as the leader of the dissident Belfast faction. "The small republican community in Belfast was drawing into separate, hostile camps,"73 placing McMillen and Sullivan "in a humiliatingly supine relationship with the men they were supposed to command."74 Crucially, "in large swathes of Catholic west and north Belfast, the dominant republican notables were hostile to Goulding's leadership. In Andersontown, the Drumm family and Leo Martin exercised influence; in Clonard, the Hannaways and Francis Card...in Ballymurphy, Joe Cahill and Gerry Adams' family."75 "Support for Goulding's leadership was concentrated in the Lower Falls, where McMillen and Jimmy Sullivan held sway, but in other parts of the city the dominant republican families— including Adams' own and Cahill in Ballymurphy—were increasingly hostile."76 The local elites

71 Taylor, Provos, p. 60.
73 Bishop and Mallie, Provisional IRA, p. 126.
74 Bishop and Mallie, Provisional IRA, p. 132.
75 Patterson, Politics of Illusion, p. 125.
76 Sharrock and Devenport, Man of War, p. 58; emphasis added.
were picking sides, and largely abandoning the IRA’s distant Dublin leaders under the pressure of immediate sectarian conflict. “The Provisionals were born in Belfast and sustained by the city’s bitter sectarian politics.”

The incumbent leadership basically had nothing to offer – few guns and little money, and a political strategy that seemed ever more unrealistic with each passing day, proposed in large by left-wingers alien to the northerners. The IRA was suffering serious internal unrest, and as predicted with a consensus-contingent organization it was marked by high factional autonomy, little military power, and division over political-military issues. “The leadership’s unwillingness (and in material terms inability) to respond to appeals for arms during the approach to the August riots and its feeble showing during them spread the conviction that changes at the top were now essential.”

“The IRA soldiered on, without Belfast and with difficulty.” But the final straw came at a December 1969 IRA special convention, in which the leadership was able to pass resolutions calling for a “National Liberation Front” that would ally the IRA with various left-wing groups, and calling for the end of abstentionism – Sinn Féin candidates would take seats in Leinster House, Stormont, and Westminster. In October 1969 primary documents show that the “Official IRA” leadership believed that the “‘non-political’ (...) wing of the Belfast movement is not in good standing with the movement . . . in an openly admitted state of mutiny.”

The counterfactual would have involved the incumbent leadership being able to supply weaponry and money to keep factions “onside,” using these resources as tools of internal control and to assuage doubts about political shifts. The absence of diasporic (much less state) support

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77 Moloney, Secret History, p. 80.  
78 Bishop and Mallie, Provisional IRA, p. 132.  
79 White, Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, p. 147.  
80 Quoted in Swan, Official Irish Republicanism, pp. 317-8.
left the Official IRA militarily weak and impoverished. Thus the Provo split combined a shock from sectarian riots that shattered internal consensus, the leadership’s lack of material resources to forge obedience, and the presence of a social infrastructure around which to build a new group despite the lack of formal organization. Instead of cross-ethnic cooperation, Northern Ireland was pitched into a vicious sectarian war that would continue for decades.  

*The Social Base of the Provos.* The Provisionals would be mobilized by key veterans and families who constituted a decades-old, geographically-dispersed bonding network that both reached deep into local communities and linked them together. I have emphasized above the role of family ties in maintaining the republican faith over time, and it was these families, particularly those with or linked to veterans of prior IRA experience, who formed the social core of the emerging PIRA. They had little access to preexisting organization, given the degraded state of the IRA in Northern Ireland, and instead had to substitute social solidarity and shared preferences for formal institutions. An extraordinary array of contingent events combined to cause the Troubles, break the Official IRA, and forge the Provisional IRA, but it was a traditionalist social core, linked from the mean streets of Belfast to the fields of Roscommon, that would give the PIRA its early organization and set the stage for later expansion and institutionalization. Over time, “the IRA has been run by a closely held centre that has co-opted congenial talent and regional barons, kith and kin and those with a singleness of purpose.”  

The Officials also held onto a substantial chunk of this network, as shown by the continuing allegiance of a significant number of local bonding network elites to OIRA. The republican bonding network born of 1922-3 broke almost cleanly in half between the two IRAs. I code the

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\(^{81}\) The IRA leadership’s “inherited leftist republican philosophy was to set in train events which, tragically, they could not control.” English, *Armed Struggle*, p. 88.

\(^{82}\) Bell, *IRA*, p. 151.
social base variable by studying in detail the social composition of the command structure of PIRA that emerged from 1969 to 1972.

After the formal split, and amidst accusations of irregularities, Sean MacStiofain, an arch-traditionalist on the Army Council, immediately drove to Belfast to rally the dissidents. Goulding tried to rally regional commands to the Official banner— which is not surprising, since in a consensus-contingent organization persuasion is crucial in the absence of material incentives. The new PIRA command met in December, and Sinn Féin itself split at the January 1970 Ard Fheis (convention). Naming themselves the Provisional IRA and holding onto the title of (Provisional) Sinn Féin, the new group preached war and tradition. They accused the Officials of trying to launch a Marxist “Take Over.” The dynamics of the split were driven by “family, locality, tradition”— the command ranks of the new group were dominated by an overlapping traditional family and veterans’ bonding network born four decades prior. This social infrastructure was mobilized despite not having engaged in much militancy since 1923.

Thus, “some resemblances might be discerned here among the people forming the nucleus of the new IRA: lengthy prior involvement in the IRA, prison experience, family and local connections. It was on such foundations that the proto-Provisionals initially built.” The historiography is overwhelmingly clear that elites within the republican bonding network laid the basis for the Provos. First, they were drawn from a set of traditional families -

“The founding membership of the Provisionals was from families with long ties to the IRA, dating back to the 1920s, and in some cases back to the Fenians of the 1860s. This core provided the nucleus around which the IRA had survived after the 1940s. (Familial socialization, of course, is not pervasive; many males with such relatives did not become volunteers).”

83 White, Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, p. 154.
85 English, Armed Struggle, p. 129.
86 English, Armed Struggle, p. 113.
In Bell’s words, “most in the North had been all but born into the movement, did not have
to seek it out as did Mac Stiofain or O Conaill.” White argues that “interviews with the
Provisionals’ founders show that they were often born and raised in an Irish Republican
tradition. Their political involvement typically stems from a commitment to the IRA that
developed out of a family tradition.” Of the “republican notables” Patterson highlights, “some
of these figures had remained active, many had dropped out, but their recognized role and status
in their fiercely localistic communities gave them a major resource when the prolonged and
serious violence erupted in August 1969.”

Second, these families were already linked to one another by decades of ritual,
mobilization, and even some (admittedly minimal) warfare, as the Provos founders “all were
devout Republicans, all had known each other for years.” Of the new PIRA Executive, “the
people in the room knew each other and their talents.” McKee, Twomey, and Cahill were
veteran northerners; Dáithí Ó Conaill and Ruairí Ó Brádaigh veteran southerners, but held
together in these early days by dint of their shared experiences in the republican movement and
its various networks stretching back decades. This was a geographically dispersed command core
— “the presence of three Northerners on the Council [the PIRA Army Council by the end of
1970], all Belfast men, serves to dispel the myth that the Provisionals were Southern-dominated
from the start.” White notes that “the IRA leadership throughout the 1970s was national in

88 Bell, IRA, p. 117; p. 120 on others.
89 White, Provisional Irish Republicans, p. 11.
90 Patterson, Politics of Illusion, p. 125.
91 Bell, IRA, p. 223.
92 White, Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, p. 157.
93 Moloney, Secret History, p. 79.
Local republican elites in Belfast and the Republic, whether neighborhood strongmen or respected community pillars, would form the building blocks of the nascent PIRA.

For this generation that joined after the 1920s but before the intense struggles of the 1970s, “new recruits shared common social backgrounds” and “the movement became an insular, tradition-bound, conspiratorial clan shaped by the experiences of those still involved from the 1920s.” The Provisionals “could look for support to the very substantial dissident elements in Belfast and to many prominent traditionalists throughout Ireland.” In the case of future leader Gerry Adams, “family connections and experience were crucial in forming the young Provisional. Adams, more than most, bore out a former Provisional’s claim that, with the IRA, ‘there’s an element of the extended family even involved.’” It is true that the Provisional split involved ideological disagreements over the role of military force and politics, but these ideological debates were tightly intertwined with social groupings, loyalties, and networks that gave dry debates over abstention immediacy and potency. This was not a simple hawk vs. dove clash – “there were also many who believed that the time had come to take military action who nonetheless remained with the Official Republicans, either for ideological reasons or, particularly in the case of older Republicans, because they would not join a splinter group.”

Devenport and Sharrock quote a young man who was swaying between the Officials and Provisionals (ultimately choosing the latter) in 1970 to make this point:

“We couldn’t disagree with a word the man [an OIRA representative] said, all his arguments were totally right, totally justified. The Provisionals leadership was reactionary and Catholic, they went against what we believed in. But we just said: ‘Yeah, but what’s my da and ma going to say if I go home and tell them I’m going with the Reds?’ There was a real thing

94 White, Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, p. 373.
96 Patterson, The Politics of Illusion, p. 141.

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about the communist threat about that time. And family tradition counted for a lot."

Thus, a bonding network had become the PIRA social base – “the alliance on which the new Provisional IRA was based was the traditional post-civil war republicanism of the rural South, represented by Ó Brádaigh, Ó Conaill, and Macstiofain, and the ‘defender’ groups in Belfast.” This coalition was cemented by the overlapping family and veterans’ networks - “increasingly the IRA drew from Republican families, not all ancient, Republican enclaves, some new, Republican resources renewed by security behaviour and local conditions,” while “immediate northern need and longstanding republican argument reinforced one another powerfully; continuities as well as discontinuities produced and defined the Provos.”

These arguments bear resemblance to Gould’s argument about the roots of the Paris Commune uprising - “a focus on relatively durable patterns of social ties, albeit in interaction with such short-term events as war or state collapse, does a better job of accounting for differences between 1848 and the Commune than does the conceptual framework of class formation.” The equivalent of Gould’s “durable patterns of social ties” in the Northern Ireland republican story were the overlapping, geographically-dispersed family and veterans’ networks; the “short-term events” were the interaction between the shift in IRA strategy and the unexpected shock of sectarian violence. A large portion of the republican bonding network had defected to the PIRA, as shown by the centrality of its local elites in the new Provisional IRA.

Initial Organization. Now we can look at the initial command structure built atop the PIRA social base. The Provisionals “won” the split in Belfast. MacStiofain calculated that “nine of the

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99 Sharrock and Devenport, Man of War, p. 69.
100 Swan, Official Irish Republicanism, p. 320.
101 Bell, IRA, p. 84.
102 English, Armed Struggle, p. 129.
thirteen units had offered their backing” to the Provos.\textsuperscript{104} Kelley points to a slightly different number - “they had a good base to start with since 9 of the 11 IRA company commanders in Belfast had sided with the Provisionals in the split.”\textsuperscript{105} Taylor says “fourteen of seventeen areas.”\textsuperscript{106} Jim Sullivan, the OIRA adjutant in the city, “estimated that only one in four of the city’s republicans” stayed loyal.\textsuperscript{107} “Each IRA had its strongholds, and each discouraged the other from operating inside them.”\textsuperscript{108} But at this point was a small pie to divvy up - within Belfast, as of August 1969, “the entire organization was hard-pressed to mobilize more than 50.”\textsuperscript{109}

Moreover, “outside the city the division was less sharp. The factions drifted apart. The rioting had been much less traumatic for Derry republicans than it had for those in Belfast”\textsuperscript{110}; in many ways Derry was a different world than the cruel, intermixed sectarian maelstrom of Belfast. “In the spring of 1971 the Provisional IRA for practical purposes did not exist [in Derry] . . . in Derry, as always, the atmosphere was more relaxed.”\textsuperscript{111} Martin McGuinness, who later became a senior Provisional, first joined the Officials in Derry, for instance, and the PIRA and OIRA “did not split in total animosity.”\textsuperscript{112} McGuinness has claimed that before 1971, “republicanism was only supported by ‘less than a dozen families,’ which were isolated from the rest of the national population.”\textsuperscript{113}

However, like in Belfast, the Derry PIRA was built around traditionalist social networks stretching back decades. The basis of the PIRA was “[Sean] Keenan, [Neil] Gillespie and two

\textsuperscript{104} Bishop and Mallie, \textit{Provisional IRA}, p. 141.
\textsuperscript{105} Kelley, \textit{The Longest War}, p. 135.
\textsuperscript{106} Taylor, \textit{Provos}, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{107} Bishop and Mallie, \textit{Provisional IRA}, p. 141.
\textsuperscript{108} White, \textit{Ruairí Ó Brádaigh}, p. 166.
\textsuperscript{109} Moloney, \textit{Secret History}, p. 103.
\textsuperscript{110} Bishop and Mallie, \textit{Provisional IRA}, p. 143.
\textsuperscript{111} McCann, \textit{War and an Irish Town}, p. 143.
\textsuperscript{112} Ó Dochartaigh, \textit{From Civil Rights to Armalites}, p. 172.
\textsuperscript{113} Alonso, \textit{IRA and Armed Struggle}, p. 44.
other older republicans, Tommy McCool, a veteran of the 1950s’ IRA campaign, and Liam McDaid.”114 “The Provisional IRA in Derry was established by the very people involved in the failed campaign of the 1950s.”115 Ó Conaill, a senior Provisional, “lived in Donegal and was in a position to maintain frequent direct personal contact with people in Derry.”116

It wasn’t just Derry where the split was hazy and ambiguous – “outside Belfast and Derry the Provisionals initially failed to make much headway” – Newry, Armagh, Strabane, and Tyrone all had large factions remain with the Officials in 1970117, while “in the country areas the Officials tended to hold sway.”118 “Many IRA units elsewhere in the North, in republican heartlands like Tyrone, Armagh, and Derry, were slower to take sides; in some cases months went by before they decided whether to follow Goulding or McStiofain.”119 The South Armagh area did not begin operations until August 1971, as it was largely untouched by the sectarian violence in the cities. White argues that by May 1970, “it had become clear that the IRA and Sinn Féin had each pretty much split in half.”120 And even in Belfast, Gerry Adams’ IRA unit in Ballymurphy “was staying separate until it saw which way things were going. . . .for about six weeks Adams and his supporters maintained a semi-independent existence.”121 Moloney writes that the unit did not fully choose sides until after the Easter 1970 Ballymurphy riots.122

As we’d expect from a consensus-consensus group like the Official IRA, there wasn’t a clear and sudden clash of arms, but instead a slow, uncertain sorting – “the fracturing of the republican movement in 1970 left the Provisionals a distinct minority in Northern Ireland. . . . the

114 Ó Dochartaigh, From Civil Rights to Armalites, p. 171.
115 Ó Dochartaigh, From Civil Rights to Armalites, p. 192.
116 Ó Dochartaigh, From Civil Rights to Armalites, p. 171.
117 Bishop and Mallie, Provisional IRA, p. 144.
118 Smith, Fighting for Ireland?, p. 91.
119 Moloney, Secret History, p. 80.
120 White, Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, p. 158. Emphasis added
121 Sharrock and Devenport, Man of War, p. 68.
122 Moloney, Secret History, p. 87.
division had caused much confusion inside republican ranks, and units untouched by turbulent events of 1969 on the whole remained cautious and stayed with the Officials."

Since the IRA had been de-militarizing in the 1960s, "the unit heads were often in charge of companies that existed almost entirely on paper. The IRA in the North had fallen into considerable disrepair."

Sean McStiofain, the first Provisional Chief of Staff, writes there was "only a nucleus. Outside Belfast, the battalions were very much paper battalions."

Belfast was the fulcrum of the war, making Provo command there essential, and providing a local hinge upon which the northern organization could be re-built, along with Derry and rural areas of the Republic. The northerners and southerners differed in important ways, but knew each other, or at least of one another, through the overlapping experiences of family, combat, prison, and political activity over decades. In Belfast, the new PIRA leadership "were all veterans who had been imprisoned or interned for the movement in the 1940s. For most of them, republicanism was in their genes." A large number of traditional republican families went Provo, their status as neighborhood notables giving them disproportionate influence over the loyalties and behavior of possible and actual recruits to the PIRA. They would form the pivot around which both elite cooperation and the process of local incorporation occurred in the 1970s.

The new organization was built and mobilized without serious dissension because there was a shared consensus on how to fight (more on strategy below) and a set of preexisting, decades-old personal and family ties that underpinned the behavior of the command elites – they knew and trusted one another, and had been socialized into the primacy of armed struggle, in many cases since birth. This core stabilized the organization in its early days, providing essential

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123 Smith, Fighting for Ireland?, p. 91.
126 Bishop and Mallie, Provisional IRA, p. 145-6.
direction and guidance in a tumultuous period, and avoiding the in-fighting and divisions that would plague the INLA, IPLO, and RIRA in their early days.

External Support and Arming for War. But to establish a truly cohesive war-fighting machine requires guns, and lots of them – “no amount of militancy could compensate for the dearth of guns and explosives.”\textsuperscript{127} Holland correctly notes that “without the constant supply of weapons, the IRA would be lost and the whole republican structure would quickly break down.”\textsuperscript{128} For the PIRA, it was initially difficult to summon this materiel - “the shortage of weapons continued to be a problem for both wings of the IRA until autumn 1970.”\textsuperscript{129} “At the very start of their existence, the Provisionals’ ‘real problem’ – in their Chief of Staff’s view – was resources: a lack of equipment and money.”\textsuperscript{130} McStiofain, then Chief of Staff, writes that “there was very little equipment in the units, and practically none to form a reserve. As for funds, I emerged from that special convention in the uncomfortable knowledge that the kitty contained exactly one hundred and five pounds.”\textsuperscript{131} “Modern weapons had to be acquired and Volunteers had to learn how to use them.”\textsuperscript{132}

The Provisional IRA leadership tried to acquire these resources in a variety of ways. First, local “taxation” and criminality provided some money. But the ghettos of Northern Ireland could only supply so much, and while smuggling, bank robberies, and other activities were lucrative they were not sufficient to maintain the stocks necessary for taking on the state. Northern Ireland’s Catholic population was poor and the bulk of support for both PIRA and OIRA were working class areas suffering from chaos and anarchy in this period. As we will see later, once

\textsuperscript{127} Kelley, \textit{The Longest War}, p. 135.
\textsuperscript{129} Bishop and Mallie, \textit{Provisional IRA}, p. 168.
\textsuperscript{130} English, \textit{Armed Struggle}, p. 115.
\textsuperscript{131} Seán MacStiofáin, \textit{Revolutionary in Ireland}, p. 138.
\textsuperscript{132} Taylor, \textit{Provos}, p. 70.
the British state began to consolidate its security position local revenues became even harder to come by (successful PIRA robberies dropped dramatically).

Second, the PIRA received some initial support indirectly from the Irish Republic – money intended for local citizens’ committees ended up in the hands of the leadership and was used to buy guns, with the help of an Irish Army Intelligence officer. The argument is that the Dublin government wanted to help Catholic defense in the north, without either triggering hostilities with the UK or supporting the leftist IRA incumbent leadership. Patterson claims that elements of the ruling Fianna Fail government in the Republic actively tried to split the IRA in favor of the traditionalists so that the northern militants would be “as insulated as possible from some of the more radical currents which were perceived to have developed in the civil rights movement.”

While it is unclear how much money changed hands, “there is now no doubt that some money did go from the Dublin government to the proto-Provisionals.” However, this was a short-term dynamic, soon to be replaced by hostility to the PIRA in the south once a Fine Gael-dominated government came to power. Fine Gael was the party of the pro-Treaty forces, and the old bitterness endured five decades later. There was also a brief Libyan arms supply line that landed at least once in November 1972 but that was shut down until the mid-1980s.

More important than either local funding or temporary external state aid was “the American connection,” the flow of guns and money from Irish-America that would help to sustain the PIRA’s armed struggle. Once again the Irish Civil War would help determine loyalties decades later, as a wave of emigration in the 1920s brought with it exiled anti-treaty IRA men who maintained a strong faith in armed struggle. They joined the already-large

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133 Patterson, *The Politics of Illusion*, p. 130.
diaspora in America by the 1950s "the exiles from the struggles of the 1920s and 1930s had dug themselves into the Irish-American community."136

The interesting thing about the diaspora link was how early it occurred – the Provisionals "enjoyed a virtual monopoly on Irish-American support by early 1971."137 But this was well before the PIRA had established itself as a dominant insurgent group or even a cohesive organization. Rather than the diaspora following the most established group, the generally conservative, militarist tendencies of the diaspora’s key actors led them to support the group that appeared closest to their preferences. "The role the Provisionals saw for themselves, defending nationalists in the North and defending the British Army, was far more in keeping with what people, especially Irish America, understood."138 Moreover, Derry’s "[Sean] Keenan and other Republicans now utilized a tight Republican network which was linked directly to the Republican movement in Ireland and was reinforced by strong personal ties."139 There was no correlation between cohesion on the ground and patterns of external support – in 1970 and 1971 the Officials were just as strong and organized as the Provisionals. In this case external diaspora support was exogenous to cohesion; the donors and gun-runners in Irish-America were not simply "following the leader."

There were two distinct types of resource flows from Irish-America – the NORAID fund-raising organization led by Michael Flannery and a gun-running network operated by George Harrison. The American connection was valuable because "money was also much easier to come by in affluent America than in the impoverished slums of the North. . . Urgent contacts were thus

137 Ó Dochartaigh, *From Civil Rights to Armalites*, p. 174.
139 Ó Dochartaigh, "'Sure, it's hard to keep up with the splits here,'" p. 147.
made with sympathetic Irish emigrants in North America." The effort to organize the diaspora for PIRA funding began in late 1969 and early 1970, when Sean Keenan from Derry “looked for support in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York, he began by contacting Irish Republicans he knew personally.” Joe Cahill and Ó Conaill would mine the diaspora, again using personal ties – “O’Connell had strong connections in New York through his uncle, a 1920s IRA veteran who headed a trade union in New York.”

The result of these efforts was the formation of the Irish Northern Aid Committee (known as both INAC and NORAID) was set up to provide funding for the families of PIRA prisoners in 1970. “Irish Northern Aid (Noraid) [sic – Irish Northern Aid Committee] was established in April 1970 at the instigation of Martin Flannery, an IRA veteran who had fought the Black and Tans in 1920 and emigrated to America after the civil war.” “In late 1969 and early 1970 two leading IRA men came to America... Daithi Ó’Conaill and Joe Cahill were veterans of the IRA’s struggle.” They met with key members of the Irish American diaspora and laid the basis for a financial flow that would endure for decades. The three major founders of NORAID, Michael Flannery, Jack McGowan, and Jack McCarthy, were all IRA veterans – “they had come to America in the 1920s after the republican cause suffered defeat in the civil war.” Cahill and Keenan, the IRA men from Belfast and Derry, became trustees of NORAID.

NORAID began to provide significant cash flows to the PIRA. “Over the years, Noraid raised millions of dollars for the Provisionals. The funds were earmarked for supporting the

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141 Ó Dochartaigh, *From Civil Rights to Armalites*, p.166.
142 Ó Dochartaigh, *From Civil Rights to Armalites*, p. 173.
143 Ó Dochartaigh, “‘Sure, it’s hard to keep up with the splits here’” offers a detailed study of various diaspora groups.
144 Taylor, *Provos*, p. 84.
146 Holland, *The American Connection*, p. 31.
147 Ó Dochartaigh, *From Civil Rights to Armalites*, p. 173.
families of IRA prisoners but there were enduring suspicions that some of the money was used to buy arms."148 "Throughout the 1970s, the committee funds made up about two thirds of the IRA-Sinn Féin’s expenditure on prisoners’ dependents."149

But in addition to money, guns were crucial to Provisional organization and strategy. The PIRA’s military ambitions can be seen in Chief of Staff McStiofain’s pleas with American supporters – “we must have the heavy stuff to win.”150 “In the spring of 1970, a member of the Army Council, David O’Connell, went to New York to put an arms network in place. In a coffee shop on Fifth Avenue he met George Harrison. . . . the contribution he was to make over the next ten years was crucial to the IRA’s ‘war’ effort.”151 By the beginning of 1972, “the network set up by George Harrison and others in American had started to deliver the goods.”152 Harrison was a 1920s/30s IRA man who had emigrated to New York and become a security guard; he would also be “the IRA’s principal source of arms for almost thirty years.”153

Harrison had become involved in gun-running in the late 1950s (for Operation Harvest) along with three IRA veterans, Liam Cotter, John Joe Martin and Tom Falvey.154 They acquired weapons through the mafia, particularly a Corsican named George De Meo. Even after the end of Operation Harvest, Harrison remained interested in IRA politics, and was asked in 1969 to send over a remaining cache of weapons. He began cooperating again with Martin and Falvey to get guns from De Meo.155 Bishop and Mallie write that first major shipment of Armalites left New

148 Taylor, Provos, p. 84.
149 Holland, The American Connection, p. 61.
150 Clarke, Broadening the battlefield, p. 5.
151 Taylor, Provos, p. 85.
152Taylor, Provos, p. 108.
153 Holland, The American Connection, p. 64.
154 Holland also notes that Falvey was “descended from a family whose connections with the Irish struggle went back to Fenian days.” Holland, The American Connection, p. 88. See also Holland, The American Connection, p. 72.
155 Holland, The American Connection, p. 82.
York in August 1970.\textsuperscript{156}

Stocks of weaponry were crucial, and “the Provisionals themselves initially relied very much on those weapons that could be purchased in America (together with those left over from previous campaigns in Ireland), and by early 1972 the plentiful supply of Armalites meant that the new army was well armed and lethal.”\textsuperscript{157} This established “a regular supply of guns and ammunition that gave the Provisionals the firepower to take on the British Army.”\textsuperscript{158}

The Harrison network operated distinct from NORAID/INAC for security purposes, and the number of people involved was “about six,” who were able to supply the PIRA “with between two and three hundred weapons a year.”\textsuperscript{159} Given that PIRA active fighting strength never reached above roughly 1,500 at its very height, 200 to 300 guns a year was a very significant flow. Money came from private contributors in the diaspora, and Harrison claims that NORAID money never went directly to arms. M-16s, M-60s, AK-47s, and AR-15 Armalites, plus shotguns and handguns, were acquired through the Harrison network.

In an interesting turn of events, the cruise liner Queen Elizabeth II was used to smuggle some of these guns until 1975; the Belfast Brigade, under Gerry Adams and Brendan Hughes, established an Armalite pipeline from New York.\textsuperscript{160} “There was a regular run every two weeks” but the QE2 was abandoned in favor of containers once the quantities became too large to easily fit in sympathetic seamens’ lockers.”\textsuperscript{161} It is worth noting that “the importance of Harrison’s network to the IRA can be gauged by the problems the guerrillas have had in getting

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\textsuperscript{156} Bishop and Mallie, \textit{Provisional IRA}, p. 295.
\textsuperscript{157} English, \textit{Armed Struggle}, p. 117.
\textsuperscript{158} Jack Holland, \textit{Hope against history: the course of conflict in Northern Ireland} (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1999), p. 56.
\textsuperscript{159} Holland, \textit{The American Connection}, p. 83.
\textsuperscript{160} Moloney, \textit{Secret History}, pp. 114-5.
\textsuperscript{161} Taylor, \textit{Provos}, p. 108.
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arms from other sources."\textsuperscript{162} The diaspora was an essential source of weaponry that let the Provos forge resource centralization and military strength in their crucial early days.

This combination of resource flows made it such that, in veteran Tommy Gorman's (perhaps overstated) words, "In August 1969, the IRA had virtually no guns at all. A year later, there was any amount and they were very freely available."\textsuperscript{163} Being able to provide these resources attracted fighters to the cause and provided leverage over them. In a clear piece of supporting evidence for my argument about the importance of resource flows to group cohesion, PIRA co-founder Joe Cahill argues of the rural units that "they wanted to know if we had guns for them. That was their main concern... they would not give up their allegiance to the Official IRA until they were certain they would get weapons."\textsuperscript{164} Ideology and social ties mattered, but so did a clearly-exhibited ability to produce and sustain violence.

This was also true at the level of individual recruits – an anonymous IRA Volunteer is quoted as saying “I never thought of joining the Stickies [the Official IRA]. I felt that Provies wanted to get the gear and that was good enough for me”\textsuperscript{165}; McCann observed that “at every meeting someone would ask sooner or later when the guns were going to be handed out”\textsuperscript{166}; Brendan Hughes says “everybody wanted to be involved with guns.”\textsuperscript{167}

It was in the 1970 that the external links which could contribute so much to the group were forged, though not fully consolidated until 1972 or so. The Provisionals were building a war machine that tried to reestablish traditional military structures built around preexisting social networks, while acquiring consistent access to military materiel. The material support was

\textsuperscript{162} Holland, \textit{The American Connection}, p. 108.
\textsuperscript{163} Taylor, \textit{Provos}, p. 85.
\textsuperscript{164} Brendan Anderson, \textit{Joe Cahill: A Life in the IRA} (Dublin: O’Brien, 2002), p. 188. It’s worth noting that Cahill has no incentives to lie about this – if anything, it goes against the PIRA line that units abandoned the Officials because of their illegitimate Marxism and cowardice.
\textsuperscript{165} Bishop and Mallie, \textit{Provisional IRA}, p. 153.
\textsuperscript{166} McCann, \textit{War and an Irish Town}, p.140.
\textsuperscript{167} Taylor, \textit{Provos}, p. 71.
essential “because it meant that, unlike the Officials, they would be able to provide arms and explosives to those who sought to join them and they could thus recruit more easily and launch a major offensive relatively quickly.”\textsuperscript{168}

While Collier and Hoeffler explicitly cite diaspora support as a cause of “greedy” or opportunistic behavior, this would not accurately characterize the Provisional IRA - “the IRA’s resources, however dubiously or criminally attained, are overwhelmingly channeled back into mission-related activities. The IRA recruited those willing to risk their lives or long jail sentences for what they warned would likely be a dangerous and short career. In short, group-oriented, nonpecuniary, and nonegoistic motivations have been key to both recruitment and retention.”\textsuperscript{169} The British Army itself argued in 1978 that “our evidence of the rank-and-file terrorists does not support the view that they are mindless hooligans drawn from the unemployed and unemployable.”\textsuperscript{170} As we also see in the South Asian cases, external support, whether state or diaspora, is not determinative of organizational form – it interacts with preexisting social structure to shape outcomes.

C. Filling the Ranks: PIRA Expansion and Incorporation

How would these new arms be used, and by who? The first five years of the conflict saw surging mobilization of radicalized young men joining the IRA, “a new breed, motivated by an atavistic fear of loyalist violence and an overwhelming need to strike back”\textsuperscript{171}; “confrontation with the security forces on the streets of Belfast and Derry brought the IRA new recruits and continued support.”\textsuperscript{172} In the absence of the bonding network at the apex of the organization,

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\item \textsuperscript{168} Ó Dochartaigh, \textit{From Civil Rights to Armalites}, p. 174.
\item \textsuperscript{169} O’Leary, “IRA,” p. 207.
\item \textsuperscript{170} Moloney, \textit{Secret History}, p. 174.
\item \textsuperscript{171} Moloney, \textit{Secret History}, p. 80.
\item \textsuperscript{172} White, \textit{Ruairí Ó Brádaigh}, p. 219.
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however, there is no plausible reason to expect that the "very localized"\textsuperscript{173} nature of this micro-mobilization would have somehow overcome geographic and social distance to form a cohesive organization.\textsuperscript{174}

But instead of factional localism, "throughout 1970 the old guard of the Provisional IRA was organizing a guerrilla army. It began with a base of veterans of the '30s, '40s, and '50s who rejected the Official IRA."\textsuperscript{175} The "old guard" directed the military and political policies of the Provisionals in the 1970s."\textsuperscript{176} "It was a collective leadership of people who had known each other for years: Cahill, McKee, and O'Hagan had been in the IRA for more than thirty years. Twomey had missed the 1950s campaign but was a veteran from the 1940s. The 'younger' people – O'Bradaigh, O'Connell, Denis McInerney, Eamon O'Doherty, and Kevin Mallon – had been involved since the 1950s."\textsuperscript{177} "The reaction of the young men with guns was a personal reaction, but it was made possible by an organization that was in place and ready for them to join. That organization had very definite ideas about how to use the rage and hurt of the angry boys."\textsuperscript{178}

This preexisting core network saw the world in similar ways, trusted one another, and had access to high levels of information about local dynamics, providing a structure for harnessing and channeling the upsurge of popular mobilization that marked the early 1970s. Built around this core set of elites, "the IRA was the ready-made conduit for the accumulated ill-feeling of the

\textsuperscript{173} English, \textit{Armed Struggle}, p. 100.
\textsuperscript{174} A contrast comes from the Indian Punjab, where a wave of micro-mobilization swept across the state after Indian Army's storming of the Golden Temple at Amritsar and anti-Sikh riots in Delhi (following the assassination of Indira Gandhi). In Punjab, pockets of highly localized insurgents operated for nearly a decade, but unlike in Kashmir, Nagaland, Sri Lanka, or Assam no single cohesive group emerged.
\textsuperscript{175} White, \textit{Provisional Irish Republicans}, p. 82.
\textsuperscript{176} White, \textit{Provisional Irish Republicans}, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{177} White, \textit{Ruairí Ó Brádaigh}, p. 205.
\textsuperscript{178} O'Doherty, \textit{Trouble with Guns}, p. 62.
community.” McCann nicely sums up my argument - “the tiny republican movement of the
time, embodied in Belfast in a few families, like the Adamses, the Hannaways, the Prices and the
MacAirts, provided an organizational framework, a channel for expression and a readiness to
fight that matched the sudden mood of the Catholic masses.”

The Provos were able to incorporate a new army of street fighters between 1970 and 1975.
“By mid-1970 the organization had approximately a thousand members in Ireland as a whole,”
reaching 1,200 by mid-1971. Some of these were already part of the traditionalist networks –
Danny Morrison and Gerry Adams, who rose to the top of the movement in the 1980s, both
had strong family traditions. In the rural redoubt of South Armagh, “many of those who joined
the Provisionals after 1970 were the sons and grandsons of men who had fought in the [IRA] 4th
Northern Division in the War of Independence and Civil War and the same names on security
force lists in the 1990s appear on government files from the 1920s.”

But many, perhaps most, others, like Derry’s Martin McGuinness, did not have prior ties to
the republican movement. These new recruits joined in reaction to events on the ground,
particularly the behavior of British security forces - “state repression through military force was,
for some, the crucial dynamic behind their involvement.” In the early and mid-1970s, we
observe “the development of the Provisionals from a kin-based, conspiratorial clan into a mass
movement.” PIRA moved beyond its original bonding network, integrating and incorporating

179 Clarke, Broadening the battlefield, p. 15.
181 English, Armed Struggle, p. 114.
182 Moloney, Secret History, p. 103.
183 Morrison was “a nephew of Harry White, a prominent Belfast Republican of the 1930s and 1940s.” White, Provisional Irish Republicans, p. 144.
184 Harnden, Bandit Country, p. 141. “South Armagh IRA had family links dating back to Treaty times, making for
185 English, Armed Struggle, p. 123.
186 White, Provisional Irish Republicans, p. 86.
new social groupings.

Over time, this flow of new recruits into PIRA would prove large - "the cited estimate of a total flow of IRA volunteers of 10,000 is therefore credible (especially given that a significant number may never have been incarcerated). It suggests that an extraordinarily high proportion of Northern Irish working-class Catholic males who matured after 1969 have been through IRA ranks." Alonso argues that "the recruitment process is determined to a great extent by structural proximity, availability and affective interaction with other members of the movement, such factors normally being more important than ideological factors." Police and loyalist violence was intertwined with political/economic grievances and the availability of local points of access to the PIRA to lead to recruitment and incorporation. Young men were "politicized by state violence", and "the direct experience of violence provided a crucial motivation for certain activists." Grievances were created by British policy and the effects of war, but would find organized expression under the direction and control of preexisting social networks.

How was this influx of new recruits incorporated into the organization? Social and family ties played an important role in facilitating the entrance of aggrieved young men into PIRA. In Derry in mid-1970, of the roughly ten young men who became the fighting core of the PIRA in the city, "several of them were related by birth or marriage to the older Republicans or to each other", while some of the young first-joiners of the PIRA were friends of Seamus Keenan - the son of IRA veteran and PIRA leader Sean Keenan. O Dochartaigh, From Civil Rights to Armalites, p. 179. In South Armagh (and elsewhere, I found

189 White, Provisional Irish Republicans, p. 98.
190 Alonso, IRA and Armed Struggle, p. 30.
191 O Dochartaigh, From Civil Rights to Armalites, p. 179.
192 O Dochartaigh, From Civil Rights to Armalites, p. 169. The Fianna Eirann was the IRA's youth wing, and another conduit for prospective recruits.
in my interviews), “an approach would be made to one of the older republicans and the potential recruit would soon find himself being interviewed by the local OC.”

Once brought on board through these local links, the newcomers would join a military unit, which in most cases was controlled by an older republican elite, part of the narrow but robust traditionalist bonding network at the apex of PIRA. At this point, there was not the extensive training that would later develop, but there certainly were attempts to vet and indoctrinate new recruits. A simple and intuitive ideology would be inculcated in the recruit, bolstered by loyalty to other members of the unit and area – “the traditional ideology was used to construct a collective identity.” There was an “intense socialization process” that tied foot soldiers to their comrades, and to the overall organization. Socialization was enhanced by the preexisting structures of obedience and cooperation within the organization; the social core was in place to construct a totalizing experience that reshaped preferences and risk-acceptance. PIRA men socialized with other PIRA men and their families, were watched by local commanders and their associates on the ground, and were subjected to political indoctrination of various sorts.

The command structure was in place to “coalesce” the bonding network local elites with the young fighters being brought into the organization through local mechanisms of repression and mobilization. Local mobilization was disciplined and directed through preexisting structures of collective action as the bonding network shaped the structure of recruiting and internal control. McGuinness and Sean Keenan were to end up running the Derry branch of the movement; the McKee-Twomey-Adams-Ivor Bell-Brendan Hughes leadership was in place in Belfast; the rural units remained largely in flux between Provisionals and Officials, tipping over

194 Alonso, *IRA and Armed Struggle*, p. 49.
195 Alonso, *IRA and Armed Struggle*, p. 78.
196 A very accurate characterization of this process by a veteran reporter in Belfast, June 2008.
in response to specific events and growing arms supplies that increasingly pushed them to the
Provos. Ó Brádaigh and Ó Conaill were the key southerners who controlled Sinn Féin and PIRA
publicity, while MacStiofain remained Chief of Staff until 1972. Rather than a profusion of
competing localized groups, the surge of mobilization was harnessed to the agenda of PIRA’s
social core by processes of elite-led local incorporation.

Strategy. With this small army coming together under its feet, the strategic vision of the
PIRA high command as of 1970 involved three steps – first, limited defensive strikes to establish
presence and credibility; second, an intermediate offensive aimed at bringing down the Stormont
parliament; and then finally a large-scale offensive to push Britain to the negotiating table and
ensure its withdrawal. Physical force was back and, like in 1919-21, it would deliver in a big
way. There appears to have been remarkably little dissension about the wisdom of this course of
action - “in the early 1970s the Provisionals were convinced that the British would wilt under a
sustained bombing and shooting campaign” ; “the first Provisional leaders were sure of the
rightness of their cause.” This facilitated cooperation, as “a rebel army that has to convince
each volunteer of every order will not last long. What is needed – and what as a result of a long
heritage, previous campaigns, and a tactical ideology, the IRA had – was basic agreement on
almost everything at the top as well as at the bottom.” The Provisionals were convinced of
their virtue, proclaiming that “it should be clear to all that the only authentic voice of the people
is the Republican Movement, the only authentic army of the people, the Provisional I.R.A.”

This meant that PIRA could fight without needing to worry about political mobilization –

197 After a botched hunger strike (including rumors that he cheated), MacStiofain would be pushed aside.
198 English, Armed Struggle, p. 125.
200 Moloney, Secret History, p. 79.
201 Bell, IRA, p. 158.
in the end, the Provos believed, Stormont would be unable to withstand those strains and would collapse, while Britain would eventually find its own best interests served by pulling out of Ireland entirely.”203 “The priority was to get the ‘Brits’ out and the only way to do it was by sending their sons home in coffins.”204 The worldview of the network led to a strategic convergence within the group’s command ranks, even as the Catholic community in both the Republic and Northern Ireland was bitterly divided about how to respond to the emerging troubles. This traditional republican certainty led to “disregard for all proffered advice or criticism”205 as “the tradition of the nationalist vanguard never inclined hardliners to take more than a passing interest in public opinion.”206 The self-assuredness of their course is reflected in a 1972 PIRA Easter appeal for recruits that states “We saw our oath with absolute clearness; we took it with absolute deliberateness... We called upon the names of the great confessors of our national faith, and all was well with us... we have the strength and the peace of mind of those who never compromise.”207

During the fall of 1970, “the Provos took advantage of the lull to lay in more weapons, to step up their training of guerrillas and to establish themselves as a policing agency in the ghettos of Belfast and Derry.”208 It was the August 1971 decision by the British to launch a campaign of (often indiscriminate) internment that consolidated the PIRA – “existing units that were still unsure of their allegiance after the 1969 split now decided to plump for the Provisionals. Internment enlarged the IRA into a six-county-wide army and transformed it into a force that could now seriously challenge British rule.”209

204 Taylor, Provos, p. 104.
205 McCann, War and an Irish Town, p.168.
206 Smith, Fighting for Ireland?, p. 104.
208 Kelley, The Longest War, p. 148.
209 Moloney, Secret History, p. 103.
From August 1971, the Provisionals began to ratchet up the pressure in a growing flurry of attacks. A commercial bombing campaign leveled much of downtown Derry and led to the garrisoning of Belfast behind a “ring of steel.” 1972 was viewed in PIRA circles as the decisive year, the shift from defense and retaliation into active offense that would bring the British to the table on their way out of Ireland. The Provisionals’ two major newspapers heralded “1972 The Year of Victory”\textsuperscript{210} and “1972: YEAR OF DECISION.”\textsuperscript{211} A further escalation following the killing of 13 civilians by the British Army on “Bloody Sunday” in Derry on January 30, 1972. For a short time, the Catholic community of Northern Ireland was fairly unified in its vehement opposition to British rule. “Both wings [Official and Provisional], in particular the Provisionals, had more than enough Volunteers and resources to do so [carry out their campaign]. The avalanche of recruits was so great the organization could barely cope.”\textsuperscript{212} The diaspora in the US also increased its support in the wake of Bloody Sunday.\textsuperscript{213}

There was not tight tactical command and control in this period – “IRA companies were encouraged to go their own way.”\textsuperscript{214} Violence had escalated each year from 1969 to 1972, and 1972 would the worst year of the Troubles, leaving nearly 500 dead amidst 10,628 shootings and 1,853 bombings. When the Stormont parliament was prorogued and direct rule from Westminster installed, in March 1972, the world seemed to be swinging the Provos’ way.\textsuperscript{215} Former MI6 man Frank Steele, who did intelligence work in Northern Ireland in the early 1970s, recounts “One forgets that it was like in those years. The place was a shambles. Areas like Belfast and Derry

\textsuperscript{210} Republican News, Vol. 2 No. 18, January 1972.
\textsuperscript{211} An Phoblacht, January 1972.
\textsuperscript{212} Taylor, Provos, p. 131. English concurs - “both wings of the IRA, Provisional and Official, intensified their campaign as a response to the events of the 30th, as support for militant republicanism dramatically grew in the wake of the killings.” English, Armed Struggle, p. 151.
\textsuperscript{213} English, Armed Struggle, p. 152.
\textsuperscript{214} Moloney, Secret History, p. 107.
\textsuperscript{215} English, Armed Struggle, p. 143: “these were days of revolutionary expectation on the part of the Provisionals.”
were almost in a state of anarchy and civil war.”216 Bringing down Stormont was seen as a major PIRA victory and Bloody Sunday would provide a powerful symbolic and emotional resource for the republican movement in future.

Despite all of this, the British state was resolved to maintain its control. The loyalist paramilitaries escalated their sectarian killings, while unionist politicians clung to the union just as vigorously as before the Provo campaign. The Provisionals kept sending fighters onto the streets and bombs into city centres, but to no avail. This became even more challenging after “Bloody Friday” (July 21, 1972) when mishandled warning calls led to nine civilians being killed and 130 wounded by 20 PIRA bombs in Belfast.

After Bloody Friday, the British decided to take back the “no-go zones” that had sprung up in Belfast and Derry, using armor and tens of thousands of troops to re-establish a serious state presence in Operation Motorman in July 1972. Swelling PIRA ranks had strained command and control at the operational and tactical levels – units were often left to their own devices in the swirling chaos of the war, and in IRA veteran Martin Meehan’s words, “Volunteers on the ground would have been taking actions that were not authorized.”217 The PIRA was trying to go all-out, but the British were not yielding.218 The escalation, as exemplified in aggressive car bombings and small unit attacks, would be capped by the British military counteroffensives of summer 1972 and intelligence counteroffensives of winter 1972 and spring 1973.

Ceasefire and Strain. Despite the fact that by the end of 1972 PIRA was “a formidable fighting machine,” the reality began to slowly sink in that this might be a protracted conflict.

“Between November 1972 and January 1973, the Provisionals’ senior leadership had been dealt a
series of crippling blows... the decimation of the Provisional IRA's leadership was nothing if not a crisis.\textsuperscript{219} Twomey, Keenan, MacStiofain, Ó Brádaigh, McGuinness, and others were detained for various periods of time. In 1973, a campaign was launched to bomb mainland England, but civilian deaths and the quick arrest of PIRA operatives limited its effectiveness. The big push to drive the British out had run into a resolute First World army, loyalist paramilitaries, and profound divisions within the ethnic category PIRA claimed to represent, as the non-violent SDLP emerged as the dominant electoral voice of northern Catholics. Throughout 1973 the PIRA was hard-pressed both by the British and by the anti-republican government in Dublin. Taylor claims that “by late 1973 several of the Provisional leaders and most notably David O’Connell were looking for a way to end the campaign.”\textsuperscript{220}

The British had desperately tried to put together a power-sharing arrangement between the SDLP and the Ulster Unionist Party (called the Sunningdale Agreement) that took power in early 1974. But both the PIRA and the loyalist paramilitaries opposed Sunningdale — loyalists because of its cross-border Council of Ireland; the Provisionals because of the continued presence of the British. The Sunningdale power-sharing executive collapsed in the spring of 1974, most decisively because of a massive strike led by hard-line unionists and backed by loyalist paramilitary muscle (particularly the UDA). Isolating the extremists was not going to work — not only did some have guns, but others, especially on the hard-line unionist side, were simply unwilling at this point to compromise.\textsuperscript{221}

This mutual realization of fatigue and stalemate contributed to a ceasefire between the Provisionals and British from late 1974 through early 1976. The PIRA claims it was given

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{219} Taylor, \emph{Provos}, pp. 152-3.
\item \textsuperscript{220} Taylor, \emph{Provos}, p. 169. O’Connell/O Conaill is one of those figures who is difficult to easily code as either a hawk or a dove.
\item \textsuperscript{221} An accessible overview of the broad politics of this period can be found in David McKittrick and David McVea, \emph{Making sense of the Troubles} (Belfast: Blackstaff, 2000).
\end{itemize}
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assurances by the British that they were on their way out, looking to create “structures of

disengagement” from Northern Ireland.\textsuperscript{222} The British vehemently deny any such claims, arguing

that they were trying to forge a path to political settlement by engaging PIRA. Regardless, all

factions within the Provisionals “could agree that a truce gave PIRA the chance both to extract

further concessions from the British over issues like interment and to re-establish its popularity

among Northern Ireland’s Catholics.”\textsuperscript{223} Sinn Féin was given a prominent role on the ground,
bringing Irish republicanism into a quasi-governing role in nationalist areas.

However, the ceasefire ended up putting severe strain on the Provisional IRA. As English
notes, “Britain used the 1975 ceasefire to improve intelligence and to try to split the republican
movement through drawing some of its members into constitutional politics.”\textsuperscript{224} The Provo
leadership, by contrast, found itself under increasing fire from local units dissatisfied with the
ceasefire as it became clear that British forces were not going anywhere.

Some units were granted (after perhaps demanding) a certain degree of autonomy to

engage in operations under cover names, especially in South Armagh, where a shadow war
erupted between republicans and loyalists involving sectarian massacres.\textsuperscript{225} Units in Belfast
became involved in sectarian clashes with loyalists, acting as anonymous or pseudonymous
defenders. Yet other units decided the war was basically over, and drifted back to daily life – “on
the ground, the IRA began to relax.”\textsuperscript{226} and “the fall-off in regular operations caused serious
problems of internal discipline.”\textsuperscript{227} During the ceasefire, “the IRA lost control of some of its
volunteers. Some, who were frustrated on the sidelines, cooperated with or left for the Irish

\textsuperscript{222} Taylor, Provos.
\textsuperscript{223} Smith, Fighting for Ireland?, p. 129.
\textsuperscript{224} English, Armed Struggle, p. 179.
\textsuperscript{225} Flag of convenience names South Armagh Republican Action Force (SARAF) and Red Flag Avengers were used
172; Taylor, Provos, p. 196.
\textsuperscript{226} Taylor, Provos, p. 192.
\textsuperscript{227} Kelley, The Longest War, p. 243.
National Liberation Army. Others... responded to the ongoing Loyalist campaign by targeting Protestants.\textsuperscript{228} We know that tactical autonomy was high, and this pattern of violence suggests that strategic autonomy was significant, though not openly defiant of the leadership.

My argument that the PIRA was cohesive post-1972 is thus complicated by the fact that local units were able to force the leadership to let them continue operating during the ostensible ceasefire. Nevertheless, there were no splits or internal feuds, and the internal dissension was over political-military issues, in line with what we’d suspect from a cohesive organization in hard times. \textit{Despite} the internal displeasure and external pressure, “the degree of control the Army Council exercised over the operations of the Northern units ... was considerable.”\textsuperscript{229}

\textit{Community Support.} Frustration and boredom also became expressed in a truly bitter feud with the Official IRA in Belfast that took a number of lives and sowed internecine bad blood within the Catholic community. The Social and Democratic Labour Party, led by John Hume and Gerry Fitt, had by this point established itself as the voice of non-violent nationalism in Northern Ireland, drawing large-scale popular support and directly challenging the PIRA’s claims to primacy. Moreover, a large, and Nobel Peace prize-winning, anti-violence movement called the Peace People emerged at this time, showing the lack of consolidated community support for militancy.\textsuperscript{230} The PIRA thus faced not only the British army and its Protestant allies, but competition from the Official IRA, SDLP, and civil society, leading to intense verbal and physical clashes: “just as rage, hatred, and contempt could be expressed towards one’s extra-communal enemies, so also the Provisionals provided a mechanism for obtaining power and prestige \textit{within} the Catholic community, and for controlling and defining it. Indeed, the

\textsuperscript{228} White, \textit{Ruairí Ó Brádaigh}, p. 239.
\textsuperscript{229} Bishop and Mallie, \textit{Provisional IRA}, p. 310.
\textsuperscript{230} Provo supporters sometimes threw stones at anti-war protesters and vandalized their homes. Kelley, \textit{The Longest War}, p. 254.
Provisionals’ battles with their intracommunal opponents were frequently vicious. . . . who was to represent and define northern nationalism?”

With this internecine feuding in mind, what was the overall level of community support for PIRA during its growth and consolidation between 1970 and 1976? This is important because there exists a “teleology of the Troubles” that finds PIRA the natural outgrowth of Catholic grievance. I argue instead that PIRA succeeded because its social backbone was deeper and stronger than its competitors, allowing it to better harness this upsurge of mobilization. Catholic grievance was broadly shared, while PIRA cohesion is part of a spectrum of variation. It is clear that the struggle for influence within the Catholic community was intense, as “in some ways the battle for dominance within one’s own community was the key one.”

It’s hard to tell what the level of PIRA support was because of the paucity of reliable survey data and the fact that Sinn Féin chose not to contest a number of elections (and contested some elections in a token way) in the 1970s. Moreover, even in elections fought by Sinn Féin, some constituencies mix Catholics and Protestants in significant numbers, leading to strategic voting. The argument I will make is a middle ground between the view that the PIRA terrorized its community into quiescence and the view that it represented the shared aspirations of Irish Catholics – neither of these are sustainable.

The SDLP certainly had a very strong support base throughout this period, and beyond, even in the republican heartlands – in South Armagh, “voting figures right up to 1998 show an almost even split between Sinn Féin and the nationalist Social and Democratic Labour Party.”

In the 1973 Northern Ireland Assembly elections, SDLP got 22.1% of the overall vote, and

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233 Some Sinn Féiners would vote for the SDLP in order to minimize the odds of an Ulster Unionist or Democratic Unionist taking another seat from a constituency.
23.7% of the 1975 Constitutional Convention Elections. Both were boycotted by Sinn Féin, which along with PIRA made an effort to suppress turnout. Given that Catholics in this period formed approximately 40% of the population, this clearly shows a very significant anti-violence constituency within Northern Ireland’s Catholic community. Moloney argues that by 1973 “the largest section of nationalism”\textsuperscript{235} supported the SDLP and that the Provisionals “became more isolated.”\textsuperscript{236} John Hume of the SDLP argued that the 1973 electoral results showed “the IRA have now heard the voice of the people and it is time they listened.”\textsuperscript{237} In addition to the SDLP, the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic church consistently condemned the IRA and republican offensive violence in general.

To some extent this bolsters the view that “the support that the republican movement and the IRA’s actions received in the ghettos of Northern Ireland may be defined as ambivalent and changing, despite the fact that attempts have been made to present them as practically total and unwavering”\textsuperscript{238}; in the mid-1970s “PIRA’s predicament was compounded by its growing unpopularity within the nationalist community.”\textsuperscript{239} Bishop and Mallie scathingly write of this period that “as long as the IRA’s energies were dedicated mostly to violence, their relationship with the community they sprang from would be exploitative, intimidatory, and underlaid with contempt. . . . the extent of intimidation shows that the IRA is generally tolerated rather than admired in the ghettos of Belfast and Londonderry.”\textsuperscript{240}

To be weighed against this, we need to remember that there was enormous support in the wake of August 1971 internment and the January 1972 Bloody Sunday incident. Influxes of

\textsuperscript{235} Moloney, Secret History, p. 129.
\textsuperscript{236} Moloney, Secret History, p. 128.
\textsuperscript{237} Moloney, Secret History, p. 128.
\textsuperscript{238} Alonso, IRA and Armed Struggle, p. 81.
\textsuperscript{239} Smith, Fighting for Ireland?, p. 133.
\textsuperscript{240} Bishop and Mallie, Provisional IRA, pp. 287-288.
recruits accompanied both major incidents, with PIRA leaders complaining that it was more than they could even handle. Young men did indeed keep flocking to the PIRA banner, even after being clearly warned that membership would very likely mean death or imprisonment. This was not a romantic blip, but instead a steady stream of recruits. Bishop and Mallie, despite their brutal appraisal of PIRA intimidation, also note that “sectarian loyalty meant that there always a large enough reservoir of sympathy and support in the North to ensure its survival.” An unknown, but clearly very substantial, number of Catholics in Northern Ireland were willing to help in smaller ways than formally joining the group – passing on intelligence, stonewalling the security forces, holding onto weapons, etc. In this period, and over time, “the active membership of the movement does not exceed a few hundred at any one time, but this merely obscures a much larger support network consisting of thousands.”

Probably the safest way of thinking about PIRA support in this period is as limited but quite deep and enduring. My argument is that this depth and solidity was derived from the Provos’ social base – a narrow but robust set of bonding network families, veterans, and local elites embedded in their communities who could sustain cooperation and control even in difficult times and incorporate new recruits without undermining cohesion. Burton argues, based on ethnography in a Belfast republican neighborhood in 1972-2, that “outside perhaps those third or so (c. 1972-3) who are staunchly and consistently Provisional there is essentially a see-saw relationship between the IRA and the community.” Sluka’s ethnography similarly points to the differences between a hard-core of loyal PIRA families and individuals, and oscillating levels of support from non-core community members. The Provisional IRA’s ability to build and maintain

241 Bishop and Mallie, Provisional IRA, p. 287.
internal cooperation and control was not the simple result of an aggrieved community as PIRA propagandists would have us believe, nor of intimidation as its critics argue; rather, it was the result of PIRA’s embeddedness in a network of interconnected local elites and notables who could control and discipline a portion of the community’s mobilization.

By 1976, PIRA was buckling, its military objectives unfulfilled, its ceasefire strategy bearing no fruit, and its foot soldiers discontent. The arrival of Roy Mason, a hard-line former coal miner, as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland promised bleaker years to come. The Special Air Service (SAS) began operating with greater aggressiveness in South Armagh, while Belfast was turned into a heavily-patrolled garrison city. The state had hit back, and the dreams of “Victory 1972!” were dashed. The reaction of the leadership to this crisis formed a crucial pivot in the evolution of the war, and one I return to below. But first we must compare the emergence of this cohesive, if hard-hit, Provisional IRA with the trajectory taken at the exact same time by its former comrades in the Official IRA.

D. Republican Socialism at War: OIRA and INLA Battle the British and Each Other

*The Officials Carry On: 1969-72.* The 1969-70 split by the Provisionals had both positive and negative aspects for what became known as the Official IRA. On the positive side, the leadership could now pursue the strategy it had wanted all along – prioritizing class politics over an apolitical militarism. However, it faced severe competition from the Provisionals in the north that forced it to engage in competitive military activity. The IRA/Sinn Féin had split roughly in half, sorting along complex lines of ideology, geography, and personal loyalty. Both the PIRA and OIRA emerged with bonding network bases after the split – weakened, divided, and confused, but each could draw on robust networks of traditional families and veterans who were locally-embedded elites. On the basis of the continued existence of a bonding network social
base, I code the OIRA as still consensus-contingent – while it had been depleted, an identifiable geographically-dispersed social core provided continuity. The republican movement had split, but the OIRA was in the position to carry on its version of the armed struggle.

The Officials held onto parts of Belfast despite the sectarian rioting largely due to the influence of a few key individuals and families – “the decision of individuals as to which side they joined by complicated by personal and family loyalties. Sullivan and McMillen [the OIRA commanders in Belfast] were powerful and respected men in the areas they lived in, local patriarchs who were looked to for advice. ..the success of the Officials in hanging on to the Lower Falls is more a tribute to his [Sullivan’s] personality than to the popularity of his political message.”

McMillen’s “decision to stay with the Goulding leadership in 1969 split kept many of the volunteers in that area [the Lower Falls] loyal to the Officials.” The McCanns in the Markets neighborhood similarly held their area for the Officials and, despite its losses, OIRA “was still able to increase its membership and strengthen its organization in Belfast.”

OIRA remained strong in Derry and was not dramatically weakened in the countryside, leaving in place very significant military potential. Indeed, “In Derry, initially at least, most of the younger Republicans had opted for the Official wing” rather than the Provos, while some old veterans maintained their loyalty to the Goulding leadership. If anything, “the city’s Official IRA was one of the most active and militant in the North, at times rivaling the Provos in numbers and support. At its peak it had around three hundred volunteers.” “The Officials were still strong in the city and drawing in recruits too” and “had the greater support in the Derry of

244 Bishop and Mallie, Provisional IRA, 146.
246 Bishop and Mallie, Provisional IRA, p. 143.
247 McCann, War and an Irish Town, p. 130.
248 Holland and McDonald, INLA, p. 16.
249 Ó Dochartaigh, From Civil Rights to Armalites, p. 207.
The Officials had fighters and units who were loyal to a left-republican vision and locked into both local and national structures of mobilization.\textsuperscript{251}

With the OIRA still at war, there was pressure for action - "the Official IRA in the North – or what was left of it – was also not waiting for Gardiner Place [OIRA’s HQ in Dublin] to make up its mind. Goulding’s cadre in Belfast were urging that at least a limited form of armed struggle be undertaken."\textsuperscript{252} Military power had to be established. The Officials tried to calibrate their war by targeting British security forces without being dragged into sectarianism, and by trying to differentiate their political stance from that of PIRA.\textsuperscript{253}

There was willingness to fight but a marked reluctance to escalate. As the PIRA campaign ramped up in the summer of 1971, "the Officials, who up to now had been unconvinced that the time was right for a full-scale campaign, weighed in. If they had not, they would have been totally eclipsed by the Provos."\textsuperscript{254} Military strength mattered hugely. Though primarily focused on defense, the OIRA engaged in several significant clashes with British troops and continued to dominate the Lower Falls and Markets in Belfast and to maintain a serious presence in Derry. The Officials were on a "violent spree"\textsuperscript{255} in 1970-72 that "threatened to go out of control"\textsuperscript{256} in 1972. In Derry in particular an upsurge of recruitment made "their centre of gravity sharply to the left, significantly to the left of the leadership in Dublin."\textsuperscript{257}

However, the OIRA’s external support, and thus military power, was very weak. They retained some support in the US, but "ultimately they could not compete with Noraid for the

\textsuperscript{250} Moloney, Secret History, pp. 164-5.
\textsuperscript{252} Kelley, The Longest War, p. 140.
\textsuperscript{253} For instance, the Officials opposed the imposition of direct rule and proroguing of Stormont, seeing it as a step backwards for democratization and civil rights.
\textsuperscript{254} McCann, War and an Irish Town, p. 147.
\textsuperscript{255} Smith, Fighting for Ireland?, p. 89.
\textsuperscript{256} Swan, Official Irish Republicanism, p. 344.
\textsuperscript{257} McCann, War and an Irish Town, p. 152.
support of the mass of conservative-minded working-class ethnic Irish-Americans. The Official Republicans were allied with marginal left-wing groups in a country where left-wing groups were especially marginal. They quickly ran into financial trouble and by early 1971 the Provisional Republicans enjoyed a virtual monopoly on Irish-American support.\footnote{258} The OIRA was backed by the Friends of Irish Freedom in the diaspora, but “very quickly ran into financial trouble.”\footnote{259} This was an ideological issue, as “the Official IRA, with its openly Marxist policies, was unpopular with the conservative Irish-American community.”\footnote{260} As Cahill’s biographer notes, there were serious concerns in Irish-America that the OIRA had “gone commie.”\footnote{261} The Officials also linked themselves to African-American groups like the Black Panthers, which did not go down well at all in conservative Irish-American communities.\footnote{262}

The crucial thing to note is how the OIRA lost the diaspora – by early 1971, when both IRAs were roughly equal in size and strength, and were both fighting British forces. External support was thus not endogenous to prior group cohesion – the diaspora preferred the Provisionals for largely personal and ideological reasons that had much to do with the emigration of hard-line IRA men to America in the 1920s and the ideological views of Irish-American communities, \textit{not} because of patterns of actual war-fighting or mobilization on the ground.

Swan offers an intriguing historical finding – after the failure of an attempted major arms purchase in 1970, the Officials had approached Moscow for aid through the Communist Party of Ireland. “Moscow sat on the request for almost three years before finally accepting that the communists and IRA could keep the matter absolutely secret, activated operation SPLASH – the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnoteref{258} Ó Dochartaigh, \textit{From Civil Rights to Armalites}, p. 174.
\footnoteref{259} Ó Dochartaigh, “‘Sure, it’s hard to keep up with the splits here,’” p. 143.
\footnoteref{260} Ian Geldard, \textit{IRA, INLA: foreign support and international connections} (London: Institute for the Study of Terrorism, 1988), p.60. A proposal in 1972 to raid a Massachusetts arm depot by an American OIRA supporter was rejected as too risky. Holland, \textit{The American Connection}, p. 89.
\footnoteref{261} Anderson, \textit{Joe Cahill}, p. 209.
\footnoteref{262} Ó Dochartaigh, “‘Sure, it’s hard to keep up with the splits here.’”
\end{footnotes}
shipping of untraceable arms to the IRA.” However, it is not clear if these arms ever arrived—parts of the OIRA had bought a trawler in anticipation of the delivery, but apparently the name of said trawler had been forgotten by the time the prospect of acquiring arms actually appeared plausible. Andrew and Mitrokhin suggest that several arms shipments may have gotten through into the arms of Seamus Costello. However, whatever arms did arrive were small and soon stopped; there was no flow of weaponry. History in Northern Ireland could have taken an interestingly different turn had the Soviets jumped at the opportunity, but in the end the Officials were bereft of external state support and largely locked out of the Irish-American diaspora.

The military weakness of the Officials was plain; then-OIRA member and future PIRA senior commander Martin McGuinness, for instance, is described as being disgusted by “the pitiful state of an organization that aimed to blow up electricity pylons with four ounces of gelignite.” He later justified his decision to jump ship as being driven by the fact that “the Officials would not give us any action. . . . armies should be fought by armies.”

Despite the Officials’ ability to generate manpower, deep ambivalence remained about the war during this entire period. The January 1971 issue of the Officials’ The United Irishmen is illustrative—the headline articles are “Fight Common Market,” “Release the Prisoners,” “Fish-In Campaign,” and “Mines and Minerals.” By contrast, the Provisionals’ An Phoblacht in February 1971 screamed “BELFAST AT WAR.” The 1972 killing of Joe McCann, a senior OIRA man in Belfast’s Markets neighborhood, “strengthened the position of those on the Army Council who were growing concerned that the armed campaign would jeopardize their efforts to build a
political machine.” McCann had believed in the utility of force and, along with Billy McMillen, had held together the OIRA Belfast war effort; with him dead, there were fewer backers of a militant line.

Efforts to reach across the sectarian divide were bearing little fruit, and the OIRA feared that it would simply become a version of the Provisional IRA. The overarching fear was that getting sucked into the northern war would undermine Official Sinn Féin’s attractiveness to the working class of the south, where the Officials hoped to supplant the Irish Labour Party. So, after a series of military operations that left civilians dead, the Army Council of the Official IRA declared a ceasefire in May 1972. It argued that the ceasefire was on a “defence and retaliation” basis, meaning that the Officials held open the use of force when being, or in reprisal for being, attacked.

The social underpinning remained – “the Officials appear to have had about 800 members in Belfast at the end of 1972, so they were still a serious potential force.” Patterson argues that by the beginning of 1973, “the Officials were for the first time since the split nearly as strong as the Provisionals in Northern Ireland.” This must refer to numbers, not fighting power, since it is clear that the Officials lacked the firepower of the Provisionals. Nevertheless, it shows once again that there was no “teleology” of the Troubles – the PIRA was not ever-fated to be the only significant armed group among republicans, nor was it the only “authentic” or “true” republican militant organization.

Despite the OIRA’s clear ability to maintain coherent organizational structures, as we would expect based on its bonding network base, there would be very little further military

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269 Holland and McDonald, INLA, p. 16.
270 “the bombings and shootings left OIRA’s image several tarnished.” Smith, Fighting for Ireland?, p. 89.
271 English, Armed Struggle, p. 175.
action – the OIRA was trying to get out of the war business, and the few coordinated efforts at a campaign of retaliation failed. The question was now whether the Officials’ leadership could forestall a repeat of the 1969 split by holding the organization together as it pursued a new, and very different, political course.

*The INLA Breaks Away: 1972-76.* The answer turned out to be mixed. The core of the Officials remained together and the organization in 1976 would decide to largely de-mobilize. A small, unofficial armed group remained that engaged in extortion and bank robberies, leading to political controversies in the early 1990s, but for all intents and purposes OIRA had left the military picture after 1976, when its new chief of staff decided that militarism was not achieving its goals.\(^ {273}\) The organization would become first Sinn Féin – the Workers’ Party, and then just the Workers’ Party. Eventually, the party split in 1992, with the more popular and moderate bloc first forming the Democratic Left party and then joining Irish Labour.\(^ {274}\) The Workers’ Party soldiers on in relative obscurity, led by old IRA hand Sean Garland, who has been accused of involvement in a bizarre North Korean/Russian mafia dollar counterfeiting scheme.\(^ {275}\) Clearly the Official IRA never achieved its socialist revolution, but it also stopped killing people. For years, a core of OIRA/Workers’ Party supporters remained in pockets of Belfast, where “loyalty was visceral and deeply overlain with local and familial ties.”\(^ {276}\)

This transition from war into (almost) pure electoralism was not smooth. “There remained north of the border a militant, well-organized group of men who by 1972 were veterans of guerrilla warfare. Many of them saw no reason to halt the conflict at that point.”\(^ {277}\) As in 1969,

\(^ {273}\) Remnants of OIRA (known as “Group B”) would remain involved in extortion. The 1992 split from the Workers’ Party by the more-successful Democratic Left had something to do with the continued, though very low-level, existence of Group B.

\(^ {274}\) On the Democratic Left split, see Patterson, *The Politics of Illusion*, pp. 257-258.

\(^ {275}\) See Hanley and Millar, *Lost Revolution*.

\(^ {276}\) Patterson, *The Politics of Illusion*, p. 165.

\(^ {277}\) Holland and McDonald, *INLA*, p. 19.
the consensus-contingent nature of OIRA left it open to internal dissension when trying to engage in major policy shifts. The agent of dissension within the Officials would be Seamus Costello, the organization's Operations Director. Ironically enough, Costello, nicknamed the "Boy General" from his service in Operation Harvest, had been a strong advocate of ending abstentionism in 1969, and then in 1972 was used to sell the ceasefire to restive units. As we see so often, a simple distinction between hawks and doves is unsustainable. Charismatic and arrogant, Costello grew disenchanted with the Officials' abandonment of militancy by 1974.

The OIRA leadership starting drawing down its units' weaponry after the announcement of the ceasefire. OIRA began withholding guns and training from "units suspected of 'disloyalty.'" Smith claims that it had some success in doing this – he argues that the OIRA was able to "tame the military tiger. . . front line units in the North were slowly deprived of the resources and equipment necessary to keep the campaign going." But this is too optimistic. Because the central command had relatively little to dispense, its ability to actually shape material incentives was fairly weak – people could not be paid off, nor could they be credibly threatened with violence. To the extent that the "acrimonious debate" was legible from the outside, it appears that persuasion was more important than material manipulation in bringing most of the OIRA onside to the ceasefire and politicization. Moreover, Costello was Director of Operations, meaning he was placed to subvert these moves.

Like all consensus-contingent groups, and as already evidenced in 1969-70, strategic shifts were very dangerous to the OIRA. The dissidents coalescing around Costello "feared that a

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279 Smith, *Fighting for Ireland?*, p. 87, p. 90.
280 Smith, *Fighting for Ireland?*, p. 89.
281 However, this alone is insufficient to explain his ability to launch a major split – when PIRA's Mickey McKeivitt led the soon-cauterized Real IRA split in 1997, he was Quartermaster General (QMG), also an enormously powerful position. Costello, like McKeivitt and despite his similarly important position, would be unable to establish a weapons and money flow for INLA.
ceasefire would be both difficult to enforce on local activists and would allow the Provisionals to extend their influence at OIRA’s expense.”

“The two most dangerous places as far as the leadership was concerned were Derry and Belfast. In both places, local grievances were the same: lack of weapons to enforce the defence and retaliatory clauses of the cease-fire. . . between 1972 and 1973 the situation within the Officials seemed volatile as the role of the armed struggle was debated.”

However, Billy McMillen remained in fairly firm control of the Belfast Official IRA with McCann now dead. Costello made his discontent with the apparently-permanent ceasefire known, and the Goulding/Garland leadership suspended him from OIRA and Official Sinn Féin activities in May 1974.

Costello used his faction within the OIRA to launch a competing militant group. The Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) was officially founded in December 1974. Its militant wing would soon be named the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA). Costello had very limited success in pulling away enough of the OIRA’s local elites to stabilize IRSP/INLA on the basis of a bonding network. In Derry he did very well - “almost the entire Official Republican movement in Derry had gone over to Costello.” This appears to be due in part to Derry’s “commitment to militarist tactics rivaling that of the Provisionals with a militant Trotskyism imbibed from the city’s student labourist left.”

Belfast was a different story; there were serious defections by foot soldiers, as “in Belfast one third of the Officials’ remaining strength defected to the IRSP, including some of the more impressive members” and Ronnie Bunting, OIRA commander in

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282 Smith, Fighting for Ireland?, p. 89.
283 Holland and McDonald, INLA, p. 19 and p. 22.
284 In retrospect, Goulding apparently came to believe that the 1972 ceasefire was too soon, and that if the Officials had waited they could have edged out or won over the younger northerners who would follow Costello. Holland and McDonald, INLA, pp. 323-324.
285 Holland and McDonald, INLA, p. 78.
287 Bishop and Mallie, Provisional IRA, p. 280; English, Armed Struggle, says 100, p. 177.
Belfast’s Turf Lodge and Ballymurphy\textsuperscript{288}, had also switched sides. Patterson writes that “over 100 Officials in Belfast joined the IRSP, including the entire IRA unit in the Divis Flats.”\textsuperscript{289}

But McMillen and Sullivan and most of the rest of the OIRA Belfast command remained loyal. For instance, there were hopes in the new IRSP that “the quartermaster on the Belfast Command Staff would join them, but he was remaining loyal to Goulding.”\textsuperscript{290} Thus there was not a firm bonding network in place; though Derry was strong, there had been little “elite defection”\textsuperscript{291} in either Belfast or Dublin. In Belfast in particular, many of the new recruits were young former members of the OIRA’s youth wing, in stark contrast to the powerful local notables who had formed the Provisionals in Belfast, Derry, and the Republic in 1969.

The Provisional’s strongholds stood firm, unattracted to the emerging IRSP and preoccupied with the challenges of the ceasefire. On the ground there was some sympathy for IRSP because of the shared OIRA enemy, and during the 1975 ceasefire a few defections to IRSP, but there was little formal coordination. IRSP/INLA would be mostly on its own when the Officials hit back. The INLA in early 1975 was tenuously based on a social coalition between Derry, Dublin, and Belfast, but with relatively weak social ties across them, especially Belfast. The Belfast units would soon go out of control, a pattern that repeated itself frequently over time.

Costello and the IRSP at first eschewed a public military face. The aim was to slowly establish its military wing, INLA, that could be unveiled after a period of consolidation and operation. Costello claimed in public that the IRSP was purely political, but this became impossible to sustain when the Official IRA decided to strangle INLA in its cradle – “the faithful

\textsuperscript{288} Bishop and Mallie, \textit{Provisional IRA}, p.280.
\textsuperscript{289} Patterson, \textit{Politics of Illusion}, p. 165. The IRSP became known as the “Irps” (and Divis Flats thus “The Planet of the Irps”).
\textsuperscript{290} Holland and McDonald, \textit{INLA}, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{291} A phrase used in Charles Tilly, \textit{From Mobilization to Revolution} (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co, 1978), to refer to government-supporting elites, but equally applicable to inter-militant competition.
nucleus [of OIRA] was now ready and willing to do battle”\textsuperscript{292}, especially once INLA members took guns from OIRA stocks. The Officials had let the Provisionals go in 1969 and suffered badly for it; now they wanted to strike down IRSP/INLA before it too could challenge them. The INLA presented a much less daunting challenge, especially in Belfast, where the traditionalist elites of the PIRA had been far more formidable targets. A former OIRA member said “it was the ghost of the Provisionals. People overreacted and it was handled badly.”\textsuperscript{293} In February 1975, Goulding used a funeral to send a message to the IRSP/INLA that the “foolhardy motives” of “a few misguided and confused malcontents” were displeasing to the OIRA.\textsuperscript{294}

A word of wars erupted between OIRA and INLA, involving standard leftist denunciations of Trotskyism, adventurism, gangsterism and the like, while bad blood was being caused on the ground by clashes over turf and arms dumps. In late 1974 or early 1975 “a decision was taken to strangle the IRSP at birth. Four assassination squads under the command of Billy McMillen were set up to deal with the dissidents.”\textsuperscript{295} The OIRA launched this onslaught in Belfast, leading to pitched gun battles, beatings, and knifings on the streets of west and north Belfast. The problem Costello faced was trying to restrain his men from retaliating too openly, lest the INLA’s existence be laid bare before it had been consolidated as an organization.

But “members of the Belfast organization had defied Costello... the Dublin-based leadership was not in control of the actions of its members a hundred miles to the north.”\textsuperscript{296} An INLA hit squad from Belfast headed down south to try to kill the OIRA’s Sean Garland, in the end badly wounding him.\textsuperscript{297} The Officials called Costello an “assassin and agent provocateur”\textsuperscript{298}

\textsuperscript{292} Kelley, \textit{The Longest War}, p. 231.
\textsuperscript{293} Holland and McDonald, \textit{INLA}, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{294} \textit{Eolas}, March 1975.
\textsuperscript{295} Bishop and Mallie, \textit{Provisional IRA}, p. 280.
\textsuperscript{296} Holland and McDonald, \textit{INLA}, p. 49 and p. 50.
\textsuperscript{297} When told that his own men had targeted Garland, Seamus Costello is said to have incredulously responded “We fuckin’ did?” Holland and McDonald, \textit{INLA}, p. 52.
and deemed the IRSP an agent of “ultra-left adventurism in Ireland.”

Tentative peace talks began between INLA/IRSP and the Officials, but the INLA in Belfast was increasingly relying on new young recruits who were brought into the organization under the pressures of the feud. This mobilization strategy was unmediated by local elites (Bunting, the Turf Lodge/Ballymurphy commander, had fled to Wales) and dramatically weakened internal control. This took a devastating turn when a 16 year old INLA member named Gerard Steenson gunned down, “on the spur of the moment without any sanction,” Belfast OIRA commander Billy McMillen. Uncontrolled by significant local command structures or prominent elites, the wave of young recruits into the INLA were taking matters into their own hands, laying the basis for divisions that would rip INLA apart over the following decades. While the feud came to an end soon thereafter, the OIRA Army Council voted to kill Seamus Costello - “the OIRA/INLA world of bloody feuding represented fissiparous tendencies at their most extreme.”

The war between INLA and OIRA had the result that “Costello’s movement was in bad shape in the Northern capital. . . badly armed, mauled from the feud, hit hard by arrests.” The feud “caused numerous scars and numerous funerals.” The first Belfast Officer Commanding after the feud, Kevin Holland, soon left for the PIRA, and while Ronnie Bunting returned to Ireland from Wales, he avoided Belfast until late 1976. In this crucial period, the INLA lacked elite cooperation or local incorporation – it was simply filling the ranks in Belfast with whoever it could find in order to first stave off and then recover from the OIRA attack. This was not a recipe for social integration. Moreover, outside of Belfast, only Derry city and parts of South

298 *Eolas*, April 1975.
300 Holland and McDonald, *INLA*, p. 74.
302 Holland and McDonald, *INLA*, p. 80 and p. 81.
Derry and South Armagh saw any INLA operation in 1975.

The INLA was soon bereft of a serious political face – Bernadette McAliskey, the prominent firebrand leftist, had originally signed up to IRSP but left in November 1975 when it became clear that the INLA would be running the show.\(^{304}\) The Belfast units’ seizure of the prerogative was a clear sign of how the gun would overpower politics, and so McAliskey and others decided to get out before things got worse. She and her supporters wrote that the IRSP “was objectively indistinguishable from either wing of the republican movement and possibly combining the worst elements of both.” Costello may have been “one of the most charismatic figures since Michael Collins”\(^{305}\) but this was woefully inadequate to hold INLA together.

In addition to this coalitional social base, strung uneasily between Dublin, Belfast, and Derry, the INLA lacked external material support, as “the overtly Marxist Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) has had difficulties in raising funds among wealthy Irish-Americans.”\(^{306}\) Links to Palestinian and far-left European groups were made, but none would provide free or heavily discounted weapons. INLA was left to rely primarily on intermittent large robberies, some of them providing significant sums of money, but none able to create a sustained flow of money. In 1976, Costello was forced to resign as INLA Chief of Staff under intense internal pressure because he had been unable to find significant stocks of guns for the organization – “over eighteen months had gone by since the formation of the INLA, and Costello had yet to deliver any equipment”\(^{307}\) and by 1977 he “was only interested in getting guns and money.”\(^{308}\) We will leave the INLA’s story here for now – with a coalitional social base and a lack of external support, things looked grim for the organization, and in fact the group’s internal

\(^{304}\) In 1975, the INLA was known as “Section B” (the Official IRA become known internally as “Group B”).
\(^{305}\) Kelley, *The Longest War*, p. 232.
\(^{306}\) Geldard, *IRA, INLA*, p. 58.
\(^{307}\) Holland and McDonald, *INLA*, pp. 105-6.
\(^{308}\) Holland and McDonald, *INLA*, p. 112.
divisions would grow even worse over time, culminating in two major internal bloodlettings and numerous smaller-scale splits, feuds, and confrontations.

E. Trajectories of Republican Insurgency, 1962-77

What can we take away from this detailed reconstruction of the social and material underpinnings of the PIRA, OIRA, and, at least preliminarily, INLA? Below I offer a chart of predicted and actual values for each of the four indicators of the dependent variable for each group during this period. The OIRA’s coding on both social base and external support remains constant throughout; I code PIRA as having achieved substantial external support by 1972; INLA was just born and did not see significant shifts between late 1974 and 1976. Bolded cells indicate significant “misfires” of the theory. I’m not particularly concerned about the INLA, since this period only involves about a year and a half of its existence. Instead the notable thing to take away is that I badly mispredicted the level of strategic autonomy by factions in the PIRA between 1972 and 1976. I discuss this below.

Table 4.4. Predictions and Reality, 1962-77

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group and DV Prediction</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PIRA 1972-76 (Cohesive)</td>
<td>Theory: Low Actual: Low</td>
<td>Theory: Low Actual: N/A</td>
<td>Theory: Low Actual: Medium</td>
<td>Theory: Political-Military Actual: Political-Military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INLA 1974-76 (Factionalized)</td>
<td>Theory: High Actual: Low</td>
<td>Theory: High Actual: N/A</td>
<td>Theory: High Actual: High</td>
<td>Theory: Multiple Actual: Multiple</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My argument broadly holds – the OIRA split repeatedly due to its attempts to change strategy in the absence of military strength and resource centralization. The splits were messy
and protracted, and thus fairly intense, in both the PIRA and INLA cases. OIRA nevertheless held onto a fairly tight bonding network over time, attracting a mix of leftist and conventional traditional republicans, but this proved insufficient in the face of its military weaknesses.

The PIRA combined bonding network mobilization, based on a deeply-rooted, decades-old overlapping network of IRA families and veterans, with growing levels of external support. To the extent that there was unrest it occurred over the 1974-5 ceasefire. My theory mispredicts the level of strategic autonomy in the post-1972 period – though I predict it should be fairly low, it was significant and growing in the 1974-76 period, putting significant strains on the group. There were no splits or direct internal challenges, however, as units took out their frustrations using flag of convenience names and denial operations. I also correctly predict that dissension would center around political-military issues (i.e., the ceasefire). Crucially, I have shown how personal ties and ideological preferences in the diaspora (and, briefly, in the Irish government) drove external support in 1970 and 1971, rather than an endogenous “follow the leader” dynamic.

Like the Official IRA, the Provisionals’ political ideology in this period was highly unrealistic and simplistic – if the Officials thought that unionism was false consciousness hiding common class roots, the Provisionals thought it was false consciousness hiding common Irish roots (and that those unionists who disagreed could just go back to Britain). A crucial difference between OIRA and PIRA lay in the latter’s access to and control over guns and willingness to hit out at the British, staking out a militarily credible position that attracted and held recruits while providing material incentives in the form of weapons to maintain control.

The INLA in this period suffered no splits, despite my prediction that it would experience numerous and intense splits. However, this section only covers about 18 months of the INLA’s existence, so it is not a very compelling test. As we will see in the next section, INLA came apart
in dramatic ways by the mid-1980s. During the 1974-76 period, we did see very high levels of factional autonomy and internal unrest over guns, money, prestige, politics and personality, including a gun-point change of Chief of Staff and nonexistent control of Belfast units.

IV. The Long War: Republican Insurgents and Protracted Conflict, 1977-1990

The period between 1976 and 1990, when the peace process began in earnest, presents a stark contrast between republican armed groups – with the Official IRA now out of the picture, the PIRA and INLA were the major violent players in the Catholic community. Both entered 1977 in trouble – the PIRA was still reeling from a controversial ceasefire, and the INLA was trying to consolidate its position after the violent split from the Officials. I argue in this section that the PIRA was able to overcome the challenges it faced because its leadership battles occurred non-violently within the confines of its bonding network base, and it continued to provide guns and money to its fighters. A partial shift towards a cellular structure was possible precisely because of the high level of social integration within PIRA, and the move towards ending abstention in the Irish Parliament did not result in the same kind of split that had occurred when the Official IRA did the exact same thing in 1969. Sinn Féin would use the political momentum of the 1981 hunger strikes to embrace electoralism without (at this point) abandoning violence. A massive influx of Libyan arms in the mid-1980s allowed the leadership to sell the political strategy to its fighting units.

The INLA, by contrast, followed a rocky path into bloody fratricide. The INLA “gained a reputation for a potent mixture of hard-left politics and ruthless violence”309 but, while able to summon several military “spectaculars” and to gain support from its participation in the hunger strikes, the INLA’s lack of both elite cooperation and local incorporation would lead to recurrent spirals of internal distrust and feuding. Elites would turn on one another, while new factions

309 English, Armed Struggle, p. 177.
continually emerged based on the undisciplined influx of new recruits. INLA never could find a consistent source of external supply that would allow it to overcome its constant funding problems. Escalating internal unrest exploded into a brutal 1987 feud that left most of the group’s elites dead or in the new Irish People’s Liberation Organisation (IPLO). The IPLO would in turn implode in 1992, and the INLA’s self-destruction continued into the 1990s. The INLA’s troubled roots could not be overcome and it would soon become clear that “death in Ireland’s ‘republican socialist’ army of national liberation was inevitably at the hands of former associates.”

The IPLO followed a similar path before being taken apart by PIRA in 1992.

### Tables 4.5. Independent Variables and Predictions: Republican Insurgency, 1977-1990

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<tr>
<td>PIRA</td>
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<td>Cohesive</td>
<td>SB: Bonding</td>
<td>Cohesive</td>
<td>SB: Bonding</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>ES: Substantial</td>
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<td>ES: Substantial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INLA</td>
<td>SB: Coalition</td>
<td>Factionalized</td>
<td>SB: Coalition</td>
<td>Factionalized</td>
<td>SB: Coalition</td>
<td>Factionalized</td>
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<tr>
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<td>ES: No</td>
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<td>IPLO</td>
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<td>ES: No</td>
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</table>

$SB =$ Social Base; $ES =$ External Support; Prediction = trajectory predicted by my theory


For the Provisional IRA, the period between 1976 and 1981 was one of strategic and organizational adaptation to the reality of the 1970-4 offensive’s failure and the 1974-5 ceasefire’s degradation of organizational effectiveness. The conventional story goes that the southern leadership was pushed aside by the north after the failure of the ceasefire, and that the reorganization into a cellular structure fundamentally changed the nature of the Provisional IRA. Both of these are true to an extent, but the leadership change represented far more continuity than is often realized – the north had already been well-represented prior to the rise of the younger Gerry Adams-Martin McGuinness leadership and the entire PIRA, including its southern component, would stay with this leadership once it pushed aside Ó Brádaigh and Ó

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Conaill, a battle that played out within Sinn Féin not the PIRA.

The change occurred within the confines of the bridging network, representing a shift of emphasis but not of type. The adoption of a cellular structure was quite incomplete and its effects varied – it was helpful in the heavily-infiltrated urban areas, but less so in rural areas. It was possible largely because of the preexisting social infrastructure of the group – the leaders of the Active Service Units could be trusted and monitored by the high command rather than left entirely to their own devices. I argue that the high levels of social integration within the Provisional IRA, as well as a continuing flow of material resources, allowed the group to implement organizational reforms and change leadership without major internal ruptures.

Military Re-organization: Northern Command and Cells. The origins of both the leadership change and organizational adaptation lie in the discontent triggered by the 1974-5 ceasefire. Despite the later claims by the younger leadership, the ceasefire had not been launched by southern armchair generals – “of the seven Army Council members who sanctioned the 1974-5 ceasefire, no fewer than five came from the north.”311 Seamus Twomey, Joe Cahill, J.B. O’Hagan, Kevin Mallon, and Seamus Loughran were all from the north, joined by Ó Conaill and Ó Brádaigh, the southern veterans. Twomey, O’Hagan and Cahill were Belfasters who would later stand with Adams and McGuinness, showing deep continuity even in the presence of generational change. Adams and McGuinness themselves had been involved in the movement from its earliest days, and so were not exactly newcomer young Turks launching a bid for power from without.

The dissent that emerged over the ceasefire came largely from PIRA members in prison, who felt that the ceasefire was degrading the organization – “Cages 11 and 9 [in Long Kesh prison] became think tanks devoted to planning new structures and policies designed to rescue

311 Moloney, Secret History, p. 142.
what every activist, inside and outside the jails, could see was imminent defeat. In addition to
the ceasefire, the British had begun to introduce the policy of “Ulsterization,” giving primacy to
the Royal Ulster Constabulary and emphasizing intelligence and interrogation; “the Government
had put in place a whole range of structures designed to demoralize and defeat the
Provisionals.” The PIRA was ill-prepared for this shift to local intelligence and policing,
hoping instead to continue fighting the alien British Army in a guerrilla campaign. Now locals
(though almost entirely Protestants), supposedly fellow Irishmen, would be their major foe,
backstopped by a large and sophisticated professional military. “Ulter-ization” was a
counterinsurgency template that posed deep military and political problems for the PIRA.

Once the ceasefire ended, this concern about military effectiveness was reflected in a push
for reorganization. A younger generation was rising through the prisons and the ranks, notably
Gerry Adams, Danny Morrison, Brendan Hughes, and Ivor Bell from Belfast and Martin
McGuinness from Derry. They came to “regard the 1975 truce as the time when the IRA came
closest to defeat and suffered irreparable damage” and would find both allies and enemies
among the older elites who had first set up the Provisional IRA; Seamus Twomey and Joe Cahill
were close supporters of Adams, while Billy McKee was an old enemy. Of the rising new elites,
many were themselves embedded in the traditionalist bonding network, while others had been
incorporated into the organization through local mechanisms of vetting and socialization. There
was no simple change of generation correlated with change of strategy; the new generation
would strike alliances with many of the older elites, thereby avoiding major splits in a
tumultuous period. The ensuing “reorganization of the IRA was the combined work of the old

312 Moloney, Secret History, p. 149.
314 Taylor, Provos, p. 197. Cf. White, Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, in which Ó Brádaigh defends his leadership record.
guard of the Provisionals and the younger Republicans.”

In the 1977, an internal analysis by PIRA recommended “reorganization and remotivation, the building of a new Irish Republican Army. . . we must emphasize a return to secrecy and strict discipline. Army men must be in total control of all sections of the movement. We must gear ourselves towards long-term armed struggle based on putting unknown men and new recruits into a new structure. This new structure shall be a cell system.” Two major organizational changes flowed from the recognized need for strategic adaptation. First, a Northern Command was set up to oversee and organize action in the north, covering the six counties of Northern Ireland and its bordering counties of Louth, Cavan, Monaghan, Leitrim, and Donegal. In addition, “control over scarce weapons was taken much more seriously,” improving resource centralization in the hands of the incumbent elites.

Thus, the PIRA command structure ever since has had a Northern Command based in Belfast, Southern Command (logistics and support operations in 21 of the southern counties), and a General Headquarters (GHQ) in Dublin. At the apex of the organization is and was the Army Council, elected by occasional meetings of the Army Executive (which is in turn elected by a General Army Convention – rare for security reasons). In addition, there are specialized departments within GHQ, including the Quartermaster General (QMG), Security, Operations, Finance, Intelligence, Engineering, Training, and Publicity. Emphasizing once again the primacy of social over purely organizational variables, “the leadership of Northern Command . . . has ‘close ties’ with the Army Council and GHQ. It is believed that the ‘personal dominance’ of

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315 White, Provisional Irish Republicans, p. 139.
316 Taylor, Provos, p. 211.
317 English writes that “this body was largely autonomous of the Army Council, and, by the end of 1976, military control in the IRA was almost fully in the hands of the northerners.” English, Armed Struggle, p. 212.
a number of senior PIRA figures on these two bodies ensures that ‘there is no breakdown in communications between the three bodies.’ 320

As part of this organizational restructuring, Gerry Adams briefly replaced Seamus Twomey after Twomey’s arrest as Chief of Staff (and was in turned replaced by Martin McGuinness after Adams’ arrest), the two republican newspapers, An Phoblacht in Dublin and Republican News in Belfast, were merged under the control of Danny Morrison and fellow Belfaster Tom Hartley, and the Ó Brádaigh/Ó Conaill policy of advocating federalism within a united Ireland came under fire; they “were slowly but firmly sidelined.” 321 The aging Billy McKee, who had played such a central role in the PIRA’s emergence in Belfast, was pushed aside after a debilitating and unnecessary feud with the Official IRA erupted in 1977 while McKee was leading Northern Command. 322 Martin McGuinness took on a key leadership role in tandem with Adams.

Another military shift was towards a cellular structure. By 1977 the PIRA realized that its rapid expansion in the early 1970s had put too much strain on internal security – not only was the garrisoning of Belfast making actions difficult, but faced challenges in “breaking the British Army’s intelligence-gathering network of spies and informers.” 323 Unlike many other groups that come to this realization, the Provisionals actually had the ability to change their structure. The shift was to a cellular structure meant that “the basic IRA unit would in theory have only three or four members, known to each other by a pseudonym and with no knowledge of the identities of their superiors.” 324 “There was to be far less chance of crucial intelligence being gained by the state through interrogation of an IRA member.” 325 These Active Service Units (ASUs) were

320 Horgan and Taylor, “The provisional Irish republican army,” p. 7. Once again, we see the primacy of personal links over formal organization.
321 Moloney, Secret History, p. 183.
322 White, Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, p. 264.
323 Kelley, The Longest War, p. 262.
324 Bishop and Mallie, Provisional IRA, p. 322.
325 English, Armed Struggle, p. 213.
backstopped by a set of companies used for non-military tasks. An adjunct to the cell structure was a greater emphasis on training and indoctrination—a training manual, the Green Book, was produced in jail to more formally structure the process through which new recruits were socialized into obedience and dedication.

The impact of the cellular system is hard to assess. It does seem to have reduced British infiltration, as “the average member’s detailed knowledge of the membership activities of the rest of the organization was severely curtailed.”\textsuperscript{326} The structure also had the effect of improving resource centralization and internal control; Clarke writes that “the central control of arms and the slimmed down nature of the organization made it possible successfully to ‘box off’ potential dissidents, \textit{making a split impracticable}.”\textsuperscript{327} Despite this much-heralded cellular system, it seems to have been highly uneven—“the cell structure was largely a Belfast phenomenon. Some rural areas fought to maintain their old structures and the operational spontaneity that came with them... even in Belfast the organization was far from complete or universal.”\textsuperscript{328}

Tactical autonomy remained among the local units and more mobile ASUs, but “they must always give precedence to orders from GHQ even if that means abandoning other operations that are ready to go.”\textsuperscript{329} The PIRA “organizational structure which has been adopted mitigates against possible fragmentation.”\textsuperscript{330} Heavy reliance on external support continued into the 1980s. Astoundingly, O’Brien reports that in the early 1980s US arms networks “supplied up to 80\textit{ percent} of IRA guns,”\textsuperscript{331} though these were coming under increasing pressure from the US Federal Bureau of Investigation.

\textsuperscript{326} Bishop and Mallie, \textit{Provisional IRA}, p. 322.  
\textsuperscript{327} Clarke, \textit{Broading the battlefield}, p. 42.  
\textsuperscript{328} Moloney, \textit{Secret History}, p. 177. In South Armagh in particular, a tight ASU system was never put into place; rather, local networks were sufficiently robust to keep British intelligence mostly at bay  
\textsuperscript{330} Horgan and Taylor, “The provisional Irish republican army,” p. 25.  
\textsuperscript{331} O’Brien, \textit{Longest War}, p. 121, emphasis added.
The Provisional IRA had battened down the hatches and reorganized, its elite still drawn heavily from the traditionalist bonding network, and with outsiders who had been integrated through local socialization, formal indoctrination, and solidarity-bolstering time in jail. A generational transfer was occurring without violent internal feuding, and the organization was maintaining cohesion. The continuities in command elite composition lasted far beyond the 1970s – Adams and McGuinness would form part of what Toolis describes as the “tiny hermetic republican elite” at the core of the Provisional IRA that endures (with some changes) to the present. This was not a coup from without, but instead a transition from within. Moreover, “PIRA makes clear distinctions between ‘leaders’ and ‘followers’” and its leaders have largely been drawn from this class of elites.

Keeping the Ranks Motivated. Elite cooperation remained, but as older leaders and members died, were arrested, or dropped out of activity, new recruits were constantly needed. The shift to a cell structure put greater emphasis on maintaining discipline and commitment at the individual level; rather than trying to accumulate mass, as in the 1970-75 period, PIRA needed to focus on reliability and impermeability. It would have enormous success in avoiding splits, feuds, and divisive power struggles, but would suffer constant intelligence penetration by the British state. On balance, social integration remained comparatively high, despite the success of British security forces in recruiting informers.

Prison, training, shared experience, and family ties were used to build solidarity at the top of the organization, and elites transmitted this solidarity to individual foot soldiers on the ground through the incorporation mechanisms of indoctrination and socialization. New recruits

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332 Toolis, Rebel Hearts, p. 313.
experienced an “intense socialization process.” Alonso, a sharp PIRA critic, describes this process of absorption – “activists were subjected to considerable group pressure, which led them to self-censorship, and also generated a psychological knock-on effect that preempted any open questioning of the leaders’ decisions even when doubts were harbored about them. The submission was almost total and uncritical. . . . group cohesion was thus guaranteed in the face of potentially divisive issues.”

Eamon Collins, who was incorporated into PIRA rather than being originally part of the bonding network, describes how “I felt myself to be part of a large family whose members had powerful emotional links to each other. The idea of turning my back on the IRA had become as repugnant to me as turning my back on my own family.”

This socialization was made easier by the continued importance of traditional republican families, something that the PIRA itself recognized. O’Rawe describes a lecture in prison – “one of the salient points of his [Tommy McKearney’s] lecture was that involvement in the republican movement was usually hereditary – that is, certain families had produced Volunteers from the Treaty era until the present day. To prove his point, he decided to do a census in the wing. Right enough, almost everyone could trace a degree of ancestral involvement with the IRA, although some connections were a bit tenuous.”

In addition to socialization, the newly-written Green Book formed the basis of sustained training for how to deal with interrogation that would reduce the likelihood of confession and betrayal. New recruits would spend weeks studying and being tested on the Green Book, as well as other training about interrogation. They were also told to expect the worst – one IRA volunteer is quoted as saying “When you join the ‘Ra, you’re told straight up, you’ll either spend a long

334 Alonso, **IRA and Armed Struggle**, p. 78.
335 Alonso, **IRA and Armed Struggle**, p. 126.
336 Collins, **Killing Rage**, p. 158.
time in jail or you’ll die.” The ties to the local community and attempts to scare off prospective recruits explain the British Army’s 1978 assessment that “our evidence of the caliber of rank-and-file terrorists does not support the view that they are mindless hooligans drawn from the unemployed and unemployable.”

Finally, internal security operations were stepped up as part of the re-organization. An unofficial counterintelligence team, “the unknowns,” had been set up in 1970s Belfast, but this was now expanded. A dedicated security department was devoted to trying to suss out informers. But it was also dedicated to protecting the incumbent leadership from violent challenges, and the prospect of coercion was used to create further incentives for obedience at both the elite and foot soldier levels. Danny Morrison, the PIRA publicity director, was allegedly a key player in deciding the fate of alleged informers. As so common among PIRA elites, Morrison had deep historical roots to the republican movement – his uncle, Harry White, had been “a legendary IRA veteran” who was good friends with Billy McKee.

Alonso argues that “authoritarianism... has always characterized the internal functioning of the IRA” – in addition to the positive social inducements of family and trust, alleged dissidents were brutally threatened and ostracized. Indeed, “group unity prevailed over everything else,” with the movement focused on “the fomenting of group cohesion by breaking down its members’ sense of individuality.” A party line was clearly outlined and backed to the hilt by a mixture of positive and negative incentives. And when it changed, the

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339 Kelley, The Longest War, p. 295.
340 It was nicknamed “the nutting squad” for putting bullets in peoples’ heads. Ironically it turned out to be penetrated by the British state. Scappatici Stakeknife
341 Moloney, Secret History, p. 335. Morrison was nicknamed “The Lord Chief Justice” by British security forces.
342 Taylor, Provos, p. 281.
343 Alonso, IRA and Armed Struggle, p. 134.
344 Alonso, IRA and Armed Struggle, p. 143.
345 Alonso, IRA and Armed Struggle, p. 130.
movement was brought into line with the new party position, with whatever mixture of lies, threats, and unspoken truths this required.

The military results of the reorganization were felt by 1979. The PIRA continued to slaughter innocents, as tragically shown in the fire bombing of a hotel in 1978 that incinerated a dozen people. In 1979 it had two higher profile military operations – first, the assassination of Lord Mountbatten (and several other civilians), second, a coordinated ambush that killed 18 British soldiers at Warrenpoint near the Irish border. The Warrenpoint attack signaled that the PIRA retained the capacity to launch limited but punishing strikes, while the (strategically pointless) killing of Mountbatten had some kind of symbolic value, linked to the republican rhetoric of attacking the establishment.

The security establishment had contained the PIRA’s early 1970s offensive but it had not defeated the PIRA - “for the security forces, to travel by road in South Armagh was to dice with death”346 and in Belfast, routine 2-man RUC police foot patrols would be accompanied by 6-10 regular British Army troops. Downtown Belfast would become ever more firmly enmeshed in a “Ring of Steel” to prevent car bombs, and the elite Special Air Service (SAS) were a fixture in Northern Ireland. Though the British made inroads through the “supergrass” system of making convictions based on the word of single informers, when this system was outlawed the PIRA was able to consolidate and recover. In the mid-1980s, therefore, “a miserable stalemate emerged, as “a large security apparatus was holding the violence down to lower levels than previously, but was unable to eradicate it completely.”347

This section has argued that as a result of deep social continuities combined with organizational adaptation, by the late 1970s and early 1980s, PIRA had become “a very large,

346 Harnden, Bandit Country, p. 80.
efficient, hierarchically-organized command structure”\textsuperscript{348} while, interestingly, “other paramilitary organizations, including, we might add, some of the ‘local’ Irish ones (e.g. UDA) have traditionally not reaped the same organizational benefits of adopting such a structure.”\textsuperscript{349} Organizational structure alone was insufficient to explain group cohesion (since it was technically shared across all groups), which instead relied on a robust social infrastructure. Formal organization followed social integration, not the other way around. PIRA elites cooperated with one another, and incorporated new recruits without degrading internal control.

**B. PIRA Goes Political, 1981-1990.**

Military critique was linked by the new leadership to a broader political point – the ceasefire had shown that in the absence of war, the republican movement was at a loss for action. “A new wave of leading voices”\textsuperscript{350} emerged to argue in favor of a broader political approach to the struggle that would combine violence with community mobilization. But here lurked the danger of “going political” and thus being labeled as sell-outs. The ideology advanced from 1977 on, and reflected in these political and organizational shifts, was “the long war” – a sustained struggle against British rule, rather than the quick-and-intense onslaught of the early 1970s. Through a series of speeches, particularly the 1977 Wolfe Tone memorial address by veteran Belfast Provisionals co-founder Jimmy Drumm, announced the strategy – “the Republican Movement was calling for a long-term, high-level sacrifice from its members.”\textsuperscript{351} Smith refers to this as a “total strategy” that attempted to use political mobilization to counterbalance overwhelming British material superiority while retaining violence as a constant reminder of the

\textsuperscript{348} Horgan and Taylor, “The provisional Irish republican army,” p. 24.
\textsuperscript{349} Horgan and Taylor, “The provisional Irish republican army,” p. 24.
\textsuperscript{350} English, Armed Struggle, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{351} White, Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, p. 259.
Balancing military coercion with political mobilization would put severe strain on the Provisional IRA.

Arms and Influence: PIRA Ends Abstention in the Republic Without a Split. By the mid-1980s the Provisionals and Sinn Féin would try to combine armed struggle with electoral politics. This move towards electoralism arose out of a prison hunger strike in 1981 that left 10 republicans dead (7 from PIRA, 3 from INLA). Unexpectedly, this created an electoral opportunity, as Bobby Sands, the first hunger striker, was elected in absentia as a Member of Parliament to Westminster from the Fermanagh and South Tyrone seat three weeks before his death. The mass mobilization that accompanied the hunger strikes and election victory signaled a possible new way forward for PIRA and Sinn Féin. As Morrison put it at the 1981 Ard Fheis—“who here really believes we can win the war through the ballot box? But will anyone here object if, with a ballot paper in one hand and an Armalite in the other, we take power in Ireland?” Sands’ election marked “a watershed” in how the Provisional movement viewed the future, opening a possible way out of military stalemate. Electoral participation in 1983, 1984, 1985, and 1986 showed that the 1981 election strategy had been no fluke.

By 1986, “Sinn Féin was now a major political force on the island.” But the challenge facing those who were willing to dabble in politics was avoiding a split. As Adams, Morrison, and others interested in mixing war and votes began to edge toward taking up seats in the Irish parliament, a repeat of the bitter 1969 OIRA-PIRA split loomed—the exact same issue of Sinn Féin abstention from the Dail (the Irish parliament at Leinster House) was once more in question.

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352 Smith, Fighting for Ireland?.
353 Recent work on the hunger strike suggests that the PIRA leadership allowed it to continue longer than necessary—showing the degree of control within the organization, one of the key prisoners involved writes in retrospect that he and others “attributed almost godlike status to the IRA leadership” and that “an order from the Army Council is absolute.” O’Rawe, Blanketmen, p. 185 and p. 119.
354 White, Provisional Irish Republicans, p. 142.
355 Moloney, Secret History, p. 245.
Such a move away from abstention in the Republic would be a “seismic change in the Republican Movement,” risking “the same result that Goulding had got in 1969.”

I argued in Chapter 3 that major political-military shifts can put enormous strain on a group’s internal control due to the change in the purpose and operations of the organization. Thus this period proves an ideal time to examine the actual level of internal control within PIRA – if a group was going to break, it would be here. Unsurprisingly, “preventing the sort of split that destroyed Goulding’s hopes became a strategic imperative for Adams.” Equally unsurprisingly, there was internal dissent even among key elites. Opposing the political move were two sets of internal foes – Ivor Bell and northern hardline IRA allies, and Ó Brádaigh and Ó Conaill and southern traditionalists. In combination, these skeptics of electoralism looked poised to rip PIRA apart in a repeat of 1922-3 and 1969. Could Adams and his supporters keep the organization together?

First, and rather murkily, Adams’ old friend Ivor Bell from West Belfast opposed a diversion of funds from PIRA into Sinn Féin; he was also upset about more personal issues. Given Bell’s prominent role in the organization this was deeply problematic; he had been chief of staff for much of 1982 and 1983. Bell began gathering allies, “convinced that a majority of IRA Volunteers were unhappy with the electoral strategy.” Moloney argues that other elements within the Belfast Brigade were also unhappy with electoralism, and Belfast OC Eddie Carmichael became implicated in Bell’s attempted coup. Their criticisms included “the low level of IRA activity in Belfast, the exclusion of tried members like themselves from the inner circle,

356 Taylor, Provos, p. 289.
357 Moloney, Secret History, p. 293.
358 Moloney, Secret History, p. 54.
359 His partner Anne Boyle had been expelled from Northern Command; he felt his soldiers needed bulletproof vests that the leadership only bought for themselves
360 Moloney, Secret History, p. 244.
and the diversion of funds into political work.”

But there would be no coup or split. The details remain hazy, but Bell, “unable to gather enough numbers to force the issue,” was quickly court-martialed, convicted of treason, and sent into an internal exile in West Belfast. Apparently he and his wife were informed that anything but silence would be punished with death, and they have held their silence. A disgruntled, if somewhat confusing, senior former PIRA member describes the purge of Bell, Carmichael, and their allies by saying “again, George Orwell: good pig, bad pig, good horse, bad horse.” When the Adams leadership decided that Bell would go, he was pushed out quickly and efficiently.

Alonso interprets the success of Adams’ defense as involving “considerable group pressure... the submission [of the organization to Adams] was almost total and uncritical... group cohesion was thus guaranteed in the face of potentially divisive issues.” Bell had stepped out of the core and was punished for it – other than Carmichael no other elites had defected to join him. As IRA veteran Brendan Hughes puts it in retrospect in explaining why the organization held together “that sense of loyalty was still there... the anti-British thing is there in that anybody who speaks out against the leadership is seen to be anti-republican.”

After the Bell challenge, the leadership did increase the level of military operations to assuage doubts that it was “selling out.” But Ó Conaill and Ó Brádaigh remained as critics of ending abstention, and “the threat remained like a sword of Damocles, ready to be dislodged by

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362 O’Brien, The Long War, p. 130.
363 Taylor, Provos, p. 290.
364 Alonso, IRA and Armed Struggle, p. 125.
365 Alonso, IRA and Armed Struggle, p. 126.
366 Alonso, IRA and Armed Struggle, p. 126.
any movement onto the head of Gerry Adams,“367 of a rupture in the movement. Ó Conaill and Ó Brádaigh, the southern stalwarts, were profoundly opposed.368 They had been key players in the PIRA split of 1969, and while they were not hawkish in the sense of maintaining high-level violence369, they retained a deep opposition to compromise with the Republic. The legacy of the civil war remained – “many of the Southern members of Sinn Féin came from families and backgrounds shaped by the bitter divisions of 1922 and they literally hated the system of government in Dublin.”370 To them, discussion of taking up seats in Leinster House was “Free State talk.”371

Southerners had a greater representation within Sinn Féin than within PIRA, but if PIRA held together and a Sinn Féin feud was relatively minor, the Armalite-and-ballot box strategy would survive. While the abstentionist southerners did pose some political threat within Sinn Féin, it is clear that the PIRA military organization held firm, as it largely had in the face of the Bell coup. Adams, McGuinness, and their supporters used PIRA’s military power and their control of a new Libyan influx of weapons to keep the armed side of the movement fully “onside.” After the American bombing of Tripoli, Libya had become interested in hurting Britain, and reactivated old contacts with the Provisionals. During 1985 and 1986, 150 tons of Libyan-supplied weapons were brought into Ireland. The presence of these weapons was important in “greatly transforming the military capacity of the IRA.”372 Gaddafi’s largesse included “around 1,000 rifles as well as formidable weapons such as Semtex plastic explosive, heavy machine guns firing armour-piercing rounds which could cut through even protected

367 Clarke, Broadening the battlefield, p. 235.
368 Another line of contention was Ó Brádaigh’s favored plan for a federal Ireland that northerners feared would leave them under unionist domination within Ulster.
369 Ó Conaill is rumored to have favored ending the war in 1973 (one of the major revelations in Taylor, Provos); both he and Ó Brádaigh later seemed to be content to keep the possibility of violence alive for future generations.
370 Moloney, Secret History, p. 293.
372 English, Armed Struggle, p. 249.
police vehicles, Sam-7 missiles and anti-aircraft guns.\textsuperscript{373} The huge influx of weapons, the largest the IRA had ever received, affected the organization at every level.\textsuperscript{374}

These weapons would bolster the incumbent PIRA leadership in the face of the abstentionists’ political challenge. The large influxes of weaponry were used by the leadership to persuade its units that the war would continue, that there would be no “sell-out,” and that only by sticking with the incumbents could they gain access to large-scale weaponry – “the leadership could promise with some certainty that armed struggle would not be scaled down.”\textsuperscript{375} Moloney notes that “with tons of weaponry stored away and many middle-ranking IRA activists aware that a big offensive was in the pipeline, the notion that Adams was about to sell out just seemed absurd... the message from the outgoing IRA Army Council was that the war was going on regardless of how the vote on abstentionism went.”\textsuperscript{376} Bell agrees, arguing that “one of the cohesive factors was the arrival of the Libyan arms shipments... so the IRA did not split.”\textsuperscript{377}

Arms, combined with support from Morrison, McGuinness, now-jailed Brian Keenan, and jailed veteran Gerry Kelly, swung a 1986 PIRA General Army Convention fully in favor of ending abstention. Quartermaster General Michael “Mickey” McKevitt and former Chief of Staff Seamus Twomeny voted against ending abstention at the Army Convention, but both accepted the decision and did not split (McKevitt, however, would later break to form the Real IRA in 1997).\textsuperscript{378} White, despite his clear sympathies with Ó Brádaigh, writes that “the supporters of abstentionism never had a chance. They were outnumbered, they faced a compelling argument, and their primary opponents were supported by hard-line IRA men – Cahill, McGirl, and J.B.

\textsuperscript{373} Mallie and McKittrick, \textit{Endgame in Ireland}, p. 61.
\textsuperscript{374} Holland, \textit{Hope against history}, p. 195.
\textsuperscript{375} O’Brien, \textit{The Long War}, p. 129.
\textsuperscript{377} Bell, \textit{IRA}, p. 236.
\textsuperscript{378} English, \textit{Armed Struggle}, p. 294.
O’Hagan – with impeccable credentials.” English writes that “the Libyan arms helped, ironically, strengthen the republican emphasis on politics. Those in the leadership who wanted to move in a more decidedly political direction had hitherto been open to the charge of playing down the armed struggle, as a consequence. Armed with Gaddafi’s guns, however, they could confidently proclaim that the war would continue.” Military credibility and resource centralization combined to give the leadership control over the organization.

When Sinn Féin held its 1986 Ard Fheis and voted on the policy of entering the Irish parliament if elected, senior PIRA men Pat Doherty, Seamus Twomey, Joe Cahill, and John Joe McGirl publicly spoke in favor of ending abstention. The PIRA did not split, though a small group led by Ó Brádaigh and Ó Conaill did break from Provisional Sinn Féin to form Republican Sinn Féin (RSF). It should be noted, against my argument, that a number of the key figures who had led PIRA in the 1969-72 period had now left it, including Sean Keenan from Derry and Billy McKee from Belfast. The foundational layer of the traditionalist bonding network within Sinn Féin had frayed significantly, and there was both a north-south and younger-older axis to the split, though this was very far from determinative.

But PIRA itself stayed firm – many of the individuals linked to RSF had been uninvolved in militancy for years and were now elderly; they no longer had status as warlord elites who could mobilize local communities for violence. The organization had taken on something of a life of its own, and was no longer beholden to the individuals who had started it. The local elites at the core of the PIRA were now a blend of the foundational old guard (Cahill, Twomey, 

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379 White, Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, p. 299.
380 English, Armed Struggle, p. 250. O’Brien, The Long War, p. 137 argues that the successful landing of 4 of the 5 Libyan shipments was a “calamity of enormous proportions” on the part of the Irish security forces and “left the IRA equipped with a bigger quantity and better quality of weapons and explosives than at any stage in their history,” p. 137.
381 Clarke, Broadening the battlefield, pp. 237-8.
382 Original southerner John Joe McGirl stayed with the Provisionals because of “close ties with the people who became the movement’s new leaders.” White, Provisional Irish Republicans, p. 161.
O'Hagan) and the younger generation, including both those linked to the bonding network (Adams, Morrison, South Armagh) and those who had been incorporated in the 1970s (McGuinness, Kevin McKenna). All were linked to one another by overlapping ties of family, prison, combat, and daily socialization, reducing the likelihood of significant defection (though far from ruling it out). The northern fighters held the center of gravity in the organization, and pursued the path of elections, pulling in their wake almost all everyone else - “the vast majority of the pre-1969 Northern Republicans, post-1969 Northern Republicans, and post-1969 Southern Republicans stayed with the Provisional Irish Republican Movement.”

A few PIRA men would become associated with RSF and in 1996 the Continuity IRA publicly emerged linked to RSF. But there was no military rupture of any consequence, in part because PIRA threatened O Conaill and his supporters that “if they set up a rival Army, the Provisionals would take O Conaill out.” The RSF/CIRA viewed themselves as playing the role of the IRA in the 1930s and 1940s – keeping the flame alive for a future generation and “if ever needed, a bolt hole for disaffected Provisionals although few actually made the transition.”

Along with the later marginalization of the Real IRA in the late 1990s, “the effectiveness with which this internal dissidence was stamped out shows the power of what could be called the leadership elite within the movement; the importance of their role can therefore hardly be exaggerated.” Remarkably, this “leadership elite” included people with quite different ideological views – the traditionalist republicanism of McGuinness, Cahill, Twomey, and the South Armagh leadership like Tom Murphy; the hard-left revolutionary ideas of Brian Keenan; and the soft-left, electorally-inclined Belfast group around Adams, including Morrison, Jim

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383 White, *Provisional Irish Republicans*, p. 158.
385 Taylor, *Provos*, p. 291. I briefly discuss CIRA’s shadowy development later in this chapter.
386 Alonso, *IRA and Armed Struggle*, p. 132.
Gibney, and Tom Hartley. As White notes, the northerners, despite generational and ideological differences, "share close, personal relationships. . . . veterans of the 1930s and 1940s, formed the core of the Provisionals. They recruited, organized, and nurtured those who became the new leadership."387 Given the massive shift that electoralism involved, it is quite striking, indeed surprising, that internal cooperation was maintained; a simple hawks-and-doves argument would predict a massive split at this point (and several others, both before and after). For the purposes of our argument, we have directly observed both social integration and external material support playing important roles in maintaining internal control.

_Stalemate._ Sinn Féin continued to contest elections, and PIRA continued to blow things up. The group was hit hard by informers and British security operations, but would nevertheless enter the 1990s as a reasonably coherent and unified organization. There have been periodic rumors of much lower-level challenges to Adams’ control, most notably the behavior of the East Tyrone PIRA, which had embarked on a sustained guerrilla campaign – blowing up police stations and operating in teams much larger than the standard ASU. Some believe that this faction of the Provisionals was pushing for a much more aggressive overall PIRA stance, and taking matters into its own hands. The death of 8 prominent members of the East Tyrone PIRA at Loughgall at the hands of the SAS in 1987 eliminated that possible challenge, however.388 South Armagh always viewed itself as a somewhat self-contained militant republican world and operated accordingly; the PIRA was clearly not a totally unitary actor. But in comparative perspective it was quite cohesive – no significant splits, no violent feuds, and moderate levels of strategic autonomy.

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387 White, _Provisional Irish Republicans_, p. 155.
388 Moloney, _Secret History_, passes along the suspicions of some that Adams actually set this unit up for annihilation, but credible sources in Belfast insist that electronic surveillance led to their deaths.
The British signaled their willingness to play with “Big Boy’s Rules”\textsuperscript{389} both at Loughgall and in the killing of three unarmed (though on-mission) members of an ASU sent to Gibraltar to set up a bombing. Thus, “by the late 1980s it was clear to both sides that, while the IRA could not be beaten, they could be contained.”\textsuperscript{390} Like India’s COIN operations in Kashmir, a vast array of specialized security agencies and units saturated Northern Ireland, from the SAS to the RUC’s Echo 4 Alpha (a highly-“kinetic” RUC team) to MI5 operatives to the locally-recruited UDR. It was hard to find room to breathe, as massive surveillance operations were maintained in both urban and rural areas.\textsuperscript{391}

Nevertheless, the low-intensity conflict continued – a botched bombing killed 11 Protestant civilians at a Remembrance Day ceremony in Enniskillen; the PIRA blew up a senior judge and his wife as they crossed from the Republic; a loyalist killed three people at a funeral and, fearful of a repeat, a PIRA-led mob publicly killed two undercover Army men who had strayed into another funeral procession; delinquents were beaten and kneecapped in West Belfast; a cycle of arrest, release, harassment, and, intermittently, attempted killing marked the relationship between PIRA men and the security forces. The long war had become a struggle to “sicken” the British into rethinking their commitment to the unionists, one dead policeman or child at a time. In this period, despite being consistently outpolled by the SDLP in the broader Catholic community, “local support in electoral and community terms held firm. The IRA needed no more than their local bases to provide hides, covers, and billets for their operation. So long as this situation prevailed, the IRA could continue indefinitely.”\textsuperscript{392}

\textsuperscript{389} Mark Urban, Big boys’ rules: the secret struggle against the IRA (London: Faber, 1992).
\textsuperscript{390} O’Brien, The Long War, p. 158.
\textsuperscript{391} There are a huge number of works on British counterinsurgency operations in Northern Ireland. A few include Urban, Big Boys’ Rules; Chris Ryder, RUC, 1922-97: A Force Under Fire 3rd ed. (London: Mandarin, 1997); and Peter Taylor, Brits: The War Against the IRA (London: Bloomsbury, 2001).
\textsuperscript{392} O’Brien, The Long War, p. 200.
The period from 1989 to 1994 would put the group under yet further strain, as the British security services intensified their efforts, loyalist paramilitaries returned to killing in numbers unseen since the mid-1970s, and the peace process presented another potentially existential challenge in the PIRA’s very raison d’etre. I will return to the crucial move towards the ceasefire after a discussion of INLA’s bloody collapse – as many obstacles as PIRA faced in the early 1990s, it was comparatively serene and triumphant compared to its leftist contemporary.

C. INLA’s Descent into Fratricide, and the IPLO Coda, 1977-1992

Above we saw the emergence and consolidation of the Provisionals as a reasonably cohesive and disciplined, if often hard-pressed, organization. We also studied the consensus-contingent Officials, who fractured on two major occasions but retained a sufficient core to demobilize and enter politics. Now we can examine perhaps the most factionalized group in this entire dissertation, the INLA. As English notes, “the fissiparous and violent world of left republicanism exemplified one of the key truths of Irish nationalist history: that it has very often involved struggle against other nationalists as much as against Britain.” 393 The INLA, I show in this section, spun ever further out of control during the course of the 1980s, culminating in a brutal 1987 feud and split that followed a long process of factionalization. I am able to follow this process using documents from within INLA itself.

*Recovering from the Loss of Costello.* Seamus Costello was assassinated in Dublin in 1977 by the Officials’ Jim Flynn – Costello had been sentenced to death by the OIRA Army Council after Billy McMillen’s killing by Gerald Steenson in Belfast in 1975. This was a devastating blow, and it is reasonable to suggest that “the IRSP and the INLA never fully recovered from this loss.” 394 Even when Costello was alive, however, INLA/IRSP had been a fractious organization

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- the unsanctioned behavior by INLA Belfast units, abandonment of the IRSP by Bernadette McAliskey and other prominent leftists, and Costello’s involuntary removal as Chief of Staff all showed a high level of strategic autonomy. The political side of the movement was essentially dead in the water, as IRSP was small and bankrupt.

With Costello dead, there was no clear leadership elite within the organization and “factions within the INLA openly struggled for supremacy – already a rivalry existed between Belfast and Dublin.” Some wanted to shut down the whole operation but it was decided to soldier on. Belfast INLA was running its own show, funded by small crime, independent of Dublin. John O'Doherty from South Derry became Chief of Staff of the overall organization in 1978, and he coordinated a joint Derry/Dublin/Belfast operation to rob a bank armored car. This provided an infusion of cash into INLA (~460,000 pounds) that kept it alive. Expeditions were sent to Beirut looking for guns and explosives to buy; with some facilitation by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation this quest was successful and INLA finally had some weaponry. Thus, in 1978 and 1979 INLA was “becoming increasingly effective and efficient.”

The quest for a “spectacular” was now on, and a plan to assassinate the British ambassador to Ireland came surprisingly close to success. Instead, the INLA was able to kill MP Airey Neave, Margaret Thatcher’s hard-line security adviser and a likely future Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Using a sophisticated explosive device, they blew up Neave in the Westminster parking lot, and “the INLA had finally made the big time.” The group gained new recruits and publicity with Neave’s killing.

But internal instability continued, including the resignation of the IRSP chairwoman and

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396 Holland and McDonald, INLA, pp. 130-1.
398 Holland and McDonald, INLA, p. 142.
the arrest of her successor. The financial crisis endured, as “neither the party nor the INLA ever succeeded in satisfactorily solving the problem of funding.” Chief of Staff O’Doherty was pushed out by people from Belfast after a series of botched arms deals, but in effect led an informal split that was only cauterized when O’Doherty and some of his crew were arrested after an unauthorized kidnapping. In 1980, the killing of Ronnie Bunting, a key Belfast figure and former Ballymurphy/Turf Lodge OIRA commander, by loyalists removed one of the very few veteran elites in INLA, and the crucial hinge upon which the Belfast unit hung. The INLA, unlike both OIRA and PIRA, had almost no local elites to begin with, and with Costello and Bunting dead, the door was open to a further spiral of instability.

In 1980 and 1981, the prison hunger strikes led to a surge of popular mobilization. This contributed to the politicization of the Provisional IRA, as discussed above, which decided to combine voting and violence. INLA benefited from the hunger strikes because three of its members died on strike. The PIRA kept INLA from benefiting in the diaspora and generally tried to marginalize the group, but INLA certainly gained on the ground, winning local elections for IRSP candidates and leading to massive funeral marches that increased its public visibility. This contributed to a rapid growth in the INLA — “during that highly charged summer, the INLA successfully recruited hundred of young nationalists to its ranks.” PIRA volunteers and sympathizers looking for more militant action than the Provisionals would authorize joined INLA during the hunger strikes, but “without any screening program.” O’Brien talks with two men who joined INLA during the early 1980s, saying “two of the men joined the INLA for action. There was nothing formal about joining up, ‘no ceremonies or swearing in.’ It was a case

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399 Holland and McDonald, *INLA*, p. 146.
400 Holland and McDonald, *INLA*, p. 184. See also Holland, *American Connection*.
401 Holland and McDonald, *INLA*, p. 179.

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of who had ‘gear.’ . . . [an individual involved says:] ‘for a three-year period the INLA were an actual fucking’ fightin’ firm. It was them who had the under-car clamp. They advanced the struggle, saying to the IRA, ‘you don’t have a monopoly.’” 403 This lack of “ceremonies or swearing” gives a sense of the lax organization of the group in comparison to PIRA.

In addition, several younger INLA members were released from prison during this period. Among them was Gerard Steenson, who as a 16-year old had killed OIRA’s Billy McMillen on his own initiative. Including Steenson, John O’Reilly and Thomas “Ta” Power, a younger generation was emerging into power in Belfast. The Dublin-based older INLA men deeply distrusted Steenson. According to a former INLA member, “Bunting had kept them in line, and diluted the antagonism. But his assassination meant there was no buffer between Flynn [Harry Flynn, a senior Dublin INLA man], Goodman [Jackie, a senior Belfast INLA man], and them [Steenson and his cohort].” 404 O’Reilly and Power would end up opposing Steenson in the bloody feuds of 1986/1987, with none surviving.

In May 1981, the Belfast OC, Sean Flynn, was removed at gunpoint by Steenson, Power, and other younger men, including the future informer Harry Kirkpatrick. Most of the Belfast INLA decided to accept the coup, but units in Beechmount and St. James’ Road apparently remained loyal to Flynn, causing a kind of “soft” split. 405 A Steenson supporter was put in charge of Belfast. This was at least the third gun-point change at a significant command level in INLA, following the removals of Costello and O’Doherty as overall Chief of Staff in the 1970s. If “in the autumn of 1981 the Belfast INLA seemed more dynamic and dangerous than ever,” 406 the tensions within Belfast and between Belfast and Dublin remained. Belfast was essentially now

404 Holland and McDonald, INLA, p. 189.
405 Holland and McDonald, INLA, p. 191.
406 Holland and McDonald, INLA, p. 195.
totally separate of Dublin. Steenson tried to kill Harry Flynn, who survived the assassination attempt, and violence broke out in Belfast between the Steenson faction and the Sean Flynn/Jackie Goodman faction.

Informers and “Mad Dog.” Before a full-on feud could develop, however, the RUC swept up nearly two dozen INLA members on the basis of informers’ information. Through a complex series of betrayals, eventually much of the northern INLA ended up in jail, many on the word of supergrass informer Harry Kirkpatrick, including Steenson, O’Reilly, and Power. Though by 1986 most would be released after the collapse of the supergrass system, Kirkpatrick locked up much of the organization for several years, with “devastating” impact on INLA. 407

With much of INLA in jail, a former Provisional named Dominic McGlinchey (nicknamed “Mad Dog”) took over as Chief of Staff. In 1982, the INLA had outkilled the PIRA in a series of ruthless and often reckless operations. McGlinchey would push the organization harder, encouraging its various loose factions to be as aggressive and militaristic as possible. By the summer of 1983 McGlinchey was the leader, and INLA was trying to muscle in on both lucrative criminal enterprises and American weapons. He also tried to purge INLA of people he believed were informers or rivals, often simply shooting or having them shot. This sowed further fear and distrust within the group – “several members of the Army Council would only attend meetings carrying guns.” 408 Bloomer quotes an IRSP spokesman acknowledging that by early 1984 or so, “the IRSP/INLA name was simply a flagpole around which various warring factions rallied.” 409 A cover group calling itself the Catholic Reaction Force, with members from the INLA, used INLA weapons to massacre Protestant church-goers during a service in the town of Darkley in south Armagh. This sectarian killing occurred without McGlinchey’s knowledge, yet another

407 Holland and McDonald, INLA, p. 200.
408 Holland and McDonald, INLA, p. 225.
instance of factional autonomy.

McGlinchey was finally arrested in the spring of 1984. Costello, Bunting, and McGlinchey had all been “indispensable men” for the fragmented and personalistic INLA, in ways that PIRA and OIRA never needed with their far deeper and broader command ranks. OIRA and PIRA could survive the deaths and arrests of key leaders, but INLA could not. The INLA in 1984 through 1986 was primarily a racketeering and extortion group. Internal documents from this period reveal the lack of cohesion in the group. The 1984 Ard Chomairle in a statement wrote:

“the organisation has drifted aimlessly leading to us becoming not a party as such but a loose federation of geographically divided socialist republicans. The continuation of such a state of affairs would lead to local ‘feudal’ socialist republican fiats under the control of socialistic overlords interpreting party policy as they see fit... all that needs to be changed... our public image that of a undisciplined anarchist militaristic movement” 410

An attempt to plot a future strategy in 1986 within IRSP led to edifying exchanges such as:

“Comrade T's document is confused, anti-intellectual, anti-bolshevik [sic] and in the tradition of the Flynnites who tore this movement apart... we need not good intentions but a firmly based ideologically committed centralised leadership and a disciplined committed membership. At the moment we have neither” 411

Fratricide. During this period when much of INLA was in jail, three distinct factions formed – one around the jailed Tom McAllister, and two much larger factions around O’Reilly, Power, and Hugh Torney, on the one hand, and Steenson on the other. When out of prison, O’Reilly had the post-McGlinchey INLA chief of staff “stood down” in a bloodless coup. 412 The group was, as usual, “desperate for weapons.” 413 In written communication from prison, Steenson showed his disdain for the state of the group, writing “there is no national movement under their [O’Reilly and his supporters’] control... examination of these loose affiliates reveals

410 1984 Ard Feis, “Aspects of the National Question,” IRSP, Linen Hall Library. This may have been written by members of Ard Chomairle.
411 “A Reply to ‘The Way Forward,’” Linen Hall Library. From mid-1980s; 1985 or later.
412 Holland and McDonald, INLA, pp. 262-3.
413 Holland and McDonald, INLA, p. 263.
no cohesion, no direction, little structure, few quality personnel though ample IRA security
rejects."\(^{414}\) He developed contacts with Dublin’s old guard IRSP men.

In June 1986, a group of disgruntled INLA men formed the Irish Peoples’ Liberation
Organisation (IPLO) in Belfast and targeted John O’Reilly, the INLA Chief of Staff, for
assassination. Just before Christmas 1986, convictions based on the testimony of informer Harry
Kirkpatrick were overturned, and Steenson and others were released from jail. A massive feud
then broke out, as Steenson linked up with IPLO. IPLO arranged what it claimed would be a
reconciliatory meeting with the O’Reilly faction to be mediated by two Catholic priests. But
instead at the meeting it killed O’Reilly and Ta Power. IPLO tried to distance its name from the
killings by claiming responsibility under the name INLA-Army Council; the O’Reilly/Power
loyalists called themselves INLA-GHQ. Regardless of terminology, “the two sides squared up to
annihilate each other”\(^{415}\) and the “reckless organization seemed to have decided that suicide
would be an appropriate conclusion to its career.”\(^{416}\)

When the smoke cleared by April 1987, Steenson was dead along with eleven others. The
INLA had been ripped apart. A “Future Strategy” document from within the Army Council-GHQ
from sometime during the winter or spring of 1987 offers a grim postmortem on the INLA’s
existence thus far:

“we have also failed to purge our membership of unsuitable material, having in the past
tolerated informers, touts, careerists, opportunists, sectarians and macho militarists”\(^{417}\)

The INLA admitted in its Easter statement of that year that:

“in the past we have too often confused armed actions with revolutionary politics. Consequently
militarism became a tendency in our movement that stultified our development. . .this
underestimation of the revolutionary potential of the Irish working class led to elitism and thence

\(^{414}\) Holland and McDonald, INLA, p. 266.
\(^{415}\) Holland and McDonald, INLA, p. 288.
\(^{416}\) Kelley, The Longest War, p. 373.
on to factionalism... no successful revolutionary movement has been built on ill-discipline, on cliques, on factionalism, nor on the cult of the personality” (Easter Statement from the Leadership of the Republican Socialist Movement, April 1987)

From here the INLA took years to recover. A group on the border led by Dessie O’Hare (the “Border Fox”) split off to form his own gang called the Irish Revolutionary Brigade that became well known for gruesome kidnappings before being shut down. INLA in Belfast straggled along, with a new commander taking control and trying to maintain some internal cohesion. As we will see later, INLA was not to find real stability despite its members being fully aware of the structural problems the organization faced.

**IPLO’s Short Life and Death.** In April 1987, after the feud, IPLO was abandoned by many of its former older members in favor of the Provisionals, leaving it in the hands of young Belfast toughs. The IPLO went on to combine sectarian killings with criminality, including a major move into drug-dealing. But, like its predecessor, it lacked a bonding network base or significant external support. Abandoned by older veterans who might have brought some stability, it became a loose organization almost exclusively concentrated in Belfast and led by Jimmy Brown. IPLO engaged in a variety of uncontrolled sectarian attacks against Protestants, and “in 1989 the IPLO’s actions raised sectarian tensions to heights not experienced since the 1970s.” IPLO also turned to drug-dealing, which was a taboo-breaking first for a republican armed group.

As a coda stretching beyond 1990, the IPLO followed a course to factionalized self-destruction. Holland and McDonald note that the Provisionals began to grow concerned at the fact that “petty criminals and paramilitary rejects started to swell the IPLO’s ranks,” including

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418 The “revolutionary-ness” and literacy of this IRB were distinctly open to question. A handwritten document trying to outline its Marxist ideology and homage to Seamus Costello managed to spell his name “Costelloe,” made reference to its ‘personel’ and offered a ‘responce’ to the INLA’s failures (“Border Fox: The Truth,” in Linen Hall NIPC). O’Hare went on to take a six-year vow of silence in prison before re-joining INLA in the late 1990s.
419 This leads some to suggest the whole IPLO/INLA-GHQ feud had been instigated by PIRA.
420 Holland and McDonald, *INLA*, p. 307.
421 Holland and McDonald, *INLA*, p. 315.
expelled former PIRA men. The IPLO began factionalizing around personalities and the quest for profits. Brown was killed by dissidents calling themselves the IPLO-Belfast Brigade, led by Sammy Ward. Though the two IPLO factions (in a throwback to 1987, Brown’s loyalists called themselves IPLO-Army Council) stopped feuding in September 1992, the Provisionals decided that the drug-dealing and destabilizing IPLO had to go. The PIRA killed Ward and abducted and beat numerous IPLO members in a carefully planned operation across Belfast on Halloween 1992. The “night of long knives”\textsuperscript{422} destroyed the IPLO, whose factions dissolved themselves rather than fight back against the Provisional onslaught.

D. Trajectories of Republican Insurgency, 1977-90

Table 4.6 offers predictions and reality for the 1977-1990 period (extended a bit to include the full run of IPLO). The values on the independent variables remained constant for each group, so I do not differentiate into smaller periods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group and DV Prediction</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PIRA 1977-90 (Cohesive)</td>
<td>\textit{Theory: Low} \textit{Actual: Low}</td>
<td>\textit{Theory: Low} \textit{Actual: N/A}</td>
<td>\textit{Theory: Low} \textit{Actual: Medium}</td>
<td>\textit{Theory: Political-Military} \textit{Actual: Political-Military}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INLA 1977-90 (Factionalized)</td>
<td>\textit{Theory: High} \textit{Actual: High}</td>
<td>\textit{Theory: High} \textit{Actual: High}</td>
<td>\textit{Theory: High} \textit{Actual: High}</td>
<td>\textit{Theory: Multiple} \textit{Actual: Multiple}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPLO 1987-92 (Factionalized)</td>
<td>\textit{Theory: High} \textit{Actual: High}</td>
<td>\textit{Theory: High} \textit{Actual: High}</td>
<td>\textit{Theory: High} \textit{Actual: High}</td>
<td>\textit{Theory: Multiple} \textit{Actual: Multiple}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{SB} = Social Base; \textit{ES} = External Support; Prediction = trajectory predicted by my theory; Bolded Cell = significant misprediction

The contrast is striking – the Provisionals survived a high-level counterinsurgency campaign and a major political shift as a unified organization. There were no military splits. Internal unrest was over political-military issues - Ivor Bell and his allies were upset about the

\textsuperscript{422} Holland and McDonald, \textit{INLA}, p. 342.
diversion of funds into election campaigning and Sinn Féin, while Ó Brádaigh, Ó Conaill and their allies opposed entering Ireland’s Leinster House parliament. As in the 1972-76 period, however, my prediction of low strategic autonomy is not borne out – there was significant freedom of maneuver for local factions, as shown in activities in East Tyrone and south Armagh. While, again, this did not reach the level of a strategic challenge, it is clear that part of the price of the 1985/6 leadership consolidation was allowing somewhat less constrained operations.

To the extent that the PIRA continued to resemble a fairly cohesive organization, it is apparent that both its bonding network social base and external material support played crucial roles. Bonds of trust amongst command cadres bolstered cooperation (though certainly not universally) even across ideological disagreements and elites continued to mobilize and control local communities, leading to success in local incorporation of new recruits. This combination of elite cooperation and local incorporation allowed growing organizational sophistication and shifts in institutional form. The funding and weaponry from the United States kept the group fighting in the late 1970s and early 1980s, while also giving its leadership significant control over who got what. The Libyan arms shipments of 1985 and 1986 are widely viewed as having helped maintain unity when we would most expect it to be tested at the end of abstentionism.

While I while touch on the INLA briefly below, for all intents and purposes its “war” ended in 1987. INLA’s factionalized, indeed byzantine, trajectory had much to do with the fact that “there was a lack of mature and experienced leadership, which has always been available to the Provisionals and the Officials.”423 The roots of this factionalization can be traced to Costello’s inability to foster the kind of elite defection that would provide a bonding network social base. Other than in Derry, Costello was forced to rely on an influx of young recruits undisciplined by a set of intertwined local command elites. This structural problem proved

423 Holland and McDonald, INLA, p. 326.
unsolvable, haunting INLA well past Costello’s death in a series of personal, political, and criminal feuds. This was badly exacerbated by INLA’s lack of external support, which left it frequently short of guns and reliant on criminality for a sporadic trickle of funding. The leadership, such as it was, never had a clear advantage in distributing weaponry or money, and INLA’s periods of military quiescence minimized its allure to possible recruits and current members. Throughout it was marked by large-scale factional autonomy and internal unrest, including numerous gun-point coups at various senior levels.

IPLO followed the INLA path in an even more compressed period of time – violent split and feud, reliance on young undisciplined fighters instead of a preexisting social core, and then falling-out over personality and small-time profits. In some ways the IPLO proved a precursor to the loyalist paramilitaries’ problems (but especially the UDA) after the 1998 Good Friday Agreement – drugs, lack of internal control and commitment, and indiscriminate violence that did more damage to a group’s own ethnic community than anyone else.

V. Continuity and Change During the Peace Process, 1990-2008

By the early 1990s, “the Provisional IRA had survived immense internal and external pressures, twisting and turning and changing according to needs.” Indeed, “few guessed as the new decade dawned that the end of the Provisional IRA’s long war against Ulster was in sight.” A series of bombings in Britain occurred, including a mortar attack on 10 Downing Street. The loyalist UVF and UDA had re-consolidated in the late 1980s and launched a growing killing spree that reminded many of the 1970s.

Instead, however, the next 15 years would see the effective end of the Troubles. The Provisional IRA would ultimately decommission its weapons and began the process of

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424 O’Brien, The Long War, p. 103.
425 Holland, Hope against history, p. 225. In 1993, a close academic observer (and sympathizer) of Irish republicanism wrote that “peace in Ireland is unlikely.” White, Provisional Irish Republicans, p. 175.
demobilization, while the loyalist paramilitaries embarked on a similar, if less successful, route. The PIRA was threatened by a potentially-formidable split in the form of the Real IRA, which broke away in 1997 in response to a PIRA ceasefire. Yet, despite the undeniable fact that PIRA was inching towards constitutional nationalism and the end of armed struggle, the Real IRA was unable to generate large-scale defections from PIRA and within five years would be split and factionalized. Even the hawks within PIRA largely, though not unanimously, remained loyal to the leadership as it marched its way into a power-sharing assembly at Stormont, showing the depth of social integration in the group and the continuity of its leadership cadres.

Once again the major social strongholds of PIRA stood fairly firm in favor of the Good Friday Agreement, assisted by the RIRA’s disastrous bombing at Omagh and the unwillingness of Irish-America to countenance more violence. Unable to rely on a socially-dense, geographically-dispersed social base, RIRA’s leaders were forced into a rapid coalition-based expansion policy to try to gain sufficient strength to quickly launch a significant bombing campaign. This led to weak internal control and high levels of government infiltration that combined with a distinct lack of diasporic support to undermine the group. RIRA’s attempts to spoil the 1998 Good Friday Agreement thus faltered. The INLA would try to reinvigorate its armed struggle in the 1990s, only to fall prey yet again to internecine factionalism, culminating in a violent 1996 feud.

I break up this period into three general sections – the move towards a PIRA ceasefire between 1990 and 1994, the tumultuous forging of the Good Friday Agreement from 1994 to 1998, and the movement towards PIRA weapons decommissioning after 1998. Each posed
different incentives and challenges both for PIRA and for its smaller republican challengers.\textsuperscript{426}

There is a lot of contingency in this story, from the involvement of George Mitchell to the Omagh bombing to the effect of 9/11 on perceptions of armed struggle/terrorism, so rather than trying to tell the labyrinthine story of the peace process, I am interested in the varying ability of groups to hold themselves together in the midst of an often unpredictable political environment.

Here I offer predictions on the DV for each period.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PIRA</strong></td>
<td>SB: Bonding</td>
<td>SB: Bonding</td>
<td>SB: Bonding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ES: Substantial</td>
<td>ES: Substantial</td>
<td>ES: Substantial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INLA</strong></td>
<td>SB: Coalition</td>
<td>SB: Coalition</td>
<td>SB: Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ES: No</td>
<td>ES: No</td>
<td>ES: No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Real IRA</strong></td>
<td>SB: Coalition/</td>
<td>Consensus-</td>
<td>SB: Coalition</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bonding</td>
<td>Contingent/</td>
<td>ES: No</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ES: No</td>
<td>Fractionalized</td>
<td>Fractionalized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*SB = Social Base; ES = External Support; Prediction = trajectory predicted by my theory


While a military stalemate developed in the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was a concomitant move towards secret negotiations between Sinn Féin/PIRA’s Gerry Adams, the SDLP’s John Hume, and the British and Irish governments. The slow progress of this dialogue is told in great detail in a variety of other works, so my focus here is on how the ceasefire was sold and imposed within PIRA itself.\textsuperscript{427} Much of the impetus for a halt to violence arose from the fact that “the situation the Army Council confronted in 1994 was critical”\textsuperscript{428} – loyalist paramilitaries were on the march (in 1992, loyalists killed as many people as republicans) and the security forces successful in cracking down on Provisional operations. While the PIRA remained capable


\textsuperscript{427} The voluminous literature on the peace is at least partially summarized in Michael Cox, Adrian Guelke, and Fiona Stephen, *A farewell to arms? Beyond the Good Friday Agreement* (2nd ed. Manchester, UK : Manchester University Press, 2006).

\textsuperscript{428} Holland, *Hope against history*, p. 261.
of "terrifyingly effective"\textsuperscript{429} operations and had enough weaponry to remain active at a very low level indefinitely, it was nevertheless facing severe military problems.\textsuperscript{430} Moreover, Provisional leaders were starting to feel the electoral ceiling placed on Sinn Féin by IRA violence – "combining the ballot box and the Armalite. . . proved unsustainable. Success with one undermined use of the other."\textsuperscript{431}

Before 1994 the possibility of ceasefires had been broached, but "the resistance to halting the armed campaign was immense. It meant going against the most deeply embedded republican belief."\textsuperscript{432} Pursuing a ceasefire was a particularly serious problem because the Adams-McGuinness leadership had risen to power in part by criticizing the 1974-5 ceasefire; the prospect of their own ceasefire, in the wake of ending abstentionism in 1986, raised yet more uncomfortable analogies to past splits and internal battles. This internal tension was heightened by the growing campaign of loyalists to kill Catholics. A ceasefire might lead to the leadership being overthrown or marginalized for having sold out while not defending their community - "the loyalist onslaught directly challenged the IRA's raison d'être, and the pressures on the organization in Belfast to respond were enormous."\textsuperscript{433} Nevertheless, Irish and British political actors were opening a door, Irish-America wanted peace, and the PIRA was getting hit hard.

In response, the leadership ended up presenting a fait accompli to its rank-and-file, with the Army Council having approved a ceasefire by a significant margin; it was announced on August 31, 1994, soon followed by a loyalist ceasefire. Internally, it appears that the leadership vowed

\textsuperscript{429} Phrase used by a knowledgeable security source in Belfast, July 2007.

\textsuperscript{430} Alonso argues that the PIRA was de facto defeated by this point, its leaders knew it, and that they continued to support violence that "guaranteed their hegemony within the IRA" despite the odds of victory being low. Alonso, \textit{IRA and Armed Struggle}, p. 159.

\textsuperscript{431} O'Leary, "IRA," p. 220.

\textsuperscript{432} Holland, \textit{Hope against history}, p. 260.

\textsuperscript{433} Moloney, \textit{Secret History}, p. 414. Though see Sharrock and Devenport, \textit{Man of War}, p. 338, for argument that Belfast more moderate.
that this was a temporary, tactical move\textsuperscript{434}, and its response to criticism “was to urge the rank and file to keep faith and trust in the leadership, and here the record – and thus trustworthiness – of a leadership that had smuggled tons of weapons from Libya was constantly and relentlessly invoked. The other argument, possibly the most powerful of all during these days, said that only the British stood to gain by division and discord within the IRA.”\textsuperscript{435} As former Irish Taoiseach Albert Reynolds said about the summer of 1994, “everything was done to avoid a split.”\textsuperscript{436} There was a parade on West Belfast’s republican Fall Roads as the leadership portrayed the “cessation of military operations” as a victory; the “undefeated” IRA had brought Britain to a standstill. Rowan notes that “the challenge for the leaders of republicanism during this period was to bring the ‘critical mass’ of their organisation along with them and to avoid a split at all costs.”\textsuperscript{437}

\textbf{B. The Real IRA and Good Friday}

\textit{The End of the First Ceasefire.} But political progress was difficult and slow, most dramatically over the issue of Provisional weapons. Decommissioning weaponry was, at this point, an absolute non-starter for the PIRA, and the entire peace process enterprise began to sink into a bog of meaningless buzz words and intransigence. The Provisionals continued recruiting and training, and in 1995 a series of murders by PIRA occurred in Belfast under the cover name of “Direct Action Against Drugs.”\textsuperscript{438} Internal unrest over the ceasefire was growing as PIRA members feared that they were being strung along by the British.\textsuperscript{439} Sinn Féin remained

\textsuperscript{434} The PIRA/SF had circulated a document called “TUAS” without clearly explaining what it meant, but signaling to some in the press and negotiating world that it meant “Totally Unarmed Strategy.” Instead, it turned out to mean “Tactical Use of Armed Struggle,” showing a willingness to return to the gun. Sharrock and Devenport, \textit{Man of War}, p. 393.

\textsuperscript{435} Moloney, \textit{Secret History}, p. 432.

\textsuperscript{436} In Sharrock and Devenport, \textit{Man of War}, p. 346.

\textsuperscript{437} Brian Rowan, \textit{Behind the Lines: the Story of the IRA and Loyalist Ceasefires} (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1995), p. 84. He also passes along rumors that a team “under the control of former republican prisoner Bobby Storey was established to deal with dissent” on p. 101.

\textsuperscript{438} This was apparently motivated by Belfast OC Brian Gillen, and signaled that the PIRA was still in business.

\textsuperscript{439} Sharrock and Devenport, \textit{Man of War}, p. 382; Moloney, \textit{Secret History}, p. 436.
unwilling to accept decommissioning as a condition for entering all-party talks.

On February 6, 1996, a large bomb exploded at London’s Canary Wharf. The PIRA cessation was over. Why? Two factors drove the return to violence. The first was a simple strategic logic of imposing cost on the British to get them to agree to drop decommissioning as a precondition. The PIRA fear was that giving up weapons, even symbolically, prior to negotiation would be to surrender. But the second was internal unrest within PIRA; as the RUC Chief Constable said, the abandonment of the ceasefire was driven by “the potential spectre of a split in the Movement.” As we would expect, the 1994-6 ceasefire and peace process was putting severe internal strain on an organization that had been built to push the British out, not to negotiate a power-sharing deal with them. In Taylor’s opinion, “had the IRA not bombed Docklands, it would have probably split.” The leadership was in danger of losing control of its key units, especially South Armagh and the border. Indeed, the IRA’s Executive, which chooses the Army Council, had been seriously displeased with the course of events after the ceasefire and essentially demanded the Army Council give up the ceasefire, and so “going back to war in February 1996 was a matter of political survival for Adams and his supporters.”

Between February 1996 and the second PIRA ceasefire of July 20, 1997, a “pathetic, grubby little war” returned to Northern Ireland, with the PIRA trying to calibrate its violence so as not to doom the peace process and harder-line elements within PIRA growing restive. The summer of 1996 was rife with sectarian tensions and the emergence of a UVF splinter that

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440 Taylor, Provos, p. 351.
441 Taylor, Provos, p. 352.
442 Holland, Hope against history, p. 277.
443 Moloney, Secret History, p. 455.
444 Holland, Hope against history, p. 277.
started killing Catholics, as well as rioting throughout the province.\textsuperscript{445} PIRA was attempting to focus on British cities and on the security forces within N. Ireland, rather than mass-casualty bombings and other civilian deaths, but these “hard” targets were far more difficult to strike and most attempted operations were aborted or broken up. In 1996, Adams “found himself in similar circumstances to those experienced by his first chief of staff Cathal Goulding,”\textsuperscript{446} trying to ride the military tiger while entering politics.

Against this backdrop, the autumn 1996 General Army Convention saw a serious challenge to the Adams-McGuinness leadership, led by Quartermaster General Mickey McKevitt, Belfast OC Brian Gillen, and a southern-based bombmaker known as “Frank McGuinness.” They tried to tie Adams’ hands and, allegedly, attempted to elect an Executive that would choose an Army Council on which Adams was on the minority. Through procedural wrangling, reassuring speeches (again a la 1986) by McGuinness, Joe Cahill, J.B. O’Hagan, and the then-Chief of Staff, Kevin McKenna, and the willingness of hard-line leftist Brian Keenan to back the leadership, the Adams faction ended up with new Army Council even to its liking. It was composed of familiar names we’ve seen numerous times before – McGuinness, Adams, Murphy, Brian Keenan, Pat Doherty, McKenna, and Martin Ferris.\textsuperscript{447}

The bonding network elites had mostly rallied around the leadership, the warlords generally (but not unanimously) supporting Adams, even though their own professed ideological views, especially those of McGuinness, Cahill, and Keenan\textsuperscript{448}, were far removed from the

\textsuperscript{445} The flashpoint of these long hot mid-1990s summers was the annual Orange march in Drumcree, which attracted an extremely combustible mix of angry drunken loyalists, IRA-linked community groups, a Catholic-majority neighborhood along the march route, and, consequently, many police and army personnel.

\textsuperscript{446} Sharrock and Devenport, \textit{Man of War}, p. 417.

\textsuperscript{447} O Callaghan identifies Ferris as a long-time PIRA volunteer from a republican family, and suggests that he was known at least in the 1970s as a “brawler.” Sean O'Callaghan, \textit{The Informer} (London: Bantam, 1998).

\textsuperscript{448} Keenan was viewed by Patterson in 1997 as having “emerged from a distinctly 1970s time-warp of fundamentalist militarism.” Patterson, \textit{The Politics of Illusion}, p. 289. Yet he would follow PIRA all the way down the decommissioning path.
electoralism that Adams had come to push. It is crucial to keep in mind just how ideologically heterogeneous the pro-peace process coalition ultimately ended up being – while some hawks would dissent and break away, the majority of the identifiable leadership hawks would remain united all the way to the decommissioning in 2005 and to the present day. There was no “young Turk” phenomenon of younger militants challenging the leadership, which Patterson attributes to the tighter, more disciplined cellular structure that stopped possible dissidents from “reaching the critical mass necessary to challenge the strategic domination of the movement by people like Adams, Hartley, Gibney, and McLaughlin.”

The INLA Self-Immolates, Again. While the PIRA’s somewhat half-hearted war marched on in 1996 without a split, the INLA once again suffered a brutal feud. It had lain largely dormant during the 1990s after the internecine killings of 1986/87, though it had successfully killed some loyalist paramilitaries. During a court appearance in 1995, Chief of Staff Hugh Torney declared that INLA was on a de facto ceasefire. While jailed in the Republic, another INLA member, Gino Gallagher, declared himself Chief of Staff. After skipping bail, Torney and his loyalists, with links to criminal gangs, tried to take back control of the organization, leading to the deaths of six between January and September 1996, including both Gallagher and Torney. “as usual it proved more deadly to its own members than to its declared enemies. Another vicious feud debilitated the organization in 1996, claiming the lives of two of its leader, Hugh ‘Cueball’ Torney and Gino Gallagher, and four others.” In some loose sense, Gallagher’s faction “won”, as the Torney group (calling itself INLA-GHQ) disbanded following

450 INLA killed UVF man Trevor King in 1994; some suspect it was given the intelligence information to do so by PIRA, which was edging towards its ceasefire at the time.
452 Holland, Hope against history, p. 282.
his death. But this was just another instance of the deep internal divisions of the INLA.

INLA would trigger a round of nasty sectarian killings in 1997. Under disputed circumstances, INLA prisoners were able to get access to a pistol that they used to assassinate Billy Wright, the leader of the Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF), an anti-peace process splinter from the UVF. Some believe that the British security services allowed this to occur so that the process would move forward without Wright’s group playing spoiler. In any case, the killing kicked off killings by loyalists and the INLA the winter of 1997 and spring of 1998 that added to the pressure felt for a settlement. Recent inquiries also make it clear that the INLA received the tacit approval of a senior PIRA Belfast commander for the killing, spurring suspicions that during this period INLA killings were part of a PIRA strategy of keeping the heat on the British without getting its hands dirty. After the killing of Wright and consequent sectarian backlash, the INLA would slump back into a loose quiescence.

The Birth of the Real IRA. The 1997 election of Tony Blair offered an opportunity for a new round of peace process negotiation – especially appealing with the PIRA’s operations mostly unsuccessful and the group low on money. Blair’s election opened the door for the Army Council to push for another ceasefire, which they announced in July 1997. Talks were scheduled for September 1997, but Senator George Mitchell laid out a list of preconditions that some PIRA elites thought it would be unconstitutional for IRA members to accept.

Whether or not to accept the Mitchell principles became the spark for a larger showdown, and “a split was inevitable given the astonishing turnaround the Provisionals were eventually to

453 There are also allegations that the British allowed Wright to be killed to get rid of a potential loyalist spoiler. See the inquiry on Billy Wright’s death for testimony from a variety of perspectives: http://www.billywrightinquiry.org/
454 Irish-America was largely backing the peace process through the US government-monitored Friends of Sinn Féin, rather than NORAID. Because of US government monitoring, FoSF was not a very useful conduit of money to PIRA.
Indeed, “the conflict between the Executive and the Army Council was heading inexorably toward a split, and when splits happened and rivals group rushed to control and take over arms dumps, IRA history showed, anything could happen. . . Adams and his allies were facing the most serious challenge of their IRA careers.” An extraordinary Army General Convention met on October 10, 1997 to decide whether Sinn Féin’s negotiating team (made up of several PIRA members) would accept the Mitchell principles.

Mickey McKevitt, the Quartermaster General, led the opposition to accepting the Mitchell principles, supported by a former senior South Armagh PIRA member named Liam Campbell and several other hard-line PIRA men. But Adams’ camp held the line, pulling over Belfast OC Brian Gillen (previously a McKevitt supporter), and holding the loyalty of “hawks” like Keenan and Murphy. Roughly 80% of the delegates at the convention voted for allowing the Sinn Féin team to accept the Mitchell principles, and “Adams and his supporters emerged with the vast majority of republicans still in line, supporting their course. The kind of split that divided the republican movement in 1969 did not take place. Most importantly, the Belfast organization remained overwhelmingly committed to Adams’ leadership.”

Group cohesion was not based on deep ideological consensus, nor on the lures of material wealth, nor on clear ethnic sentiment, but instead on loyalty and trust combined with the ability of PIRA to credibly threaten and withhold control of arms dumps from dissidents. The key mechanisms studied in my theoretical chapter can be found holding the organization together during this most serious of threats to PIRA cohesion. This drives dissidents into fury, castigating the “blind loyalty” of those who have stuck with the leadership despite the massive shift in

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PIRA/SF strategy. Be this as it may, the fact is that once McKevitt led his minority of dissenters out, "the leadership’s control over the IRA was by now complete and dissent virtually nonexistent." Adams, McGuinness, and their loyalists "worked hard, through internal briefings and – in all probability – a certain amount of economy with the truth, to maintain unity." 

McKevitt, Campbell, and "McGuinness" set out to establish the new IRA, what they continued to believe was the true IRA (soon to be known as the Real IRA). What were the social and material underpinnings of this group? The RIRA is difficult to code based on the lack of detailed empirical work on its membership, but it seems to represent an intermediate value on the social base variable – it did pull away a set of highly committed traditionalist republicans, including skilled militants among the quartermaster and engineering departments, but relatively few local republican elites in Belfast, Derry, or even south Armagh. There were significant elements of support on the border around Armagh and Louth, and some support would emerge in Belfast, but the dominant republican elites in these areas generally did not defect as they had in 1969-74 from the Officials. McKenna, the former PIRA Chief of Staff, did not change sides as McKevitt had hoped, while the South Armagh leadership of Murphy and individuals known as the Surgeon and the Undertaker remained onboard with the Provos, as did the bulk of Derry under McGuinness and Belfast under Adams and his "clique," including hard men like Eddie Copeland in north Belfast and traditionalists like Joe Cahill.

PIRA sent out Ferris and other senior members to blunt the outflow of PIRA members, forcing the Real IRA into a fairly rapid and indiscriminate expansion unmediated by local

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460 MacGinty, "Irish republicanism and the peace process," p. 133. Again for comparison’s sake, we can recall Goulding doing the exact same thing in 1969 to try to keep factions on board, but without the same success.
461 Harnden, *Bandit Country*, describes these Armagh men at a PIRA ceremony in 1998, and we know that Murphy stayed with PIRA.
This was definitely a significant split and one that worried the PIRA leadership; it was more important militarily than the 1986 Sinn Féin split over abstentionism. But the republican bonding network remained primarily under PIRA’s control, leaving little social space for the Reals to establish a serious presence. Like INLA in the wake of its split, an inability to generate defection and loyalty by republican local elites doomed the organization.

These social problems were exacerbated by difficulties in gaining support from Irish-America, which had heavily backed the process (especially its wealthier corporate component). Dissidents from the PIRA line certainly continued to exist in Boston and New York, but were not good for significant flows of funding, much less weapons Irish America, which had traditionally supplied weapons, was also a reluctant supplier of arms and munitions.°°° RIRA pursued arms deals in Eastern Europe with mixed success, but was forced to rely, like INLA, on robberies and criminality for sustenance. The Provisionals asserted during this period that journalists were spreading “spurious split stories” and that “suggestions of a split are ridiculous.” Adams argued that “whatever is happening within the IRA, it has shown itself to be a cohesive body.”

The problems of recruitment led to a reliance on criminals and PIRA rejects that diluted the effectiveness of the veterans in the group – unlike the Continuity IRA, whose only real interest appears to be sticking around so that future generations will be able to more successfully rebel, the RIRA tried to actively spoil the negotiations leading up and then the consequent aftermath of the Good Friday Agreement. This required rapid expansion and a ramping-up of operations, and led to severe infiltration by both Irish and British security forces as well as weak internal

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coordination and control - "volunteers had developed a pathological distrust of their own organisation." The loose factions on the ground were largely left to their own devices under the general instruction to cause as much mayhem as possible, dreams of forging a disciplined war-fighting machine having been fairly quickly dashed.

This high autonomy and weak internal control helped contribute to the Real IRA’s disastrous bombing of Omagh in 1998, which killed 29 civilians. The leadership was put under severe pressure, forced to call a ceasefire in a haze of internal recrimination and accusation as well as threats from the Catholic community. A few diehards remained devoted to the cause, but unlike the Provisionals after their various civilian killings, social support largely disappeared from the Real IRA; it was not robustly embedded in enough local communities to survive. Any significant flow of Provisional defectors largely stopped with Omagh. The Provisionals launched a PR offensive against the RIRA, accusing it of pursuing “The Futile Path of Militarism” and asserting that it was “very few in numbers and [they] have little or no support base.”

C. Good Friday, Weapons Decommissioning, and the Dissidents

The Provisionals End Their War. While the Real IRA was trying to launch a bombing offensive, Sinn Féin, after enormously tortured negotiations mediated by George Mitchell, signed onto the Belfast Agreement in April 1998 (more commonly known as the Good Friday Agreement or GFA). The GFA is essentially a power-sharing deal in which elections are held to a Northern Ireland Assembly at Stormont but a four-party (SDLP, Sinn Féin, UUP, DUP) Executive bears collective responsibility for governance, with a First Minister and Deputy First

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467 Mooney and O'Toole, Black Operations, p. 84.
Minister being drawn from the largest two parties.\textsuperscript{470} In this institutional framework, Sinn Féin had re-entered Stormont, despite having heralded its 1972 fall as a major success. But the leadership successfully used the shift to argue that it was now reaching out beyond its core republican support base into the broader nationalist community, creating a sense of momentum that was matched by deep unionist pessimism.

Weapons decommissioning remained a massive issue – the Provisionals argued that there was no need to turn in weapons, which had never been done by republicans before (not even De Valera or the Official IRA had done so when entering constitutionalism), a stance which led many to fear that the peace process was simply a tactical ploy by the Provisionals to gain time, money, and influence while keeping the Armalite poised. Throughout the 1990s, the Provisional leadership was reported to have continually promised not to get rid of its weapons in order to maintain support within the organization for the ceasefire moves.

However, Adams came under increasing pressure to put PIRA arms beyond use under the auspices of the Independent Monitoring Commission. Battles over this issue dragged on, and the Provisionals remained active below the level of attacking the security forces – training, intelligence gathering, and fund-raising activities endured. The need to maintain weapons was seen by many as related to the fact that “the first problem for the IRA throughout the peace process has been to maintain the internal consensus – keep the faith and in doing so deny the mandate of legitimacy to any competition.”\textsuperscript{471} Giving up weapons would essentially end the Provisionals’ war for the near- to medium-term future, and so the challenge remained to overcome “the danger of further splits and the departure of their materiel into the hands of

\textsuperscript{470} This means that there is essentially no “opposition” party or bloc, with the Alliance Party acting as an upper-middle class, bien-pensant group to sometimes give contentious portfolios to.

\textsuperscript{471} Bell, \textit{IRA}, p. 313.
irreconcilables." In October 2000, a Belfast member of the Real IRA was shot and killed, seen by many as a clear bid to stop RIRA influence. The IMC reported in 2004 that the PIRA was "a sophisticated and well-controlled organisation which maintained itself in a state of readiness and was capable to reverting to more widespread violence."

A series of embarrassing PIRA actions - including a bank robbery, volunteers killing a man in a bar brawl, and the unmasking of several senior informers - and the aftermath of 9/11 finally pushed PIRA into weapons decommissioning. Though Adams claimed this would lead to a split and the PIRA hinted at returning to violence in the spring of 2005, the game was up – in this context there was would be no deal if weapons were not put beyond use. Adams publicly called on the PIRA to lay down its arms, the Army Council released a statement ending the campaign, and the IMC announced that it had observed large-scale weapons decommissioning in September 2005.

Other than some speculative work by Ed Moloney, it remains somewhat unclear what the internal discussions within PIRA led to decommissioning, but it involved no splits or violent feuds, instead being marked by "remarkable unity." It is definitely true that since 2005 the PIRA command structure remains intact and continues to exert influence over its members as well as in the community – many PIRA members and ex-prisoners have taken on the role of trying to control rioting at Belfast sectarian interfaces, for instance. Though the DUP has

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472 O'Leary, "IRA," p. 223.
473 Joseph O'Connor was shot and killed in Andersontown, a PIRA redoubt. Those who criticized his killing were criticized in turn by PIRA supporters. There are reports that in 2003 the PIRA basically shut down RIRA in Belfast, but I do not have great confidence in those claims one way or another.
called for the Army Council to be disbanded, it was clear in my interviewing that the British security forces are actually much more willing for the command structures to remain intact so as to facilitate the demobilization process and block the growth of the RIRA, CIRA, and INLA. The move to create a viable policing structure in republican areas where the PIRA can no longer use significant violence to maintain a kind of order reflects this fear of a coercive vacuum opening up in the wake of the Provisionals’ demobilization.478

Decommissioning thus represented “a significant symbol of the great change which had occurred in republican Irish nationalism”479—though the dissidents remained (discussed below), there had not been the type of wrenching fragmentation seen in 1922-3 and 1969-70. As even a former PIRA member skeptical of the leadership says, “‘Gerry Adams has managed to do something no republican leader has ever done. He has brought the republican movement down a road of political compromise with the British state without causing any serious split.’”480 The survival of a coherent, socially-grounded core at the heart of the organization, drawing on family roots and then on decades of shared experience, has maintained high levels of social integration within the PIRA, while the leadership’s ability to acquire significant stocks of guns and money have provided centralization and credibility that bolster their control of the group. This has allowed what is essentially a 180-degree shift in the organization’s stated purpose for existence and means of political action. After years of delay and wrangling, Martin McGuinness, the former Derry PIRA commander, Chief of Staff, and Northern Command leader, became Deputy First Minister, with Protestant firebrand Ian Paisley the First Minister, in 2007. For all intents and purposes, the Troubles in Northern Ireland are over.

478 The battles over the devolution of policing that plagued Northern Ireland during 2009 and 2010 reflect attempts by different parties to use this crucial issue for political leverage.
479 English, Irish Freedom, p. 420.
480 Alonso, IRA and Armed Struggle, p. 160,
Dissidents. What has happened to the non-PIRA republican armed groups since 1998? The Real IRA re-launched its campaign in 2000, but factionalized quickly into opposing blocs led by McKevitt and Campbell that split in 2002. It continues to exist in some hazy form as a series of armed but autonomous factions, and was linked to the shootings of two police officers during the autumn of 2008.\textsuperscript{481} RIRA maintains the capacity to inflict lethal damage but at present lacks a cellular structure, significant size, or, apparently, a central leadership. The INLA claims to be on ceasefire, but has been linked to violent attacks in Derry, as well as drug-dealing in Dublin. Its Belfast unit is apparently completely vulnerable to Provisional punishment if it steps out of line, so it is fairly quiescent.\textsuperscript{482} Currently, INLA is a loose coalition of groups in these three cities, lacking any real central organization. I have devoted little attention to the Continuity IRA because of its low level of activity and high level of secrecy. While jokingly called “dad’s army” because of its members’ age, CIRA continues to exist, though it may have split in 2006.

Both CIRA and RIRA returned to the news during the spring of 2009 by killing British soldiers and a PSNI policeman.\textsuperscript{483} However, despite this lethal burst, neither of these groups have a significant network of local elites upon which they can rest, nor have they been able to gain significant favor abroad – while there have been arms deals consummated overseas, there has not been diaspora (much less state) support; instead, these deals have been paid for by bank robberies and other forms of low-level criminality that the security forces find alarming but that supply nowhere near the amount of weaponry and finance that were available to the Provisionals during their war. The dissidents continue to pose a significant threat to safety in Northern Ireland, but remain at present loosely organized and poorly resourced. The endurance of

\textsuperscript{481} Parts of RIRA now appear to claim responsibility under the name of Óglaigh na hÉireann (ONH), the Irish-language equivalent of Irish Republican Army. Suzanne Breen fall 2008 interview w/RIRA Army Council.
\textsuperscript{482} Interviews in Belfast.
\textsuperscript{483} See “Attacks put pressure on republicans,” BBC, March 10, 2009: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7934750.stm
dissidents will pose a policing, but not military, challenge for the foreseeable future.

D. Trajectories of Republican Insurgency: 1990-2008

The behavior of the Provisional IRA after 1990 ended the Troubles. Much of this change is due to new thinking, to the unavoidable pressures of British COIN, and to careful management of its constituency. But its leadership also overcame the dangers of internal fragmentation and splits which had so plagued republican militancy in the past by summoning both social integration and control over resources.

Table 4.8. Trajectories of Republican Insurgency, 1990-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group and DV Prediction</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PIRA 1990-2005 (Cohesive)</td>
<td>Theory: Low</td>
<td>Theory: Low</td>
<td>Theory: Low</td>
<td>Theory: Political-Military</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actual: Medium</td>
<td>Actual: Low</td>
<td>Actual: Medium</td>
<td>Actual: Political-Military</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>INLA 1990-2008 (Factionalized)</td>
<td>Theory: High</td>
<td>Theory: High</td>
<td>Theory: High</td>
<td>Theory: Multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual: Low</td>
<td>Actual: N/A</td>
<td>Actual: High</td>
<td>Actual: Multiple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real IRA 1997-2008 (Factionalized)</td>
<td>Theory: High</td>
<td>Theory: High</td>
<td>Theory: High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actual: High</td>
<td>Actual: High</td>
<td>Actual: High</td>
<td>Actual: Multiple</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SB = Social Base; ES = External Support; Prediction = trajectory predicted by my theory; Bolded Cell = significant misprediction

The lack of a major PIRA split was remarkable given the policy reversal of the Provisional IRA, and can be best explained by the bonds of internal trust and loyalty among the leadership cadres of the organization and their ability to maintain control over the armaments that could have fueled a major split. Despite clear ex ante ideological differences, the bulk of the organization’s leadership followed Adams and McGuinness down the path of demobilization. The social integration built up over decades and sustained by the PIRA’s mixture of continuity and change provided a crucial resource for surviving the peace process and weapons decommissioning. The warlord elites almost unanimously held firm.
However, the limits of my argument are also clear. First, I overpredict the cohesion of the Provisionals. Not only was there a significant split in 1997, but the leadership was also clearly driven to end the ceasefire in 1996 by internal pressures. This reflects a recurrent problem with my argument – autonomy has been consistently higher than I predict, meaning that my argument is missing important aspects of how local units and factions make decisions in the murky realm between total obedience and active defiance or defection. Second, as the story above makes clear, there was artful strategic management, by Gerry Adams in particular, that must be credited with bringing PIRA in for a “soft landing.” Dissembling, ambiguity, and careful timing were all involved, rather than just the raw activation of loyalty and coercion.\footnote{Alonso and Moloney basically call him a liar; others take a more nuanced approach, viewing this as a necessity in pursuit of greater virtue. Either way, the contrast between the behavior of Adams and that of Goulding and the Officials’ leadership in 1972 is clear, adding an element of art rather than simply administration to internal control.}

The INLA continued its path of self-destruction, the legacies of the organization’s founding 30 years before having laid a structural basis for internal instability. New influxes of recruits, weak elite cooperation, and spasmodic access to resources all fueled suspicion and rivalry, exploding yet again into a brutal feud. There was no formal split, though, suggesting that my theory lacks a sufficiently-clear explanation of when feuds erupt as opposed to attempted splits. The overall pattern of fragmentation remained the same, however.

The Real IRA’s inability to pull away a clear set of bonding network elites doomed it to a rapid expansion policy and a coalition social base that could neither coordinate violence nor maintain unity and control in the controversial aftermath of the 1998 Omagh bombing. Factional autonomy was high throughout, and splits emerged in the early 2000s once the organization went back to something like war. Inability to mobilize the diaspora in the face of Irish-America’s pro-peace process attitudes left RIRA reliant on high-variance criminality for its resources, and provided few incentives for individuals and factions to remain with the organization. One of the
reasons for the fragmented constellation of dissident groups has been the inability of any one of them to find a consistent source of guns and money that could stabilize it.

VI. War and Peace in Northern Ireland

This chapter has offered a detailed study of the social base and resources of the major republican insurgents involved in the Troubles between 1962 and 2008. I trace the relative cohesion of the Provisional and Official IRAs to their ability to draw their command elites from the traditionalist bonding network of Irish republicans that arose from the cleavages of the 1920s. The local networks that dominated both organizations would provide elite cooperation and local incorporation that helped hold the groups together. However, the Provisionals pulled decisively ahead in terms of cohesion because of their ability to consistently generate war-fighting material that both fed the military struggle and gave the leadership significant leverage over local units. This combination forged cohesion in the 1970s and provided the structural basis for PIRA internal control to be reproduced over time even as new recruits entered the group and old elites and foot soldiers left, died, or were arrested. This fostered a remarkable unity through a variety of military setbacks and political maneuvers all the way to nearly-total demilitarization.485

The Officials' inability to hold onto their units reflected the weak military power and resource centralization of the group – it is clear that many rural units, for instance, would have stayed with the status quo if they’d felt that their material needs were being met. The slow fragmentation and bleeding-away of recruits did not stop the organization from being able to increase its numbers by 1973, but the INLA split of 1974 illustrated the problem of internal control in bloody fashion. The Officials got out of militancy, led into politics by the same

485 Bean’s recent assessment supports the interpretation I offer: PIRA is “sustained by family and intergenerational connections, social and geographical ties, the homogenizing experience of prisoners and prisoners families, and the power of bonding and sense of victimhood within IRA culture. . . . the language of family and community is significant, suggesting a sense of a unique shared experience and indissoluble ties.” Kevin Bean, The New Politics of Sinn Féin (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), p. 66.
dominant nucleus that had embarked on the post-1962 leftist strategy. OIRA occupies an intermediate position in our study of republican insurgency, between the discipline and control of PIRA and the fragmentation of the INLA, IPLO, and Real IRA. While its political strategy was unrealistic and Stalinist, OIRA nevertheless represents a political path out of insurgency.

The smaller republican groups all followed a similar path to factionalization – locked out of the social strongholds of the republican bridging network, they lacked a set of intertwined local elites who could maintain cooperation and socialize/monitor new recruits. This led to cycles of influx, feud, and split that were exacerbated by the uncertain material resource situation. The 1987 and 1996 INLA feuds, as well as the numerous lower-level gunpoint coups and factional rivalries preceding and following these conflicts, are a classic illustration of these pathologies, as was the rapid growth and fragmentation of both the IPLO and RIRA. Personalism (whether Costello, McGlinchey, IPLO’s Jimmy Brown, or McKevitt), weak command and control amidst factional autonomy, and botched operations all characterized these groups.

Despite not being able to explain important aspects of factional autonomy, the theoretical argument offered in Chapter 3 helps us understand the processes by which cohesive (and factionalized) armed groups are built and maintained. We observed bonding networks providing the command cadres and local elites of the PIRA and OIRA, and coalitional bases underpinning INLA, IPLO, and RIRA. The bonding network core of PIRA and OIRA did a comparatively better job of both cooperating with one another and of mediating and controlling local foot soldiers. This social infrastructure combined with a significant and steady flow of external support to PIRA that allowed it to consistently provide material to its fighters while controlling who got what, and in what quantities. The inability of the other groups to tap into Irish-America (for ideological reasons) left them struggling to centralize internal control or to forge military
power. There are many contingent events left unexplained in this account, but hopefully my theory gives a clearer sense of the sources of group cohesion than previous work on Northern Ireland, which takes this variation as given.

In the process, I was able to assess alternative explanations. I showed that there was not a clear relationship between ethnic grievance and group cohesion, given that all of the organizations were based in the same ethnic community, and that this ethnic category was bitterly internally divided. I also called into question the argument that “greedy” groups fueled by crime and external aid are undisciplined thugs. These were the main sources of sustenance for the Provisionals (and crime was the Officials’ main resource), but did not cause the patterns of indiscipline and indiscriminate violence Jeremy Weinstein and others predict. Finally, I have shown that while ideology may matter in some ways, the balance of hawks and doves is both terribly difficult to measure and of extremely limited value in explaining patterns of cohesion and fragmentation. Power and loyalty trumped politics within PIRA and even OIRA, while politics was only peripherally related to the struggles over control of IPLO, INLA, and RIRA. Narrow but deeply-rooted social mobilization and consistent flows of guns and money kept the PIRA alive in the face of a highly capable state.
Chapter 5

Introduction

The former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir lies divided between India and Pakistan as a recurrent trigger for confrontation and crisis. Kashmir has experienced three conventional wars and a brutal insurgency that has lasted for more than two decades. This chapter explores the complex world of militancy in Indian-administered Kashmir, reaching from the labyrinthine streets of downtown Srinagar to the halls of power in Delhi to Pakistani Punjab’s militant networks. The Kashmir conflict has been studied in great depth at the level of high politics and international conflict, but detailed and systematic comparison of the armed groups involved is lacking.¹ Research on these trajectories of militancy takes on greater significance as groups, like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, that cut their military teeth in Kashmir have moved beyond its confines to dramatically strike in both India and Pakistan.

I focus in this chapter on explaining cohesion and fragmentation in nine insurgent groups that had a significant role at some point in the conflict. Six of them are or were primarily indigenous (based in Indian Kashmir) and three are predominantly Pakistani. The level of attrition that the Indian state has been able to impose on these groups means that this war has been a Darwinian process of organizational stress and destruction – most have faltered in a haze of splits, feuds, and killings. Shifts within Pakistan have similarly affected these groups, adding

¹ Many scholars have studied the origins and politics of the dispute over Kashmir but few have offered a micro-level study of the key armed groups that have challenged Indian rule. This study represents one of the first detailed scholarly examinations of these organizations. See also Christina Furtado, “Inter-rebel group dynamics: Cooperation or competition. The case of South Asia,” Ph.D Dissertation (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2007); Gerald Meyerle, “Death by a thousand cuts: The dynamics of protracted insurgency in Kashmir and Sri Lanka,” Ph.D Dissertation (University of Virginia, 2008); Sumantra Bose, “JKLF and JKHM: Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front and Jammu and Kashmir Hizb-ul Mujahideen,” in John Tirman, Marianne Heiberg, and Brendan O’Leary, eds., Terror, Insurgency, and the State, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007) pp. 229-256.
another layer of organizational hurdles to the already “very challenging” operational environment within Indian Kashmir. Kashmir provides a tragic but important comparative laboratory in which to study the rise and fall of guerrilla and terrorist groups.

I divide Kashmir’s insurgency into two sets of armed groups. The first are indigenous, largely Kashmir Valley-based organizations. These groups led an armed uprising against Indian state power, and included the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and Hizbul Mujahideen (Hizb, HM), Muslim Janbaz Force (MJF), Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen, al-Umar Mujahideen, and Al Jehad. The Hizb ended up dominating the 1990s in Kashmir by maintaining relatively high cohesion and military power compared to its militant rivals and contemporaries. The second category of militant groups are primarily Pakistani, particularly the Harkat-ul Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Jaish-e-Mohammed. The Lashkar emerged as the most disciplined and effective group. Within each set of comparisons (indigenous and Pakistani) there was extreme variation in the ability of organizations to survive in some unified, centrally-controlled form, rather than factionalizing or being wiped out, and there was variation in the issues over which organizations ruptured.

I find that variation in the social base of and external support for organizations explains significant variation in group cohesion, though there is a huge amount of messiness and contingency. A bonding network social base of preexisting family and social networks linked under the aegis of the tightly disciplined Jammu and Kashmir Jamaat-e-Islami political party combined with massive Pakistani support to forge Hizbul Mujahideen as the dominant indigenous insurgent group. The Hizb has managed to survive, despite several splits and its lack of popular political appeal, to the present day. Though hit very hard by Indian

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counterinsurgency, it has remained more disciplined and unified than the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and a variety of smaller indigenous forces. These other indigenous groups mobilized on the basis of coalition network social bases, primarily personalized political parties and/or collections of local factions, and over time were squeezed out of Pakistani patronage for ideological and strategic reasons. The JKLF in particular was unable to capitalize on its large size and extensive popular support, instead splintering apart under pressure from both the Indian security forces and the Hizb, while losing Pakistani patronage. If there is a case of mass popular support not leading to group survival and organizational integrity, it is the JKLF.

The Pakistani groups operated in a very different context, one that does not fit the scope conditions of my theory as well (because they were not mobilizing directly in the face of a counterinsurgent state), so I compare them to one another to see if my argument can offer some systematic insights. The Harkat-ul Mujahideen was highly fractious over time, as was its splinter group Jaish-e-Mohammed, despite Pakistani state patronage. I argue that the pervasive factionalism of Deobandi religious/political organizations is reflected in the splits and feuds within these Deobandi armed groups. The Jaish in particular has dissolved into a variety of factions in the wake of Pakistan’s partial post-9/11 crackdown on militancy. Parts of Jaish and Harkat have turned on the Pakistani state, including assassination attempts against former President Pervez Musharraf. The Lashkar-e-Taiba, by contrast, has taken advantage of tighter (if much smaller) Ahle Hadith religious networks in Punjab, financial links to the Gulf, and continued Pakistani state patronage to forge a disciplined and motivated fighting force capable of fedayeen attacks and guerrilla warfare in Kashmir and terrorist attacks in urban India.

Instead of either the crystallization of mass ethnic grievances or purely mercenary proxy armies, the insurgency in Kashmir has been sustained by groups built around homogeneous
command elites generated from disciplined, institutionalized religious-political organizations that overlap with local family and community networks. These organizations have also been extensively backed with funds and guns by Pakistani intelligence services and Persian Gulf and/or Pakistani religious networks. The absence of a bonding network social base has doomed armed organizations fighting in Kashmir to serious internal unrest even when backed by the resources of the Pakistan Army or able to call upon the political loyalties of large portions of the mass populace. The fate of insurgent organizations was significantly determined by the evolution and structure of their social bases formed in the decades prior to the onset of militancy.

The argument I advance is necessarily highly caveated and incomplete due to the extreme difficulties of gathering accurate information on the internal workings of these groups. Nevertheless, I hope this helps advance more detailed and rigorous academic study of the internal dynamics of Kashmir’s bloody war, which is all too often studied solely in the context of Indo-Pakistani strategic competition, or in partisan publications of dubious reliability.

The chapter is broken up into five sections. First, I briefly introduce the conflict and outline the relevant variation on the dependent variable. Second, I offer a historical overview of the origins of militancy in Kashmir, focusing on the partition of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir and evolution of different religious and political organizations in Indian Kashmir after 1947. This provides the background with which to analyze the onset of insurgency and its trajectories after 1988. Third, I examine in detail the comparative emergence, social bases, and evolution of six primarily indigenous Kashmiri insurgent groups. Fourth, I study the rise of three major Pakistani armed groups that have operated in Kashmir since the early/mid-1990s, but with historical antecedents stretching back to the early 1980s. Each of these two comparative sections is preceded by my theoretical predictions, and concludes by assessing the explanatory power of
my argument, and assessing alternative explanations. Fifth, I conclude with implications of the Kashmir case for our broader understanding of militancy.

I. Cohesion and Fragmentation in Kashmir: An Introduction and Preview

Jammu and Kashmir was a princely state in British India that was divided in war between India and Pakistan. Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir (IJK), Pakistan-administered “Azad” Jammu and Kashmir (PJK), and the Pakistan-administered Northern Areas are the respective political units, divided by the Line of Control (LOC). No insurgency emerged on the Indian side of the LOC until 1988, after a rigged 1987 election led to militant mobilization against the Indian state. From 1988 an intense insurgency raged until 2003, when violence began to drop in the context of an India-Pakistan ceasefire, though low-level militancy endures. The conflict has seen a variety of militant groups fighting a large, highly resolved Indian security apparatus in a context of several state and national elections; it has also involved dramatic variation on the dependent variable that can be profitably studied through a comparative lens.

An Introduction to the War

The Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir (IJK) is divided into three areas – Buddhist/Shia-dominated Ladakh bordering China, the Muslim-majority Kashmir Valley, and slight Hindu-majority Jammu (see map). The Kashmir Valley has roughly 5 million inhabitants; Jammu approximately 4.5 million; Ladakh less than 300,000. Within the Valley and Muslim areas of Jammu, there has been division between Muslim Kashmiris favoring independence for the entire former princely state, accession of the state to Pakistan, or the retention of the link with India. More recently, the autumn/winter of 2008 witnessed a low-violence, high-turnout state assembly election and claims by various militants that the struggle may be taking a low/non-violent direction – at least for the time being. However, deep social divisions have emerged between Jammu and the Kashmir Valley, and the threat of serious militancy endures. Nevertheless, the 2008 state assembly elections and November 26, 2008 Lashkar attack on Mumbai represent an appropriate point to stop our analysis given the massive shift in context they both entailed. A new major Lashkar infiltration during the spring of 2009 shows that the war is still on in some form, however.
but with greater autonomy). The pro-Pakistan forces draw exclusively from Muslims, and most pro-independence social blocs are also Muslim. Both Buddhists and Hindus generally favor closer union with India rather than any form of separatism or even state-wide autonomy.

Elections in Indian Kashmir (and PJK) have been traditionally dubious affairs, and 1987's state assembly elections proved no different. Amidst large-scale accusations of vote-rigging, the dominant National Conference swept to power once more in the state. In response to electoral irregularities, young Kashmiri Muslim men, many of whom had been involved in the 1987 campaign, began crossing the LOC into PJK to receive training and arms. This cross-LOC movement was matched by a growing tide of mass protest, particularly in Srinagar, the Valley's major city. By 1989, this combination posed a direct threat to Indian rule in the Kashmir Valley, leading to a massive and violent crackdown in 1990. An extraordinary plethora of militant groups sprang up in this period, but most were short-lived or cover names.

All of these militants have been met since 1990 with a sustained and massive Indian COIN effort combining the Indian Army, Ministry of Home Affairs paramilitaries, Jammu and Kashmir Police, and a set of former militants who changed sides in the mid-1990s (the "Ikhwanis"). As Evans noted in 2000, the Kashmir insurgency was "as bad as it gets," and thus an arena within which to study the ability and inability of highly motivated, well-armed militants to survive a powerful and relentless Indian security apparatus. While there are no reliable numbers of security forces, it seems plausible that at the very least 350,000 Indian soldiers, police, and paramilitaries garrison the Valley and Jammu regions, leading to extremely high

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4 The two major paramilitary formations involved are the Border Security Force (BSF) and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). The BSF is the more adept of the two, and became the primary urban counterinsurgent force, though it took several years of bloody adaptation. There are a plethora of other smaller paramilitaries like the Indo-Tibetan Border Force.

force: population ratios.\textsuperscript{6}

The conflict initially was focused on the Kashmir Valley, including both urban and rural locales, but over time has spread into mountainous highlands and border/LOC areas of Jammu, particularly Doda, Poonch, and Rajouri. The urban areas of serious contention were primarily Srinagar (the summer capital of the state and largest city), Anantnag in south Kashmir and Sopore in north Kashmir, as well as terror attacks in Jammu city and elsewhere. As the security forces locked down the cities, the conflict moved into the rural parts of the Valley and then rural Jammu, with the BSF and CRPF dominating the cities and the Army garrisoning the countryside, and the Army and BSF guarding the crucial LOC. The primary launching areas for militants across the LOC are Azad Jammu and Kashmir (which I call PJK, or Pakistani Jammu and Kashmir) and the Northern Areas. Over time Pakistani (and to a lesser extent Afghan) fighters have grown in importance, though their operations are often linked to the indigenous logistical and intelligence networks of the Hizbul Mujahideen. Security force activities involve a mix of anti-infiltration border interdiction and conventional deterrence along the LOC with area dominance deployments and cordon-and-search operations across IJK’s counterinsurgency grid.\textsuperscript{7}

The violence within the war has primarily involved a clash between militants and the government, lacking the kind of sustained massacres we see in Iraq or Sri Lanka. However, there were a number of large-scale communal killings, high levels of civilian casualties, and extensive human rights abuses. Torture, rape, and “disappearances” were (and still are, to a much lesser extent) commonly used by the security forces and insurgents. Indiscriminate targeting of

\textsuperscript{6} I thank Anit Mukherjee and Kanchan Lakshman for providing insight into the likely numbers of security forces, estimates of which range dramatically, from 250,000 to 800,000.

Kashmiri Hindus (known as Pandits) and Sikhs occurred by the insurgents, while the security forces indiscriminately targeted young Kashmiri Muslim men. Levels of targeting precision on both sides generally increased over time, though several indiscriminate and vicious communal killings were undertaken by Pakistani armed groups in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In the mid-1990s, the security forces successfully “flipped” several groups of militants into shadowy pro-state militias that played a crucial but brutal role in shattering indigenous insurgency.\(^8\)

\textit{Variation on the Dependent Variable: Insurgents in Kashmir}

There are no groups in Kashmir that can approach the infrequency and low intensity of internal unrest we saw in the Provisional IRA.\(^9\) Attrition has been extreme, the geographical distances are vast, and the size of the militancy far larger. But we can productively compare the major Kashmir groups to one another to generate a relative ranking of cohesion and control. Though there have also been a huge number of organizations supposedly at war, of these “only about a dozen [groups] could be described as ‘major players.’ Many of these are closely associated with particular political parties.”\(^10\) I study the nine major insurgent groups involved in the conflict. On the others there is often essentially no reliable information with which to make any kind of claims, and these groups had no significant effect on any part of the conflict. I thus compare the groups that were able to get themselves into a serious war.

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\(^8\) The political situation that has emerged pits four major political parties against one another – the National Conference (NC) and People’s Democratic Party (PDP) do battle in the Valley, and the Indian National Congress (INC), NC, and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are the key players in Jammu. A separatist political grouping, the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), does not stand for elections and has links to militant groups; it is currently divided into two factions and amalgamates a variety of separatist political parties. The NC has ruled Kashmir for much of its history (at times in coalition with Congress, which also ruled at times), including most of its post-1988 history, but the PDP and Congress shared power in the state between 2002 and 2008. In the 1996 and 2002 state elections, militants targeted politicians and party workers.\(^9\) Moreover, “unlike Sri Lanka or Northern Ireland, no single organization has achieved unequivocal, long-term political and military predominance in the seventeen-year history of the insurgency against the incumbent regime.” Bose, “JKLF and JKHM,” p. 232.\(^10\) Iffat Malik, \textit{Kashmir: Ethnic Conflict, International Dispute} (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 293.
Among the indigenous groups, the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM, Hizb, JKHM) has most successfully combined survival and unity, though it has suffered from several internal ruptures over time (one very serious, the 2000-3 Abdul Majid Dar split). The organization has lost an extraordinary number of both foot soldiers and senior commanders to death and arrest, yet it has neither disintegrated nor been wiped out. The Hizb’s major internal conflicts have largely been over politics and organizational control, and its factional autonomy has, for the most part, been relatively moderate. The Hizb has been “the most militarily well organized of all the jehadi organizations in Pakistan and Kashmir.”\textsuperscript{11} However, the early 2000s would see some fragmentation of the group, suggesting over-time change. The JKLF, by contrast, was highly fractious, with splits from the Muzaffarabad high command (JKLF-Amanullah) by the JKLF (Yasin) in the Valley, Al-Umar Mujahideen, and Ikhwan ul-Muslimeen (formerly the Jammu and Kashmir Students Liberation Front). Jalal and Rana assert that the JKLF splintered into up to 20 factions, in addition to internal feuds.\textsuperscript{12} Between 1988 and 1996 the JKLF was marked by high levels of factional autonomy and numerous motivations for internal unrest. It is now a purely political organization. As Bose notes, “the JKLF declined as an insurgent force after its peak period from 1990 to 1992 and ceased to be active in the armed struggle from the mid-1990s. The JKHM took its place, demonstrated significantly greater resilience as an insurgent outfit, and has maintained its position as the single largest guerrilla group active in Kashmir.”\textsuperscript{13}

The Muslim Janbaz Force (MJF), ul-Umar Mujahideen, Ikhwan ul-Muslimeen, and Al Jehad suffered from repeated splits and internal unrest that marginalized or destroyed these

\textsuperscript{11} Muhammad Amir Rana, \textit{A to Z of Jehadi Organizations in Pakistan} (Lahore: Mashal Books, 2004), p. 440.  
\textsuperscript{12} Rana quotes a JKLF leader in PJK as saying “loyalties of many leaders were bought and at least 20 different militant organizations of the JKLF” broke away. Rana, \textit{A to Z of Jehadi Organizations}, p. 87. This claim is repeated in Ayesha Jalal, \textit{Partisans of Allah: Jihad in South Asia} (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008). This could also refer to non-violent splinters of the JKLF post-1995, of which there have been quite a few.  
\textsuperscript{13} Bose, “JKLF and JKHM,” p. 235.
organizations by the mid-1990s. This is interesting because they were all patronized by Pakistan and all drew on a broadly similar ethnic base as the JKLF and Hizb; several apparently reached quite large membership sizes and had reasonable popular appeal. Given the tightly shared context and their proven ability to attract recruits, the variation is striking. Al-Umar Mujahideen essentially disintegrated as a significant fighting force when its leader was arrested, while large portions of the Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen and MJF abandoned the fight in the mid-1990s, with some splitting to actively join Indian security forces in the mid-1990s. Al Jehad took a meandering path of mergers and splits that appears to have fizzled out.\(^\text{14}\)

There is also variation across the three major Pakistani groups – the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), and Harkat-ul Mujahideen (HuM; also named Harkat-ul Ansar). The Harkat has led a consistently fractious existence, first emerging in a split from the Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islam (HuJI) in the mid-1980s, then re-merging with HuJI from 1993 until splitting again in 1996, and then being split from by the Jaish in 1999/2000, and again facing an apparent splinter in 2002 in the form of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen Al Alami. High levels of factional autonomy have endured throughout. The Jaish in turn has fractured in the wake of Pakistani policy changes after 9/11, having broken into at least two major factions and a variety of smaller ones.\(^\text{15}\) Like HuM, Jaish was never characterized by tight central control even before splitting. Both Jaish and HuM are linked to Deobandi religious-political organizations like the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islami (JUI-F), JUI (S), and madrassahs and mosques. Currently, some “militants within

\(^\text{14}\) There are recurrent press reports that these and various other members of the acronym soup of Kashmir militancy are being reorganized into yet another organization or formation, but rarely does this come to anything of note. My analysis of these groups stops when they stopped engaging in military operations in IJK. Bits and pieces of Al Umar are apparently still floating around old city Srinagar, and have had a role in rock-throwing and street protests in the last couple of years.
JeM have systematically redirected the focus of their aggression toward the Pakistani state"\textsuperscript{16} while Pakistani security officials allegedly claim to have no clear idea what exactly has happened to the JeM organizational infrastructure.\textsuperscript{17}

The Lashkar, by sharp contrast, is a radical Ahle-e-Hadith organization that has remained cohesive throughout its existence. LeT was recently in global news for its dramatic attack on Mumbai, but in Kashmir has been the most threatening insurgent group in Indian eyes since the late 1990s. Interviews with Indian security elites made it clear that Lashkar is viewed as a disciplined and effective guerrilla organization in Kashmir.\textsuperscript{18} Though the group’s history and social composition are less clear than its contemporaries, it appears to have also avoided their debilitating feuds and splits.\textsuperscript{19} LeT has for two decades managed to sustain the fight in Kashmir without succumbing to the whirlwind of Pakistan’s domestic-militant politics or Indian COIN. If the Taliban’s various factions pose the greatest threat to international stability along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, the LeT poses the greatest threat along the India-Pakistan border.

Sources of Evidence

This is an exceptionally byzantine topic, rife with acronyms, shifting names, aliases, lies, and simple factual errors in much of the literature.\textsuperscript{20} As Noorani notes, tracking down the lineages of many of these groups “would require the industry of the editors of Burke’s Peerage,"

\textsuperscript{16} Fair and Chalk, \textit{Fortifying Pakistan}, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{17} Interview with informed Pakistani involved in security policy, March 2009.
\textsuperscript{19} There were reports in the Pakistani press in the summer of 2004 of a split by Khairun Naas. Nothing ever came of this new organization in terms of press coverage, and some of the alleged splitters (like Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi) were actually involved in the 2008 Mumbai attacks, so these reports appear to have been largely inaccurate.
but “there is a dearth of written scholarly work on armed militants in Kashmir.”21 This problem is most prevalent in dealing with the post-1998 period, which centers on Pakistan both as a source of materiel and as a source of manpower, but is still a problem in the primarily indigenous pre-1998 phase. To get around these empirical problems I do two things. First, I focus most of this chapter on the first decade or so of the Kashmir insurgency, where most of the groups mobilized the bulk of their manpower from IJK and there is decent, if spotty, information on many of them. This allows reasonably-supported claims based on multiple credible sources. Good analytical, historical, and journalistic books have emerged in recent years that allow an acceptably fine-grained level of detail with which to study the indigenous organizations, and I try not to rely on any single source too much.22

Second, I delve into a wide variety of sources, from Pakistani and Indian newspapers to US government reports to militant DVDs in search of insights. This includes interviews in New Delhi and Srinagar with journalists, academics, analysts, and retired security force officials. All of these interviews were confidential, and those in the Valley itself were not recorded nor were significant notes taken. I also did email and phone interviews with experts in India, Pakistan, the US, and the United Kingdom. The reader is well-advised to take my findings as caveated and incomplete, but this study hopefully represents the most detailed, structured comparative study of the militant organizations that have fought in Kashmir.

22 Nevertheless, the reader will note a heavy reliance for nitty-gritty details on Manoj Joshi, The Lost Rebellion: Kashmir in the Nineties (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1999); Sumantra Bose, Kashmir: roots of conflict, paths to peace (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003) and “JKLF and JKHM,” Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, and David Devadas, In search of a future: the story of Kashmir (New Delhi: Penguin, Viking, 2007). These (with the exception of Devadas, too recent) are standard cited works in the field, so I am following scholarly practice. Much of the information conveyed has been corroborated in anonymous interviews, but I prefer to cite existing work for the sake of transparency. There are also clear biases in these accounts that I try to account for; I draw on credible factual information contained in them without necessarily agreeing with their analyses – Devadas offers an unsustainable cultural argument about “how Kashmiris are” and Joshi is quite close to the security forces, for instance.
II. The Roots of Unrest in Kashmir, 1931-1988

Hindu Dominance and Muslim Social Mobilization. We can now turn to the historical origins of the conflict. British colonial rule in India involved both direct administration of territory and indirect rule in 565 “princely states,” which technically had their own governing apparatuses. The princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, cobbled together in the mid-19th century amidst the Anglo-Sikh wars, was one of the largest of the princely states on the subcontinent. The Dogri-speaking Hindu family that established its rule in J&K governed a predominantly Muslim population. Bolstered by British patronage, this political state of affairs would endure until 1947. However, the state was not unaffected by the rising tides of ethnic and religious mobilization rocking the broader subcontinent.

Prior to the 1947 partition, two kinds of mobilization dominated opposition to the maharaja and his Dogra dynasty – Kashmiri nationalist and Muslim religious. These overlapped in clear fashion, particularly until the late 1930s, but can also be distinguished in important ways. The nationalists focused on Kashmiri identity as distinct from that of other identities on the subcontinent, including other Muslims. Islam was an important component, but the behavior of the dominant Kashmiri nationalist, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, also stressed shared language (Kashmiri) and territory instead of purely religious affiliation. Sheikh Abdullah in the 1930s and 1940s led the rise of the National Conference (NC) as the dominant opposition to Maharaja Hari Singh. However, this was far from an uncontested axis of mobilization. Islamic mobilization also was prominent in Kashmir, led by the Muslim Conference, and by a new, if relatively small,

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24 Chitralekha Zutshi, Languages of Belonging: Islam, Regional Identity, and the Making of Kashmir (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003) offers a critique of the argument that the NC was the unquestioned dominant force. While she is persuasive in outlining the voices of dissent, hard data with which to assess relative popularity is lacking.
wave of Islamists under the aegis of the Jamaat-e-Islami. The political mobilization in the broader subcontinent thus found echoes in Kashmir.

Sheikh Abdullah and the NC were the main force in the Valley itself, but his influence was significantly reduced south in Jammu and west in areas around Muzaffarabad and Mirpur, which were less linked to a pure, Valley-based “Kashmiri” identity. Abdullah was bolstered by strong links with Jawaharlal Nehru and the Indian National Congress because of shared opposition to princely rule, and some shared sense of secularism. Abdullah built the NC into a powerful mobilization vessel, but the Muslim Conference (which was less favorable to Nehru and the Congress) remained influential in the western areas of the state. As the broader maneuverings of Congress and the Muslim League led towards the partition of India, the Maharaja hoped to use Kashmir’s size and strategic location to make a bid for independence. This led to a policy of vacillation and indecision as the date of partition grew closer, despite pressure from the British and the Congress to make up his mind one way or another. But neither Jinnah nor Nehru had any interest in an independent Jammu and Kashmir. Thus some of the lines of future contestation could already be seen by 1947 – proponents of independence, merger with Pakistan, and accession to India competed within Jammu and Kashmir (both within and across religious lines), while India and Pakistan stood unwilling to allow the emergence of an independent state.

Partition, War, and Consolidation, 1947-53. At the time of partition, J&K’s maharaja attempted to hedge his bets by not committing to either India or Pakistan. As the late summer of 1947 dragged on, a revolt by Muslim ex-servicemen erupted in the region of Poonch, beyond the strong reach of Sheikh Abdullah’s Valley-based organization. As the revolt against the maharaja

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25 The NC was originally named the Muslim Conference; after the name change, the Muslim Conference re-emerged as a distinct unit led by anti-Abdullah dissidents.

26 Ghulam Abbas of the Muslim Conference was not from the Valley, and did not speak Kashmiri, making his political movement into the Valley itself difficult. Victoria Schofield, Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unending War New ed. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), p. 23.
spread, it was joined by Pashtun tribesmen from the northwest frontier. The surge of tribesmen, actively backed by some Pakistani government officials, towards Srinagar forced to maharajah to finally decide, and he acceded to India. Indian troops arrived in Srinagar, and soon a conventional war between the Indian and Pakistani armies broke out in the former princely state. When the dust settled in 1949, J&K was divided, with India maintaining its hold on the Valley. The crucial Ceasefire Line (CFL; later renamed the Line of Control or LOC) demarcated the reach of the armies.

The maharajah was removed from power and Sheikh Abdullah took control of the state’s administrative machinery, which at the time was granted significant autonomy from Delhi’s control. The National Conference essentially became the party of state. Abdullah embarked on a campaign of consolidation and entrenchment that presaged the authoritarian-tinged governance of Kashmir that would follow. However, Abdullah and Prime Minister Nehru fell out by 1953 over Nehru’s suspicions that Abdullah was attempting to move towards either independence or accession to Pakistan. J&K had been ruled in a rather non-democratic manner under Abdullah; from 1953 until 1975 it would be ruled in some capacity by the Centre’s chosen party apparatchik in Srinagar. Abdullah was jailed and both the NC and state branch of the Congress became reliant on Delhi for patronage and power.

*Mobilization after 1953: Separatist Party and Religious Organizations in Kashmir.* A record of dubious, corrupt governance did not mean that there was no other political mobilization in J&K before 1988. While the NC and Congress dominated electoral politics, a series of protests, mass demonstrations, and scattered violence marked the following decades of Kashmir’s history. A wide range of separatist-oriented organizations emerged. Some relied on

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27 There would also be a revolt against the maharajah by Muslims in Gilgit, now in the Pakistani Northern Areas.
violence (at low levels), others on mass mobilization, and others on cadre-based organization-building. Here I focus on four major separatist political organizations – the Jamaat-e-Islami of Jammu and Kashmir (JI), Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), People’s League (PL), and Awami Action Committee (AAC). At one point all were allies in the Plebiscite Front, a coalition established by Sheikh Abdullah’s followers while he was in jail. These organizations and networks became the social bases for the insurgent groups of the late 1980s and 1990s.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Jamaat would form the social underpinning of the Hizb-ul Mujahideen, the JKLF would re-emerge as the vanguard insurgent force and also form an indirect base of the Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen, the Muslim Janbaz Force and Al Jehad were armed wings of the People’s League, and the Awami Action Committee was a base for Al Umar Mujahideen. This section provides the historical context for coding the crucial social base independent variable when we assess the origins of the insurgents. Only the Jamaat successfully combined both geographic reach with fairly high social density across its locally-embedded cadres - it was a clear bonding network. The others, for reasons of structure and choice, became coalition networks of both the foco-ist (JKLF) and parochial varieties (PL, AAC).

Between 1942 and the onset of the insurgency the Jamaat tapped into, and transformed, local structures of religious and economic authority through an intentional, but non-violent, strategy of cadre-based mobilization. By contrast, the other separatist groups were highly personalized and factionalized by the late 1970s, at least a decade prior to war onset. When the war emerged, many of the separatist political organizations in Kashmir mobilized a tanzeem, but most lacked the necessary bonding network social infrastructure to survive the Indian counterinsurgency effort. This variation in social base emerged decades prior to the onset of the

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29 The Front endured in loose alliance form until fracturing into a variety of sub-groupings by the mid-1970s. The Front emerged as a mass mobilizing forum in periods of tension, like controversy over a religious relic in Srinagar in late 1963/early 1964 but when Abdullah made his peace with the Indian state it withered away.
insurgency, and was caused by a complex mix of leadership strategies, social and class
dynamics, and state policies. Ironically, the Jamaat was able to build itself into such a robust
social structure because for its first two decades it avoided formal politics, thereby escaping
some of the state’s more repressive and disruptive attentions.

We begin with the J&K branch of “South Asia’s most important Islamist organization.”

The Jamaat-e-Islami is a political party/religious organization founded in pre-partition India in
1941 by Syed Abul Ala Mawdudi, which can be loosely compared to the Arab Muslim
Brotherhood. Dubbed “the vanguard of the Islamic revolution,” the Jamaat first arrived in
Jammu and Kashmir in an informal form in the mid-1940s, and soon became formally
organized. Following the Pakistani Jamaat’s model, the JIJK pursued a strategy of deep but
limited social mobilization aimed at social transformation through non-violent means. An
important aspect of the Jamaat’s underpinnings in Kashmir was the predominance of “local
notables” in its early ranks, including middle/lower-middle-class professionals like
schoolteachers and doctors, some land-owners (especially in orchard areas), and former Sufi Pir
families with traditional authority and influence. Given the Jamaat’s opposition to Sufi practices
in favor of an austere understanding of Islam, the underpinning of Jamaati local authority around
traditionally Sufi families is quite ironic. As Sikand notes:

“The common thread seems to run through the biographies of most of the early activists of
the JIJK, who later went on to become leaders of the movement. They all seem to have
belonged to middle-class families, many with Pir backgrounds. Their standing as
members of Pir families gave them a position of leadership and authority within their
own local communities, in which the Pirs and their descendants were traditionally looked

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32 Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama`at-I Islami of Pakistan (Berkeley:
University of California Press, 1994). See Yoginder Sikand, “The Emergence and Development of the Jama`at-i-
Sa`aduddin Tarabali, and p. 718 on the first unofficial meeting in 1942.
upon with considerable respect and reverence." 33

Along with Sufi families, the Jamaat also attracted “many of the better-off urban or
landowning classes that had lost out to land reforms. Deprived of feudal privileges, they adopted
the primness, savings, and professional respectability that this puritanical movement
promoted.” 34 This social base, combining different forms of traditional religious and economic
local authority, would lend considerable mobilization power to the Jamaat, and was linked to an
extensive, growing system of Jamaat-run schools. 35 The structure of the Jamaat was, and is,
highly institutionalized and hierarchical, with multiple tiers of members as well as various circles
of lesser affiliation. 36 These strata of membership were joined by numerous levels of
organization, from the overall leadership all the way down to highly local sub-units. The Jamaat
thus attempted to combine tight organizational discipline, education, and appeals to the “pious
middle class.” 37 The Jamaat was pioneering, and in turn drawing from, patterns of religious
mobilization that became crucial in both South Asia and the Middle East. 38

Over time, “these [Jamaat] schools were working to bring about ‘a silent revolution’,
many of those who were to go on to play a leading role in militant politics in the 1990s having

33 Sikand, “The Emergence and Development,” p. 720. Gauhar writes that “all these activists with the exception of a
few belonged to Pir families and were mainly school teachers. Syed Ali Geelani, another Pirzada and school
77. Devadas argues that they were “often from the once-privileged landlord classes, even pirs.” Devadas, In search
of a future, p. 115.
34 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 77.
35 “the Jamaat of Kashmir has steadily built up its strength through a host of social and cultural activities such as
running schools or institutions for religious instruction.” Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 11. “the stress of the Jamaat
has always been on education; on firmly instilling in people the ideology of Islam. This is particularly true of the
36 In Pakistan, organizational unity through meetings, ideological training, family conversion. Nasr, Vanguard of the
Islamic Revolution, p. 49. The layers of membership include - mutaffiq as affiliates, then sympathizers (hamdard),
then members (arkan). Nasr, Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution, p. 48.
Press, 2002).
38 In Pakistan, “Instead of opening its membership to all, the Jamaat prides itself on being a party of ethically upright
and religious individuals. With its limited social base, it has fared poorly at the hustings.” Jalal, Partisans of Allah,
p. 264.
been products of these schools.” Nevertheless, the Jamaat’s base always remained relatively small, in part due to its focus on literacy in Urdu, an austere brand of Islam explicitly at odds with Sufi-derived traditional Kashmiri practices (“a disciplined religiosity very different from the one Kashmir was used to”), and an unflinching commitment to Pakistan. This was a strategic decision driven by Mawdudi’s model of transformation – Islamizing society through literate elites and the middle class in a top-down fashion, rather than launching a rebellion or mobilization effort amongst the illiterate lower classes. While Mawdudi was familiar with the communist model, and drew upon it, his focus was neither on mobilizing the dispossessed nor on violence. It did offer a more egalitarian model of Islam than the patron-client version prevalent in parts of Kashmir, but was not a mass movement in the standard sense of the term.

Instead, “the Jama’at was initially conceived of as a ‘holy community,’ in which high standards and ideological commitment limited membership; it was a vanguard party, an ‘organizational weapon.’ This allowed the party to project power far beyond its numbers and kept it alive through adversity.” This strategy in Kashmir “produced a whole generation of young Kashmiris for whom Islam was not just a personal faith consisting of some rituals and regulations, but a way of life – something to be implemented as much in collective, public life.” These cadres, workers, and co-travelers were the great asset for the Jamat, rather were its backbone. They had emerged out of continued process of disciplined training for years

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40 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 47.
41 On similarities to communist organization, see Nasr, Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution; and Haqqani – “a cadre-based structure similar to that of communist parties,” Haqqani, Between Mosque and Military, p. 22.
42 Nasr, Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution, p. 221.
43 Malik, Kashmir, p. 270. Jamaat “tried to extend its influence by running schools, holding regular cadre meetings. . . it remained close-knit, cadre-based, and grew in its self-righteousness.” Basharat Peer, Curfewed Night (Noida: Random House India, 2008), p. 183. In Pakistan, “the Jama’at was initially conceived of as a ‘holy community,’ in which high standards and ideological commitment limited membership; it was a vanguard party, an ‘organizational weapon.’ This allowed the party to project power far beyond its numbers and kept it alive through adversity,” Nasr, Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution, p. 221.

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A deep institutional structure was forged, overlain with family and village ties. The early Jamaati leaders traveled the state with their message, and partially as a result the party was spread throughout Muslim-majority areas of J&K, even if not in great numbers in any one place (though Sopore and a few other areas became strongholds).

However, this “ideology of Kashmir banega Pakistan (Kashmir will become Pakistan) remained a minority orientation, at odds with the continuing popular appeal of independentist ideology in the pro-azaadi areas of IJK”; indeed to the present day “the Jamaat continues to be a minority in Kashmir.” While of the pro-Pakistani political organizations in J&K “the Jamaat-e-Islami alone had a significant rural presence... the large majority [of Kashmiris] remained committed to traditional religiosity.” Mass popularity would never come to the organization, as “the Jamaat has not been as popular in the valley as it had hoped to be” and “it proved incapable of reaching out to vast numbers of ordinary Kashmiris, in whose lives the cults centred around the shrines of saints continued to play a pivotal role.” After the execution of Zulfiqar Bhutto in Pakistan in 1979, riots against Jamaatis occurred because of the Pakistani Jamaat’s support of Zia ul-Haq’s dictatorship; as a result, “the Jamaat became an increasingly isolated bastion of Pakistan’s once-formidable support base in Kashmir.”

44 Gauhar “Jamat-I-Islami,” p. 81. Even government bureaucrat Sati Sahni writes that “the most fundamentalist and most disciplined organisation in Kashmir, is Jamait-e-Islami. . . its cadres are fully indoctrinated, dedicated, and committed. . . its roots have gone deep into the soil of Kashmir.” Sahni, Kashmir Underground, p. 122.
45 “the JIJK follows a consultative method of functioning, headed by the President (amir-i-jama’at) and a team, the markazi majlis-i-shur’a (Central Advisory Council), who are elected by the Council of Representatives. The members of the latter body are chosen by the basis members of the JIJK (irkan-i-jama’at), the amir and the secretary-general (qayyim-i-jama’at). . . the amir is the head of the JIJK. The members of the organization are bound to obey him.” Sikand, “The Emergence and Development,” p. 710.
46 The geographic dispersion of the Jamaat was repeatedly mentioned in interviews in Kashmir.
47 Bose, Kashmir, p. 130.
48 Peer, Curfewed Night, p. 186.
49 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 114.
50 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 12.
52 Habibullah, My Kashmir, p. 45.
Electorally, “prior to 1987 the party [Jamaat] never won more than 5 seats in an election, a figure which would appear to negligible public support,” though this somewhat understates its social influence. Bose notes this disjuncture between organization and popular support, which is reflected across South Asia:

“the JI shows a uniform pattern: a committed, hard-core following that amounts to only a small fraction of the population. Thus, as a political party the JI has consistently fared poorly in electoral contests in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Kashmir, incapable of mustering more than a few percentage points of the popular vote. Nonetheless, all these JI branches have a long-standing reputation for committed cadres and organizational acumen”

Regardless of the Jamaat’s inability to mobilize the masses, it slowly and relentlessly layered a robust organizational infrastructure atop its social network of educated local notables. It would become, even in the eyes of government bureaucrats like Sati Sahni, “the most fundamentalist and most disciplined organisation in Kashmir. . . its cadres are fully indoctrinated, dedicated, and committed.” It also spread out beyond localized enclaves, as “the Jamaat’s support base extended to the rural areas of Shopian, Sopore, Baramulla, Anantnag, Doda, and areas of Jama Masjid in Srinagar.” These local cadres became enmeshed over time and space in the broader Jamaat social milieu through meetings, travel, and intermarriage. Jamaat “tried to extend its influence by running schools, holding regular cadre meetings. . . it remained close-knit, cadre-based, and grew in its self-righteousness.”

Journalists who have dealt with the Jamaat in Pakistan, Indian Kashmir, and the UK describe it as being remarkably homogeneous

53 Malik, Kashmir, p. 272.
54 Regarding social influence, Jamaat “schools were working to bring about ‘a silent revolution’, many of those who were to go on to play a leading role in militant politics in the 1990s having been products of these schools.” Sikand, “The Emergence and Development,” p 735.
56 Sahni, Kashmir Underground, p. 122.
58 Peer, Curfewed Night, p. 183.
and consciously part of a self-enclosed community. Respondents in Kashmir note that members are unlikely to leave the party once they are in it due to its socially encapsulating nature.

The republican social networks of Ireland offer an interesting, if admittedly distant, analogue—a committed minority reproducing itself through family, party, and organizational ties, despite its lack of broader appeal. The difference, however, was that the Jamaat was not building or sustaining itself for war or, for much of its life, even politics. Instead, this mobilization was aimed at a peaceful social revolution in favor of piety and away from syncretic religious practices. The state would be Islamized, but not at the point of a gun. With this combination of disciplined mobilization and a focus on elites, Nasr argues that the Jamaat resembled a Leninist organizational weapon, but one that eschewed both violence and appeals to the lower classes. It was largely able to avoid state repression (at least until the 1970s) because it avoided the formal political sphere.

Thus by the mid-1980s, the J&K Jamaat was deeply embedded and geographically-dispersed, but unable to attract significant vote shares (as evidenced in the 1972, 1977, and 1983 elections), nor a mass membership. Its core “remained isolated to a few families, often of first-generation professionals.” Even to the present day, “JI’s brand of orthodox Islam – preached in a network of schools run by the party – is regarded with distaste by most Muslims in the Valley.” Nevertheless, “its main impact was felt not in politics but, as Sheikh Abdullah had realized, in the mosques and schools.” This infrastructure would later become a crucial resource as the party unexpectedly went to war. The Jamaat’s social base would provide the

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59 Phone interview, May 2009.
60 Srinagar, July 2009. Of course, some do leave, and they are not barred from doing so.
61 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 124.
62 Bose, Kashmir, p. 131. One observer in Kashmir suggested that only 1-3% of Kashmiris are currently active Jamaat supporters, much less party members.
63 Schofield, Kashmir in Conflict, p. 136.
commitment, capacity, and ideology to hold its armed wing together against long odds. In Pakistan as in Kashmir, organizational units “envelope one another, producing an all-encompassing administrative and command structure, decentralized and yet closely knit to form the organizational edifice of the Jama’at.”\textsuperscript{64} Despite weak popular appeal, a Jamaati bonding network had been slowly and painstakingly built on the back of local notables, schools, ideological training, and a vision of an Islamically austere and Pakistani Kashmir.

Now we can shift attention to the Awami Action Committee of the Mirwaiz of Srinagar, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), and the People’s League. While these organizations offered ideologies that significant portions of Kashmir were loyal to, none had the social infrastructure of the Jamaat-e-Islami. They would become coalition networks, and consequently weak social bases for later insurgency. These organizations show that, to borrow a phrase from an acquaintance, often Kashmiris “only have leaders, not parties.”\textsuperscript{65}

The Jammu and Kashmir National Liberation Front (JKNLF) deserves special attention as the precursor of the JKLF that would be the vanguard of the insurgency in the late 1980s.\textsuperscript{66} The JKNLF was founded in 1964 by Amanullah Khan and Maqbool Butt, drawing on some supporters of the Plebiscite Front.\textsuperscript{67} The JKNLF was the primary grouping that “spoke of secular, egalitarian freedom,”\textsuperscript{68} as opposed to a variant of pro-Pakistan Islamism. Butt and a few followers pursued violent militancy in Kashmir, but with relatively little success. Some suggest that he and the JKNLF of this period were inspired by the wave of violent radicalism sweeping Latin America, the Middle East, and Western Europe (as the name itself, and the 1971 hijacking

\textsuperscript{64} Nasr, \textit{Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution}, p. 51.
\textsuperscript{65} Srinagar, July 2009.
\textsuperscript{66} There is ambiguity in the secondary sources about where the JKLF name was first used – some argue it was not until 1977. See Praveen Swami, \textit{India, Pakistan and the Secret Jihad: The Covert War in Kashmir, 1947-2004} (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 129; and Devadas, \textit{In search of a future}, p. 135.
\textsuperscript{67} Schofield, \textit{Kashmir in Conflict}, p. 114. She appears to conflate JKLF and JKNLF.
\textsuperscript{68} Devadas, \textit{In search of a future}, p. 113.
of an Indian Airlines jet suggest). The organization within the Valley was very quickly rolled up, and Butt would be arrested twice and then, in 1984, hanged in Delhi.\(^{69}\) Throughout this period he remained a well-known, and in many segments well-respected, individual, but the JKNLF’s organizational prowess and social embeddedness did not match his personal popularity.

Moreover, most of the JKNLF was based either in PJK or, more problematically, in the UK. “After the failure of Operation Gibraltar [the 1965 Pakistani invasion of Kashmir], the group scattered, and Khan and [Hashim] Qureshi went abroad to live in Britain.”\(^{70}\) Amanullah Khan emigrated to the United Kingdom, largely detaching the JKNLF from both the Indian and Pakistani-administered sections of Kashmir, though offices remained in Muzaffarabad and Pakistan. However, the organization did retain some support in the British-Kashmiri diaspora, including among a heavily-Mirpuri working class displaced from Pakistani Kashmir by Pakistani development projects (primarily a major dam that flooded their land), and thus disaffected with both Pakistan and India.\(^{71}\) However, this diasporic base was not particularly tied to the Valley, since it was heavily drawn from PJK, and, based in Birmingham and Luton, it lacked the levels of wealth and education to be a major player. The American-Kashmiri diaspora had/has a very different political and socioeconomic profile, with a heavy Kashmiri Pandit element and with fewer political/economic refugees. Unlike the Sri Lankan or Irish diasporas in the US and Canada, the Kashmiri diaspora in America was not as composed of the targeted “losers” of state/state-backed violence, and thus was less interested in backing separatism.

The organization renamed itself the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) in 1977,

\(^{69}\) The death anniversary of Maqbool Butt is a highly salient date in Kashmir, often a trigger for protests and strikes. Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, p 12.

claiming to be carrying forward the mantle of the Plebiscite Front after Sheikh Abdullah ended up cutting a deal with Indira Gandhi. The JKLF languished with almost no activity until 1988 – “highly sporadic” militancy, the (it is claimed, unsanctioned by the leadership) killing of an Indian diplomat in Britain, and Khan’s wanderings to and from conferences were what endured of the JKLF. A presence remained in PJK and the UK, but during the 1970s and most of the 1980s, “only an isolated handful of young men from IJK were attracted to the JKLF” and “until the late 1980s [the JKLF] had negligible presence and support on the Indian of the LOC.” By “the 1980s . . . the JKLF’s leadership was in the hands of a small dedicated band led by Amanullah Khan, Hashim Qureshi in Europe and Dr. Farooq Haider and Mohammad Muzaffir, who operated from Azad Kashmir. It was not an easy existence.”

Thus the JKLF was not a well-developed social structure, both at the formal and informal levels, with few members, comparatively weak ties to IJK (remember that much of the UK Kashmiri diaspora was from PJK), and almost no real institutionalization, even though its ideology carried on the original pro-independence political views of Sheikh Abdullah and parts of the Plebiscite Front. This was clearly a coalition network (specifically, a foco-ist variant) – even if the top leaders knew each other well, they lacked embeddedness in the various local communities in whose name they struggled, especially in Indian Kashmir itself. To paraphrase one knowledgeable interviewee in Kashmir, the JKLF had a “floating constituency.” Both the broad resonance of its appeal and its social weaknesses would come forth in dramatic fashion when the JKLF went to war in a serious way in 1988.

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72 Malik, Kashmir, p. 283.
74 Bose, Contested lands, p. 179.
76 Srinagar July 2009.
Two other political organizations became bases for militancy once the insurgency began - the Awami Action Committee and the People’s League. Both were highly personalized, pro-Pakistan parties unable to reach outside of particular sub-pockets of Kashmiri society and geography to forge a deeply-rooted and broadly coordinated political party. Though they existed for decades prior to the insurgency, they had the structure of coalition network social bases. As in the case of the JKLF, the *simultaneous overlap* of families, local institutions, and routinized regional interactions was missing from these organizations. Why? First, the class and religious coherence of the Jamaat did not characterize these organizations, which tried to bridge gaps between the urban lower classes, youth, pious middle class, and rural farmers and agricultural laborers. Second, the state and political rivals were able to circumvent the appeal and mobilization structures of these groups much more effectively than they could in the case of the strangely stealthy Jamaat, or, to a far lesser extent, the diaspora- and Pakistan-backed JKLF.

The People’s League was launched in significant part by former Students’ and Youth League and Al Fatah militants and “brought together many of the incipient insurgents of the 1960s” The charismatic young Shabir Shah was one of the People’s League heroes, joined by a variety of well-known pro-plebiscite individuals like S. Hamid, Naeem Khan, and Sheikh Abdul Aziz, who came together in 1974 to form the League, looking to create and sustain momentum against further integration into the Indian Union. These were “iconic” figures who carried credibility as opponents of a “sell-out” to Delhi. The PL thus had the potential to become the

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77 Devadas, *In search of a future*, p. 12. For a detailed discussion of Al Fatah from the perspective of Indian sources, see Swami, *India, Pakistan and the Secret Jihad*.

78 Devadas, *In search of a future*, p. 139.

central organization continuing to oppose integration with India, and was indeed one of the major groups advancing this position.

However, this organization was “by no means a mass movement. . . they spent more time outmanoeuvring each other than fighting India. . . with its multiple splits and mergers.”80 Despite influence derived from its ability to mobilize contentious politics and urban mass protest, the League lost leaders like Azam Inquilabi to splits, and broke into several distinct sub-factions by the mid-1980s, including groupings around Shah and Farooq Rehmani.81 In part this reflected the ability of Sheikh Abdullah and then his son Farooq to close the space for serious political opposition, as well as the disruptions of the 1975-77 Emergency. This took the form both of harassment of PL activists by the state security apparatus, and economic co-optation. Some of the angry young men who were linked to the PL and its Al-Fatah predecessor in the early 1970s had been assimilated, at least temporarily, by state economic strategies to bolster employment through state patronage; they became bureaucrats and government employees.

The lack of institutionalization and party discipline also reflected the coalitional and personality-centric origins of the PL in the chaotic aftermath of the Plebiscite Front’s fragmentation.82 This was a parochial variant of a coalition network. For instance, Shah’s sub-faction of the People’s League was held together by the respect of its members for Shah’s many years in jail, rather than deeply-rooted social and formal institutions; his appeal allegedly “was, ironically, not based on any interaction with the public, but was solely due to the long spells of incarceration.”83 Interviewees in Srinagar emphasize the personality and turf battles within the party as creating a debilitating check of institutionalized collective action and party-building

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80 Noorani, “Contours of militancy.”
81 Farooq Rehmani’s online book offers more information on his account of how this process occurred.
82 Srinagar, July 2009.
83 Sinha, Death of dreams, p. 16.
from the very beginning, even if the ideas of the PL enjoyed significant popular support and its leaders possessed visibility and name recognition.\textsuperscript{84} By the mid/late-1980s, there was continual “sniping” between various People’s League satraps.\textsuperscript{85} This means that the People’s League was a parochial coalition network, lacking robust social ties across rival leaders.

The Awami Action Committee formally emerged from a split within the Plebiscite Front in 1964, but has roots stretching back a century.\textsuperscript{86} It was, and is, led by the mirwaiz of Srinagar, a powerful, hereditary clerical position with deeply-rooted support in the inner areas of the city; he was “nothing short of a papal figure to his followers.”\textsuperscript{87} This history meant that the AAC was largely building itself around existing social networks of obligation and loyalty to the mirwaiz. The mirwaiz’s family had been a traditional proponent of Pakistan and opponent of Sheikh Abdullah and the National Conference prior to partition, even if brought into an alliance of convenience with Abdullah during part of the Plebiscite Front years. The mirwaiz’s base was centered on the Jama Masjid in old city Srinagar, and was bolstered by a set of social institutions founded around the turn of the century, including the Anjuman Nusrat-ul-Islami and a small array of schools. These provided education and other services atop the religious devotion inspired by the mirwaiz; they were part of a (contested and internally divided) broader project of resistance to the Hindu maharajah, and had a role in the Muslim Conference.

However, both intra-Islamic rivalries (particularly with the Mirwaiz Hamdani, as well as with traditional Sufi-linked religious figures) and the policy of the maharajah and British limited the reach of this social constituency to parts of urban Srinagar.\textsuperscript{88} This forestalled significant

\textsuperscript{84} May 2008 and July 2009. Also Delhi 2008 and 2009, though some interviewees in Delhi argue that this kind of factionalization is endemic of politics in Kashmir.
\textsuperscript{85} Devadas, \textit{In search of a future}, p. 169.
\textsuperscript{86} Devadas, \textit{In search of a future}, p. 103.
\textsuperscript{87} Habibullah, \textit{My Kashmir}, p. 74; for more, Rai, \textit{Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects}.
\textsuperscript{88} For more, see Zutshi, \textit{Languages of Belonging}; and Rai, \textit{Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects}. 
institution-building by the mirwaiz into the rural areas or other towns. In important ways, the future reach of the AAC was circumscribed decades prior to its formal creation by the strategies of the state and the mirwaiz’s religious/political rivals.

The Awami Action Committee, officially founded in the 1960s, was thus “the political arm of the more orthodox element of Kashmir’s Islam.” From 1964 onwards it would be “active in Kashmiri politics even if its appeal was limited.” The AAC would develop as a weakly-institutionalized group without a clear political position or well-developed organizational structure. Interviews suggest that the organization was (and remains) highly personalized, with potential leaders being shunted aside for fear they would threaten the mirwaiz, there is no robust indoctrination or organization. It retained a hold on traditional followers of the mirwaiz, but was not able to extend its reach far beyond his direct influence in part because of this intentional focus on personalized, centralized control, and in part because of the historical limits of its influence due to clashes with other religious figures and organizations. Lacking broader sources of mobilization out into the countryside or other urban areas of the Valley, the AAC can be thought of as either a strong localized network or a weak coalition network.

Trigger: The 1987 Elections. Despite the various political projects that the JKLF, Awami Action Committee, People’s League, and Jamaat represented, the dominant parties in valley remained the National Conference and Congress. The NC once again rose to dominance when Sheikh Abdullah came to an agreement with Indira Gandhi in 1975, in which he essentially abandoned his aspirations to an independent J&K and then in the 1977 elections won a dramatic

89 Zutshi, Languages of Belonging.
90 Habibullah, My Kashmir, p. 98. It should be noted that the AAC and Mirwaiz represented a reformist-orthodox motivation, not one that looked to Kashmiri tradition.
91 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 216.
92 Srinagar, July 2009.
93 Srinagar, May 2008; Delhi, July 2009.
victory. "Mainstream" politics centered on pro-India parties, with the key argument focusing on J&K's level of autonomy within the Indian Union. However, Sheikh Abdullah's death in 1982 led to a problematic dynastic succession to his son Farooq Abdullah, who distinctly lacked the political acumen and gravitas of his father. Missteps by Farooq combined with Indira’s paranoia to cause a Delhi-backed removal of Farooq’s state government in a blatant instance of manipulation. This further undermined the legitimacy of governance in J&K.94

The mid-1980s saw continued political instability, as Farooq then returned to power in alliance with the same Congress that removed him. The tipping point came in 1987 when a state assembly election was tampered with, denying a representative share of seats to the Muslim United Front (MUF), a coalition of separatist parties bound by opposition to Indian rule. The MUF itself, like the Plebiscite Front before it, was a loose and un-institutionalized coalition that threw together the Jamaat, People’s League, People’s Conference, and a variety of smaller separatist parties, and its “activist cadre came, as the membership of anti-India jihadist groups had historically done, from educational institutions which had been deeply influenced by the Jamaat-e-Islami.”95 Despite a broadly shared background and goal, MUF “brought together no coherent agenda beyond opposition to New Delhi’s egregious treatment of Indian-controlled Kashmir.”96 Nevertheless, its 1987 electoral campaign attracted significant support and enthusiasm. While there is debate about the extent of rigging, and about how well the MUF would have done in a fair election, there is no doubt that there were substantial electoral irregularities that denied the coalition its realistic share of seats.97

94 For overviews, see Bose, Kashmir; and Tavleen Singh, Kashmir: a tragedy of errors (New Delhi: Viking, 1995).
95 Swami, India, Pakistan and the Secret Jihad, p. 160.
96 Bose, Contested lands, pp. 177-178.
97 Swami, India, Pakistan and the Secret Jihad argues that the fact that the MUF would not have been able to win power in the state even in a fair election suggests that Islamism had reached its electoral limits, and that the ensuing militancy was more of a ‘putsch’ by a failed movement than a reaction to denied victory. While I agree with him, and the scholarly consensus, that the MUF would not have won a majority in J&K state, I have found no evidence
Angry cadres of the MUF would become leading figures in the war to come. Street militancy and low-level acts of violence began to rise in 1987, and then more dramatically in 1988 as first a few and then a growing stream of young Kashmiri men crossed the LOC to get weapons and training. Pakistan offered sanctuary and supplies, but the Indian security services were confused and lethargic, with Delhi consumed by a massive corruption scandal and coalitional maneuverings in the Lok Sabha. Thus began a campaign of “violence by an armed underground of embittered young men consisting mostly of former MUF activists and volunteers, mainly bomb blasts targeted at sites and symbols of government authority and selective assassination of local pro-India political figures and Indian intelligence personnel.”

III. The Valley in Flames: The Rise and Containment of Indigenous Insurgency

This section examines in detail the six major indigenous insurgent groups that operated in Jammu and Kashmir from 1988 until approximately 1998, when the bulk of Kashmiri militancy had been crushed. I offer a set of theoretical predictions for this decade-long period and then assess the match between theory and reality. I argue that for the most part the theory performs well, though it consistently under-predicts the level of factional autonomy within all of the groups, a similar problem that occurred in my Northern Ireland analysis. I also study the post-1997 trajectory of Hizbul Mujahideen. The organizations that emerged in this period “came up because of the pre-existing fault lines in the valley’s politics” and these differences in social base would have enduring effects on their consequent organizational cohesion.

In the extraordinarily hazy and uncertain environment of 1988-1990, success seemed likely, costs to recruitment were low, and as a result a variety of social and political groupings...

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98 Bose, “JKLF and JKH,” p. 231.
99 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 52.
made a bid for militancy - "with revolution in the air and the Valley awash in weapons procured from across the LOC . . . it was distinctly fashionable to become a 'freedom fighter. . . it was almost equally easy for newly minted 'commanders' to gather a band of gunmen from their locality or extended family and float a tanzeem, a guerrilla group."\textsuperscript{100} This led to a rapid militarization of politics, as "all political formations, be they anti-Indian, pro-plebiscite or pro-Indian, had to adjust to a reality where the AK-47 was the arbiter."\textsuperscript{101} For much of 1989 and early 1990, the Indian security forces reacted ineptly.\textsuperscript{102} Numerous social and political groupings decided to give militancy a try and "individual motivations among young men in IJK for joining the armed struggle from ranged from the ideological to the banal."\textsuperscript{103}

But a massive, sustained Indian response from the spring of 1990 on dramatically raised the costs of rebellion, while intense rivalries between and within organizations put huge strain on group cohesion. In this context, shifts in Pakistani policy created further pressures on groups, as "the Pakistanis were operating in a cautious fashion, taking a social Darwinist approach and allowing groups to rise and fall. . . the main focus was to back an outfit, any outfit, that was able to, by force of arms or otherwise, bring about the merger of Kashmir with Pakistan"\textsuperscript{104}; these changes in support were pivotal because "no militant group can operate for long [in Kashmir] without outside funding, training and arms."\textsuperscript{105} The ability or failure of Kashmiri insurgents to sustain internal control and cooperation hinged on both their social base on the ground and their access to this Pakistani largesse; the intersection of these domestic and international dynamics

\textsuperscript{100} Bose, Kashmir, p. 125.
\textsuperscript{101} Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 50.
\textsuperscript{102} "if the police was comic, the army had no idea at all about what was going on." Devadas, In search of a future, p. 176.
\textsuperscript{104} Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 86.
\textsuperscript{105} Malik, Kashmir, p. 298.
created massive variation in insurgent cohesion – the separatist insurgents “differ[ed] in size, ideology, popular support, military strength, tactics employed and durability.”

I argue here that this variation emerged in substantial part because of variation in both the structure of the social networks around which armed groups mobilized and in Pakistani patronage. I find that the Hizbul Mujahideen emerged as a comparatively cohesive group due to its combination of a bonding network base in the form of the Jamaat-e-Islami party and its support from Pakistan. The JKLF would spend 1988-1990 as a state-reliant group largely held together by Pakistani patronage, but when it lost favor in Pakistan by late 1989/early 1990 it became a factionalized group and splintered apart in a series of splits and feuds - despite apparently very high levels of popular support. If “the JKLF enjoyed popular support but lacked the manpower and weapons; [and] the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen had a well-trained and armed cadre but little public sympathy,” the Hizb would be the last one standing, the lack of public sympathy notwithstanding. The JKLF’s coalition social base doomed it, and Pakistan’s abandonment of the group dramatically accelerated this fate.

The other major groups I study, Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen, Al-Umar Mujahideen, Muslim Janbaz Force, and Al Jehad, were all classically state-reliant organizations that could generate significant numbers of men with guns and some popular support, but lacked a strong preexisting social infrastructure through which to control the fighters. The internal unrest that erupted centered on guns, money, and turf. Table 5.1 offers theoretical predictions for these groups based on the argument outlined in Chapter 3 up until 1998, when most had been eliminated as substantial fighting forces, with the major exception of the Hizb. There are two periods, because

the external support variable changes in 1990 with the shift in Pakistani policy away from the
JKLF. Significant Pakistani state patronage on its own was clearly not enough to ensure cohesion
and resilience against the power of the Indian state, but neither was substantial popular support
and enthusiasm. I study the post-1997 course of the Hizb on its own terms in section III.F, since
the comparative framework disappears with the shattering of the other groups. I argue that my
theory can explain the Hizb’s trend towards greater fragmentation. After I assess the power of
my theory I also examine whether competing theories can provide a more helpful explanation.

Table 5.1. Predictions: Indigenous Insurgency, 1988-1998

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<tr>
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<th>1988-90</th>
<th>Prediction</th>
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<th>Prediction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JKLF</td>
<td>SB: Coalition</td>
<td>State Reliant</td>
<td>SB: Coalition</td>
<td>Factionalized</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ES: Substantial</td>
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<td>ES: Minimal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hizbul</td>
<td>SB: Bonding</td>
<td>Cohesive</td>
<td>SB: Bonding</td>
<td>Cohesive</td>
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<td>Mujahideen</td>
<td>ES: Substantial</td>
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<td>ES: Substantial</td>
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<td>Ikhwan-ul</td>
<td>SB: Coalition</td>
<td>State Reliant</td>
<td>SB: Coalition</td>
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<td>Muslimimeen</td>
<td>ES: Substantial</td>
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<td>Al-Umar</td>
<td>SB: Bonding</td>
<td>State Reliant</td>
<td>SB: Coalition</td>
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<td>Mujahideen</td>
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<td>Muslim Janbaz</td>
<td>SB: Bonding</td>
<td>State Reliant</td>
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<td>State Reliant</td>
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<td>Force</td>
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<td>ES: Substantial</td>
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<td>Al Jehad</td>
<td>SB: Bonding</td>
<td>State Reliant</td>
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<td>ES: Substantial</td>
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SB = Social Base; ES = External Support; Prediction = pattern on DV predicted by my theory

A. The JKLF’s War: Popular Mobilization and Internal Fragmentation


Despite decades of turbulence, the real insurgency in Kashmir did not begin until 1988, and it
would initially be under the auspices of the JKLF. Across the LOC, Amanullah Khan’s return
from the UK in 1986 combined with Pakistan’s growing nuclear program and expertise in proxy
war in Afghanistan to increase the likelihood of a Pakistan-backed insurgency. Khan wrested
power from Hashim Qureshi in PJK, a sign of things to come as Khan both pushed for power and
proved more willing to deal with Pakistan. The spark for a renewed militant campaign came from the rigged 1987 state assembly election. Young Kashmiri men began crossing the LOC into PJK in search of guns and training. At this point the Jamaat was holding back from the fight, while other separatist parties slowly, and rather disorganizedly, became involved in insurgency.

Khan’s JKLF, despite its lack of size or infrastructure, was the natural destination for the men crossing the LOC, and “the first JKLF organizational unit was established in Srinagar only in early 1988, by a new generation of radicalized young men. . . this core of militants made contact with the existing JKLF organization across the LOC during 1987-1988.” It is crucial to keep in mind the social structure of the JKLF’s key leadership at this point - there was nothing resembling the deep, geographically-dispersed embeddedness that we have seen in the case of republican local notables in Ireland or the Jamaat-e-Islami in Kashmir. This was clearly a coalition social base, and one with relatively few branches or enclaves. Nevertheless, the JKLF’s political project represented an appealing idea of independence that drew on aspects of the ideology of Sheikh Abdullah and the Plebiscite Front, from before Abdullah’s deal with Indira Gandhi in 1975, and the group was the first-mover in the insurgency, which was an advantage.

In response to the unexpected opportunity created by contentious politics in the aftermath of the 1987 election, Pakistan’s military dictator Zia ul-Haq Zia “made a deal with the JKLF. The group undertook to wage guerrilla war with Pakistani arms and training.” Joshi argues that “the Pakistanis soon realized that the Islamists had very little appeal in the valley and the only viable vehicle for rebellion had to be the pro-independence JLF.” As a result of this

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108 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 159. Qureshi has since emerged as a fervent critic of Pakistan and the JKLF leadership. See Qureshi 1996.
109 It should be noted that the MUF itself split in 1988.
111 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 159.
112 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 17.
understanding, “between 1988 and 1990 ISI operatives assisted the JKLF, which saw Pakistan as a vital strategic ally, in launching the insurrection.”\textsuperscript{113} Four men from Srinagar led the JKLF’s operations in the Valley - Ashfaq Majid Wani, Hamid Sheikh, Yasin Malik, and Javed Mir.\textsuperscript{114} These four became known as the “HAJY” group and would constitute the initial leadership of the Valley JKLF.\textsuperscript{115} None were linked to the kinds of local notables that composed both the Jamaat and the National Conference; instead, they were largely lower and lower-middle class urban youth who had enthusiastically created an Islamic Students’ League in the mid-1980s on their own volition.\textsuperscript{116} The HAJY group linked up with other small factions, led by Hilal Beg, Abdul Ahad Waza, and others, that coalesced under the JKLF banner.\textsuperscript{117}

The organization’s size swelled dramatically, and large parts of Srinagar rapidly became the domain of gun-toting teenagers.\textsuperscript{118} As inept Indian crackdowns spurred growing mobilization, militancy became a path for angry young men looking for revenge – “even the JKLF’s relatively few underground militants were initially stunned by the spectacular scale and emotional intensity of the protests.”\textsuperscript{119} Trying to harness this mass unrest, the JKLF “emerged as the vanguard of a mass uprising.”\textsuperscript{120} In turn “within two years, the previously marginal JKLF

\textsuperscript{113} Bose, Kashmir, p. 126.
\textsuperscript{114} Azam Inquilabi, a rather nomadic early JKLF/Al Fatah/People’s League member, claims to have arranged their meeting with Amanullah Khan in Muzaffarabad; apparently they simply “approached me for initiation into the gun culture.” Pradeep Thakur, Militant Monologues: Echoes from the Kashmir Valley (New Delhi: Parity Paperbacks, 2003), p. 35.
\textsuperscript{115} On Javed Mir joining with a group of friends, see Thakur, Militant Monologues, pp. 121-122.
\textsuperscript{117} Beg is sometimes spelled Baig.
\textsuperscript{118} Interviews in Srinagar, May 2008. See also Peer, Curfewed Night; and Singh, A Tragedy of Errors, for evocative anecdotes of the pervasiveness of JKLF flags in Kashmir and the sudden profusion of JKLF members.
\textsuperscript{119} Bose, Kashmir, p. 109.
\textsuperscript{120} Bose, Kashmir, p. 117. Singh, A Tragedy of Errors, notes that JKLF members often joked that the hardline governor of J&K, Jagmohan, had quickly accomplished what they had failed to do in 40 years.

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emerged as the vanguard and spearhead of a popular uprising in the Kashmir Valley against Indian rule. It dominated the first three years of the insurgency (1990-92).” 121

Even to the present day, “most commentators agree that among Muslims in the Valley, the JKLF enjoys considerable popular support.” 122 In the early 1990s, “the predominant battle cry in Kashmir is [was] azadi (freedom) and not a merger with Pakistan” 123 and “the JKLF, a secular militant group, is by far the most popular.” 124 While there is no consensus on precisely how much popular support the JKLF had, it was clearly very substantial and seems significantly greater than that of its militant contemporaries – it “had caught the imagination of the people.” 125

In February 1990, for instance, the JKLF led a march by half a million Kashmiris demanding independence. 126 In 1995, roughly 70% of Kashmiris claimed to favor independence, rather than India or Pakistan. 127 There is little question that the JKLF was the most popular of the militant ideologies being advanced in IJK; it had the plurality of pro-militancy hearts and minds. 128

The strategic vision of the JKLF was fairly simple. In part inspired by the rising unrest in eastern Europe and the withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan, it hoped to generate enough popular resistance to Indian rule that India would withdraw from Kashmir and leave it as an independent state. Some compare it to a foco-ist strategy, with hopes for a quick, cascading revolution driven by a motivated core. 129 This matched the social structure of the late 1980s

122 Malik, Kashmir, p. 300. Jonah Blank, “Kashmir: Fundamentalism Takes Root,” Foreign Affairs 78, no. 6 (December 1999), p. 40, suggests that “most observers agree that if a plebiscite were held today, residents of the Valley (if not Jammu and Ladakh) would still opt for independence from both India and Pakistan.”
126 Habibullah, My Kashmir, p. 74.
JKLF, with a small group of older leaders in PJK and a small group of younger leaders in Srinagar, but without a strong preexisting network otherwise. The focus was thus on a rapid mass uprising to shatter India’s security apparatus in the state and impose sufficient costs that the Indian government would simply abandon the state. There was also a hope that Pakistan would launch an invasion behind its nuclear shield to repay India for the loss of East Pakistan in 1971. This strategy militated in favor of a rapid expansion strategy; the search was for a tipping point at which enough people were armed on the streets that the state would back down – “there was a wide belief that liberation could be gained in a matter of months.” Yet “these were dangerously naïve illusions. . .the Indian state would not contemplate any such course in Kashmir, the cornerstone of its identity as an inclusive, secular state and the focal point of its bitter enmity with Pakistan” and these beliefs proved to be “grave miscalculations.”

Combined with this strategic decision to expand quickly and broadly was a structural problem for the JKLF – its key leaders in Indian J&K were not centrally tied into the major vessels of collective action in the Valley, where the JKLF had a minimal presence. While the JKLF project appears to have been quite popular, it was forced to grow without strong preexisting patterns of cooperation and control to rely upon. There was no deeply-rooted party, tribe, caste, or religious network/s to build the organization around, and so it faced deep obstacles to successful institutionalization. As we have seen, its Valley organization was basically a group of lower-middle class teenagers and young men. There were weak social ties between the key leaders on the Indian and Pakistani sides of the LOC, and between the factional

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131 Bose, Kashmir, p. 111.
132 Behera, Demystifying Kashmir, p. 149.
elites (often barely older than teenagers) within Indian J&K. Not only had the JKLF had little sustained presence in IJK before 1988, the new recruits it picked up were not systematically tied to the JKLF organization through family, religious, or other community links.

In one former militant commander’s opinion, the early period of mobilization (also including non-JKLF groups) “was simply a matter of disgruntled boys exfiltrating for arms training; there was no organisation, no leadership, no guidelines, and no explicit objectives for the movement.” The JKLF even agreed to train Jamaatis and People’s League loyalists without forcing them to adhere to the JKLF organizational principles or ideology. The “big tent” of the JKLF provided opportunities for the JKLF’s future enemies to gain training, weaponry, and access to Pakistani patronage and sanctuary. Thus the emerging cadres of the JKLF were highly heterogeneous, both socially and ideologically. To paraphrase one interviewee, the JKLF “didn’t have a base, but an idea.”

Within the valley, “most of the top JKLF militants belonged to the capital city of Srinagar and its periphery.” Given the need to move into both rural areas of the Kashmir valley and then farther afield into the Muslim-majority areas of Jammu in order to deal with the ability of India to surge massive forces into Srinagar, this would prove to be extremely problematic. As Bose notes:

“The JKLF also suffered from its own limitations, in particular its overly Srinagar-centric and Valley-centric focus and organization. All four of the JKLF’s top commanders in the early phase of the uprising were from Srinagar (the JKLF’s other stronghold in the early

133 Amanullah Khan was actually from Baltistan, part of the Pakistani Northern Areas, not from the Valley; the HAJY group had no prior connections to PJK.
134 Sinha, Death of dreams, p. 25.
135 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion. “so fervently did the People’s League men argue that the JKLF leaders agreed to let them be trained without signing the JKLF code, as long as they were not given arms.” Devadas, In search of a future, p. 164.
136 “when the militants had arrived in ‘azaad; Kashmir, they had arrived together. Yet when they sat down to discuss matters, there disagreements, and they came apart.” Sinha, Death of dreams, p. 45.
1990s was Anantnag, the main town in the southern part of the Valley) and the group failed to develop and sustain an effective organizational structure outside Srinagar, in the smaller urban centers and the rural areas. This combination of weak preexisting social ties across the LOC and within IJK leads us to clearly code the JKLF as relying on a coalition social base, particularly given the indiscriminate recruiting techniques used. As a result, local incorporation was weak and ineffective - a lack of value infusion and collective obligation characterized both recruiting and training. For instance, Devadas suggests that Waza, an early faction leader, “had no time to indoctrinate every bunch of boys, he decided, and he had to take stock now of the big picture.” The decision to grow quickly amidst its lack of access to strong preexisting mobilization networks led the JKLF to accept and train a variety of individuals and sub-factions who did not share the organization’s commitments, were not indoctrinated or socialized in the course of their relatively brief training, and then were sent back across the LOC to operate in a highly autonomous manner. This “turned out to be a big mistake for the JKLF.” Without socially-embedded networks of local leaders across a reasonably broad swath of Kashmir, the JKLF was at risk of internal feuds and splintering due to weak social integration.

But Pakistani patronage initially provided material incentives for foot soldiers and factional leaders to join and stay with the JKLF, and the organization was the first mover which provided a certain momentum and recognition. Some members joined the JKLF to get their hands on weapons. For instance, Noorani quotes a pro-Pakistan insurgent leader saying “I agreed to send some of our boys to Pakistan for training [in JKLF camps] in handling sophisticated

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140 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 162.
141 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 164.
weapons as it would have helped us in our plans.”\(^{142}\) From 1988 until 1990, the JKLF was basically a *state-reliant* organization – while there were true believers in Kashmiri independence, there were also many others who knew that, for the time being, the JKLF was the only game in town - “at this time, in 1988, the JKLF was clearly running the show. Even Jamaat activists went through the JKLF mill,”\(^{143}\) and this was important since “everyone wanted to be a mujahid.”\(^{144}\) The coding is fairly unambiguous – “from 1988 to 1990, the ISI and the JKLF were complicit in launching the insurgency.”\(^{145}\)

Targeted killings of security officials, mass protests, and a general sense of chaos gripped Kashmir as the JKLF escalated its war in 1989. With the central government in Delhi adrift over a bribery scandal and the local security apparatus blinded by the unexpected militancy, the JKLF was riding very high in 1989 and early 1990. Nevertheless, unrest within the JKLF developed fairly quickly – “almost as soon as the insurgency had begun, one of its central weaknesses was underlined: division.”\(^{146}\) The diverse factional leaders who crossed the LOC often attempted to retain control of the resources they brought back and clashed over extortion and ‘revolutionary taxation.’ There was also a major pro-Pakistan vs. pro-independence cleavage running through the JKLF. Suspicion and incredibly poor information were endemic within the JKLF, and autonomy consequently extremely high. Hilal Beg’s JKLF student wing, the Jammu and Kashmir Students’ Liberation Front (JKSLF) acted largely on its own by planning and executing operations when and as it saw fit.\(^{147}\)

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\(^{142}\) Noorani in Thomas 1992, p. 263. Ghulam Rasool Shah, a senior commander of Jamiat-ul Mujahideen, is quoted as saying “we took training from them [JKLF], but made it clear that we stand for merging Kashmir with Pakistan.”

\(^{143}\) Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, p. 26

\(^{144}\) Thakur, *Militant Monologues*, p. 122; this is admittedly a clear exaggeration but there was large-scale joining.

\(^{145}\) Bose, “JKLF and JKH,” p. 238.


\(^{147}\) Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*; Devadas, *In search of a future.*
Splinters began to break away in late 1989, particularly the Awami Action Committee-linked Al-Umar Mujahideen, led by Mushtaq Zargar.148 When the JKLF kidnapped the daughter of India’s (Kashmiri) Home Minister, JKLF member Zargar suggested they demand one of his jailed friends, the JKLF leadership “not only rejected it [the suggestion] but passed derisive comments about the fighting qualities of Latrum and his friend. Along with Shabir Ahmed Bayaroo, Lateed Muzaffar Soifi, and Shaukat Bakshi, Latrum walked out of the JKLF on 13 December 1989. . . Latrum decided to go across the LoC to seek aid.”149 It was as simple as that – a personal insult, a split, and a new group emerged in Srinagar without the JKLF preventing the split or rapidly marginalizing the new group. Zargar’s Al-Umar Mujahideen, discussed below, would carve out turf in the JKLF’s erstwhile Srinagar stronghold. Even when the favored ally of Pakistan the JKLF suffered from weak boundary maintenance, allowing recruits to drift in and out of the organization.

The Loss of Pakistani Aid and Change to JKLF Factionalization. This process of fragmentation dramatically accelerated from late 1990 onwards when the Pakistani ISI began to downgrade the JKLF – “from 1991 onward . . . the JKLF’s domination of the armed struggle began to erode.”150 This loss of preeminence was directly caused by the JKLF’s inability to avoid splits or mitigate factional autonomy. As the ISI shifted favor to the pro-Pakistan forces, including the Al-Umar, Muslim Janbaz Force, and Hizbul Mujahideen, it began to “systematically deprive the JKLF of weapons and money”151; the “Pakistani military and its ISI deliberately and systematically undermined the JKLF.”152 As a result of the loss of significant

148 “Zargar . . . had skipped out of a window when Ishfaq entered a house he was in.” Devadas, In search of a future, p. 214. See below on Al-Umar’s ultimately dismal course.
149 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 49.
151 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 90.
152 Bose, “JKLF and JKH,” p. 238.
external support, the JKLF shifted into a factionalized trajectory that spelled its demise- “once the ISI ceased helping the JKLF, the movement was almost literally left high and dry.”\textsuperscript{153} The various groupings that had attached themselves to the JKLF banner in order to get material resources defected once they had established their own modus vivendi with the ISI.

Why did Pakistan change course? It was not that the JKLF was failing, but rather that the strategic aims of the JKLF diverged from those of Pakistan and political parties within it like the Pakistani Jamaat. The divergence between JKLF and Pakistani war aims had been accepted by the Pakistani security establishment as a necessary compromise in the insurgency’s early days, but once a full blown revolt had erupted there was an opportunity to push for Kashmir to join Pakistan.\textsuperscript{154} Once useful in generating momentum, now “the JKLF became an obstacle to this design”\textsuperscript{155} and was cast aside.

Both India and Pakistan could agree on the unacceptability of an independent Jammu and Kashmir, and so the JKLF’s politics left it in a difficult position. The Pakistani Jamaat was, furthermore, an ally of the Sharif government that came to power in Islamabad in 1990, adding further motivation for a change in heart.\textsuperscript{156} This means that the change in external support was not endogenous to cohesion and military effectiveness; rather, it was driven by exogenous strategic assessments of which groups best served Pakistani strategic interests - “like the Pakistan government, organizations such as the Jamaat [of Pakistan] are highly selective in which militants they support: basically those that share their Islamic ideology and have the same aspirations for Kashmir.”\textsuperscript{157}

\textsuperscript{153} Bose, “JKLF and JKHM,” p. 241.
\textsuperscript{154} Jamal, \textit{Shadow war}.
\textsuperscript{155} Bose, “JKLF and JKHM,” p. 238.
\textsuperscript{156} Sharif’s coalition was a center-right alliance of the PML(N) with the Jamaat and a Karachi-based ethnic party, the Muhajir Qaumi Movement.
\textsuperscript{157} Malik, \textit{Kashmir}, p. 298.
The JKLF had thus “become redundant.”\textsuperscript{158} The loss of Pakistan’s support was crucial. Lacking significant diaspora support (much less a means to get diaspora support delivered) – in part because of the relatively poor, PJK-linked nature of the British diaspora and the more non-political, if wealthier, nature of the American diaspora - the JKLF began to wither on the vine in the face of the mounting Indian counteroffensive.\textsuperscript{159} Its military weaknesses combined with its vulnerable social infrastructure to shatter its fighting power. As the Border Security Force in particular ramped up its intelligence and liquidation programs, the JKLF “lost almost all of its top commanders and the cream of its fighting cadres”\textsuperscript{160} and “steadily squeezed by arrests and starved of funds, remained confined to Srinagar, where its appeal had not dimmed.”\textsuperscript{161} Put bluntly, “the JKLF did not have the organizational caliber and resources to withstand either the ruthless Indian countrinsurgency campaign or the growing hostility of its initial patron,”\textsuperscript{162} even if it retained a hold on hearts and minds.

A series of “catch-and-kill” operations (allegedly modeled after the Phoenix Program in Vietnam), the rise of massive force-population ratios in favor of the state, and the emergence of an institutionalized counterinsurgency grid all consolidated the Indian position, as troops, paramilitaries, and the intelligence agencies flowed into the Valley.\textsuperscript{163} The ratio of security forces to militants would, according to Indian security sources, eventually reach a staggering 1,000:1 in the Valley.\textsuperscript{164} The JKLF’s apparent power had been exaggerated in the collapse of Indian governance in 1989 and 1990, but when the time came to measure real relative power, it

\textsuperscript{158} Puri, \textit{Kashmir towards insurgency}, p. 68.
\textsuperscript{159} “the JKLF also failed to develop its own financial networks. The movement...failed to build on this goodwill and turn the diaspora into a vital source of funding.” Bose, “JKLF and JKHM,” p. 241.
\textsuperscript{160} Bose, “JKLF and JKHM,” p. 238.
\textsuperscript{161} Joshi, \textit{The Lost Rebellion}, p. 77.
\textsuperscript{163} Indian COIN had learned the importance of a grid and local quick response units from the experience of Nagaland.
would find itself on the wrong end of the bloody contest.

After Ishfaq Majid Wani, the first military commander of the JKLF in IJK, was killed in 1990, leadership struggles within the JKLF broke out, with Hamid Sheikh, Javed Mir, Yasin Malik, and Saleem Nanhaji all attempting at various points to consolidate power within the organization. Elite cooperation and trust was very low, and efforts to re-consolidate the group failed. Nanhaji attempted to bring Hilal Beg’s JKSLF back under the JKLF banner, but was only able to get them to change their name; he also apparently had a running rivalry with fellow JKLF veteran Javed Mir. Hamid Sheikh, one of the founders of the organization, was released from prison in 1992 and tried to “whip some energy and discipline into the effete outfit” but himself was soon killed. Systematic leadership decapitation is a sign that betrayal and lax communication are rife within an organization, and there was no smooth re-filling of the ranks like we saw when PIRA leaders were arrested. Furthermore, in large part because of its over-reliance on Srinagar and weak links into the countryside, “once the Indian counterinsurgency forces gradually reasserted control over Srinagar, the erstwhile JKLF bastion, the group had no ‘Plan B’ to fall back on.” The Srinagar-centric nature of the commanders, its lack of strong ties elsewhere in the valley, and its reliance on a coalition social base left the JKLF reeling once the Indian state punched back in a serious way.

Moreover, powerful rival militants appeared, some from within the JKLF itself. First, the ISI “began to engineer defections from the JKLF by its more pliable elements and the

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165 To give a sense of how decisions were being made, Devadas offers an anecdote of what happened when the de facto Valley commander of the JKLF, Nanhaji, after Yasin Malik’s arrest, heard of the return from PJK of one of the four HAJY founders: “hearing that Javed [Mir] was back, Nanna sent some boys to hail him in like a captive. A shouting match ensued when Nanna discovered that Javed had accepted 100,000 rupees from the ISI.” Devadas, *In search of a future*, pp. 247-8.
166 Nanna’s (failed) attempt to get SLF back under his control is discussed in Devadas, *In search of a future*, p. 248.
167 Devadas, *In search of a future*, p. 262.
reconstitution of such elements as pro-Pakistan tanzeems.” Thus, “by the end of October [1989], several important rivals to the JKLF had obtained ISI backing... each dedicated to Kashmir’s merger with Pakistan: the Muslim Janbaz Force was an offshoot of the People’s League, Al Umar was based among the ‘goats’ of downtown, although it did not have the mirwaiz’s blessing, and Hizb for the moment included Islamist radicals from both the Ahle-hadis and the Jamaat-e-Islami.” The Al-Umar Mujahideen had split directly from the JKLF in very late 1989/early 1990 in part because it had gained Pakistani support, and would be a significant presence in Srinagar until approximately 1993.

The students’ wing of the JKLF, the Jammu and Kashmir Students Liberation Front (JKSLF) under Hilal Beg had already been acting largely autonomously from the remnant HAJY leadership, indeed “turning his Students’ Liberation Front into a rambunctious rival.” Its extremely high autonomy in 1989-1990, marked by Beg holding onto many of the weapons he was given to bring across the LOC even when the senior leadership wanted him to hand over all of them, foreshadowed a more formal break in 1991 that represented a significant blow to the JKLF’s organizational integrity and fighting power. The JKSLF’s new incarnation, the Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen, is discussed below. Beg had approached the ISI, built his own cadre of loyalists, and was thus able to easily splinter from the JKLF, which lacked the ability to deter or destroy him. Former JKLF members also helped to form Al Barq, the armed wing of the People’s Conference. The JKLF continued to have brutal and enduring feuds with its splitters, and even

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170 Devadas, In search of a future, pp. 180-181.
171 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 214. See also Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 49 for a slightly different chronology.
172 “it seemed suspiciously like a split.” Devadas, In search of a future, p. 181. According to Sahni, Kashmir Underground, p. 44, Amanullah Khan then proceeded to denounce Beg’s JKSLF/Ikhwan.
173 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion dates the formal split to April 1991.
174 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 51.
attempts to bridge these differences in order to hold off the Hizbul Mujahideen failed.\footnote{The Ikhwan actually attempted to get the JKLF and Al Umar to sort out their feud in March 1992 (Joshi, \textit{The Lost Rebellion}, p. 105), but this failed.}

Second, the rise of a powerful Islamist, pro-Pakistan group, the Hizbul Mujahideen (discussed in much greater detail below), proved enormously problematic, as the JKLF “faced the lethal challenge of the Hizbul Mujahideen which had Jamaat-trained, highly disciplined cadres, better equipment, and better military strategy.”\footnote{Behera, \textit{State, identity & violence}, p. 204.} The Hizb began systematically marginalizing the JKLF, killing and intimidating its members, and spurring others to defect. In the face of the JKLF’s dramatically declining military strength and fragile social infrastructure, this sustained pressure from the Hizb led to more deaths and defections. As Joshi notes, the JKLF “was almost entirely decimated and had no strike power left . . . its very own top militants were afraid of taking on its pro-Pakistan adversaries.”\footnote{Arun Joshi, \textit{Eyewitness Kashmir: teetering on nuclear war} (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2004), p. 167.} When talking to JKLF, “nobody denied that the HM (Hizbul Mujahideen) had more weapons than they did”;\footnote{Singh, \textit{A Tragedy of Errors}, p. 189.} indeed, “a group of Hizb boys would carry a weapon each to Kashmir, sophisticated heavy weapons too sometimes, but a dozen JKLF boys would be handed two or three automatics or pistols to share.”\footnote{Devadas, \textit{In search of a future}, p. 245.}

The remaining JKLF leadership put up a brave front, with Javed Mir saying in mid-1993 that “gun power is not the only thing that matters. The public is the most powerful weapon and it is on our side,”\footnote{Interview with Javed Mir, \textit{India Today}, May 31, 1993.} but in reality “devoid of new weapons, cadres, and funds, the JKLF was no match for the massive military power of the Indian state, especially when it was being marginalized from within by the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen.”\footnote{Behera, \textit{Demystifying Kashmir}, p. 167.} As Baweja noted in 1993, the “JKLF,
though keeping its popularity intact, has lost its military edge” to the Hizb.\textsuperscript{182} Clearly popular support was \textit{not} the “most powerful weapon” in the militant arsenal. Increasingly bitter over this turn of events, Amanullah Khan and Javed Mir began arguing that India and Pakistan were both the J	extsc{k}lf’s enemies.\textsuperscript{183}

\textit{Putting Down the Gun.} Thus “by 1994 the J	extsc{K}lf had split several times”\textsuperscript{184} and was clearly militarily weak. In 1994, the J	extsc{K}lf suffered a final split that essentially ended its war. When Yasin Malik, a founding member of the Valley branch of the J	extsc{K}lf, was released from prison he announced a unilateral ceasefire. Some believe that Malik was released by the Indians in hopes that he could “resolve the disunity in the ranks of the J	extsc{K}lf” and thus balance the now-dominant Hizb.\textsuperscript{185} But the J	extsc{K}lf had been hammered very hard, as the combination of the Hizb and the Indian security forces simply devastated the organization – “there were few options left before the J	extsc{K}lf after funds from Pakistan dried up.”\textsuperscript{186} Despite his claims to be able to restore unity\textsuperscript{187}, Malik’s decision to lay down arms led to another split, this time between him and his loyalists in IJK (becoming J	extsc{K}lf-Yasin), on the one hand, and Amanullah Khan’s leadership in Muzaffarabad and a few of his followers in IJK on the other.\textsuperscript{188} The origins of the split combined ideological disagreement about the future of militancy (i.e., whether or not to embark on a ceasefire) with personal rivalry between Khan and Malik; the latter accused the former of trying

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item On Khan, see “Both Nawaz and Rao are our enemies,” \textit{India Today}, December 31, 1992, p. 100.
\item Evans, “The Kashmir insurgency,” p. 69.
\item Thakur, \textit{Militant Monologues}, p. 127.
\item See interview with him in \textit{India Today}, June 15, 1994, p. 69: “if there are differences of opinion in the J	extsc{K}lf, it doesn’t make it a divided house.” He also said he would be able to end the rivalry with the Hizb within 40 days.
\item For background on the process and condemnations involved, see Sahni, \textit{Kashmir Underground}, pp. 49-52.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
to run the movement by “remote control,” while egos seem to have been involved as well.189

Neither side had significant military power or organizational capacity, and so a messy split ensued, with most of the JKLF in Indian Kashmir going with Yasin, but a small faction in IJK around Shabir Siddiqui remaining loyal to the Khan leadership; the other surviving HAJY founder beside Malik, Javed Mir, apparently swayed between the two before joining the Yasin Malik faction.190 The Amanullah faction, led by Siddiqui, continued to bear arms, but was entirely wiped out by Indian police in 1996 after a somewhat strange escalation of previously-low tensions. The only JKLF that remained in IJK was Yasin Malik’s group, which had abandoned the armed struggle.191 Its ceasefire made it even less popular among the pro-Pakistan groups, who continued to target senior JKLF members in 1995 and 1996.

Thus “in mid-1994 the weakened JKLF ceased armed operations altogether, leaving the insurgency dominated by the JKHM [Hizbul Mujahideen]”192 and “by 1995, the JKLF as an armed group was no longer a force to seriously reckon with, although its agenda for a free, independent Kashmir still fired the hearts of many, if not most, Kashmiris.”193 The IJK branch of the JKLF under Yasin Malik has engaged in significant contentious politics and mass protest/demonstrations, but not militancy. The non-violent JKLF in Indian J&K has further splintered and re-coalesced among different personal factions.194 Popular support and mass

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189 Opinions vary about the overall balance of personality and ideology in this split. First, Joshi deems this “nothing more than a clash of two strong egos.” Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 431. Second, Behera suggests that “Yasin Malik refused to play second fiddle to Azad Kashmir’s leadership of the JKLF and in 1995 parted ways with Amanullah Khan, asserting that the ‘movement cannot be run by remote control as Khan was doing’ from Azad Kashmir.” Behera, Demystifying Kashmir, p. 158. Finally, Malik argues that “the split emerged partly out of personality differences, but mostly over divergent attitudes to militancy,” Malik, Kashmir, p. 300.

190 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 431.

191 Noorani, “Contours of militancy,” also suggests that there was tension within the JKLF in Pakistan: “Amanullah Khan and Farooq Haider fell out, as did the Khan and Yasin Malik. The JKLF split in both parts of the [former princely] State.”


mobilization could not save the JKLF in the face of its inability to harness and channel this mobilization into sustained organized violence.

**B. Rise of the Hizb: Sword-Arm of the Jamaat and ISI**

While tracing the rise and fall of the JKLF, I alluded to the growing importance of the Hizbul Mujahideen as a competitor and rival within the insurgency. The Hizb was the dominant player in the armed struggle by 1993. But why? I argue here that the social base of the Jamaat-e-Islami political party combined with large-scale Pakistani support to forge the Hizb as a comparatively cohesive and militarily effective insurgent group. The Hizb built this relatively high unity and fighting power despite representing the Jamaat’s fairly unpopular, minority political-religious ideology – austere Islam and a fierce devotion to Pakistan. Indeed, “in the early days of the insurgency, the Hizb-ul Mujaheddin, based in Sopore and regarded as the armed wing of the Jamaat-I Islami, did not have widespread support within the valley.”

But the Jamaat’s party cadres and their kin and sympathizers provided a comparatively disciplined minority social base, even if “its very tight-knit, hierarchical organizational structure was not geared to mass mobilization” and it “could not aspire to the same degree of spontaneous popular support enjoyed by JKLF insurgents in their prime.” Rather than being led by enthusiastic young men, the Hizb built itself at the elite level around Jamaati party cadres, particularly at the level of district administrator and above. Much like the overlapping traditionalist networks of Northern Ireland, this social base provided the cooperation and control to take full advantage of the vast quantities of guns and money that Pakistan and the Pakistani Jamaat-e-Islami pumped into the organization. Hizb was, and is, the “organizationally strongest”

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of the indigenous Kashmiri armed groups and its leader Syed Salahuddin “has continued to rule the roost.” It would become “the most militarily well organized of all the jehadi organizations in Pakistan and Kashmir,” “a large organization having a well-equipped, disciplined, and highly trained cadre,” and, among the indigenous groups, “the most effective.” The variation compared to the JKLF is dramatic – the Hizb “had highly disciplined cadres and better firepower” despite its less popular ideology. This, I argue, is in part because it was “totally differently” built than the JKLF.

In this section I examine three key dynamics in the Hizb’s rise as a relatively (but far from perfectly or absolutely) cohesive group compared to the other Kashmiri organizations – first, the consolidation of its leadership around Syed Salahuddin and the J&K Jamaat, second, the organizational structure and processes of recruitment at the local and regional levels, and, third, the strategic logic of Pakistani support for the Hizb. The combination of Jamaati social mobilization in the valley, which tapped into both Jamaat cadres and local, non-Jamaat networks, with massive Pakistani material aid proved decisive to hold Hizb together as it rose. This does not mean the Hizb was anything close to perfectly cohesive, but comparatively it was the most disciplined and robustly organized of the indigenous groups; it is also the only one that has even survived as a coordinated force.

Leadership Consolidation: Party-led Elite Cooperation. An early version of Hizbul Mujahideen emerged in some form during the upsurge of militant mobilization in 1989, though

198 Varshney “Three Compromised Nationalisms,” p. 221.
199 Noorani, “Contours of militancy.”
200 Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 440.
204 Srinagar May 2008.
205 Al-Umar Mujahideen apparently still has a presence in old city Srinagar, but it is not an active militant force.
there is some lack of clarity about its exact original name. The Jamaat-e-Islami was not an original sponsor of this group. In fact, the Jamaat in 1988 and early 1989 looked on the armed struggle with a deep skepticism and suspicion, since it had played no direct role in previous militancy in J&K and, some suggest, knew that India would not back down quickly. However, the Hizb’s founders included several Jamaati party members and/or affiliates - one of its key leaders, Master Ahsan Dar, “used to teach in a Jamat-run school before his foray into militancy.” With the JKLF growing rapidly in pursuit of its pro-independence ideology, both politically-minded Jamaatis and the Pakistanis began to get nervous. The initiative to enter the militant realm was allegedly pushed by veteran Jamaati Syed Ali Shah Geelani and a former MUF candidate in Srinagar, Mohammed Yusuf Shah, among others. This move was supported by the Pakistani Jamaat, which had experience backing militancy through Gulbuddin Hekmatyar’s Hezb-i-Islami in Afghanistan. The Pakistani ISI, as we will see below, was also in favor of broadening the battlefield to include a variety of pro-Pakistan armed groups.

The Hizb, with its Jamaat members, pro-Pakistan ideology, and lack of sympathy with Sufi-linked Islamic practices in Kashmir, was a natural partner for the J&K Jamaat to swing into action to counter the JKLF assertion. However, an Ahle-e-Hadith (a South Asian version of Wahhabism) adherent, Nasir-ul Islam, was one of the key leaders of the Hizb in 1989/early

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206 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 48 argues that Hizb was originally named Al Badr; Devadas, In search of a future, p. 180 argues that it was originally the Ansar-ul Islam (mentioned by Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 15), and that Al Badr was merely one name considered.
207 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 47; and Devadas 1999, p. 213. The Jamaat saw more clearly the likely contours of the Indian response, according to interviews in Delhi 2008 and 2009, and so much of the early pro-Pakistan mobilization occurred (in Amin’s pro-Jamaat euphemism) “independent of the Jamaat discipline.” Amin, Mass resistance in Kashmir, p. 90.
209 Geelani fits the socio-economic profile of many influential Jamaat members – “another Pirzada and school teacher,” Gauhar ‘Jamat-I-Islami,’ p. 77. The leadership of “a militant wing led by Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Ghulman Nabi Nowsheri, and Mohammed Yusuf Shah was able to pressure its colleagues to jump into the fray,” Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 47.
The Ahle-e-Hadith and Jamaat share an opposition to Kashmiri Sufism, but in other respects are competing sects, and Nasir-ul Islam was not comfortable with Jamaat control. Nevertheless, “Geelani had enough political experience to deal with that. He mobilized two of Jamaat’s ranking leaders for the task: Ghulam Mohammed Safi to take charge of the training camp [in PJK] and Ashraf Sehrai to displace Nasir.” The Jamaat was taking over the Hizb from within by placing loyal personnel in key positions, rapidly augmenting the already Jamaat-heavy social composition of the command elite. The party aimed to seize control of the gun, using its discipline and preexisting organization to consolidate the insurgent movement under its reins. Elite cooperation would be built around the Jamaati core.

When Yusuf Shah, the former MUF candidate in March 1990, was released, “Geelani handed Yusuf the job of displacing Nasir – and then the JKLF.” Shah was a deeply committed Jamaati who had been actively involved in the party since college. Shah renamed himself Syed Salahuddin and began to consolidate his dominance of the Hizb, first as patron-in-chief. Master Ahsan Dar, the chief commander, officially pronounced the organization the “sword arm of the Jamaat” in 1990 and in response, in the autumn of 1990, Nasir-ul Islam left the Hizb to start his own tanzeem, Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen. This was not a major split, and the Jamiat had a relatively low profile for the rest of its existence (Nasir-ul Islam was soon killed).

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210 His real name was Hilal Ahmed Mir.
211 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 213.
212 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 214.
213 Most Wanted, pp. 116-117. He became a schoolteacher and a politician; he also became a full-fledged Jamaat rukn, or member, sometime soon after 1972.
214 This splinter was also known as the “Green Army.” The Jamiat was “soon marginalized,” Praveen Swami, “The Tanzeems and their leaders,” Frontline, September 19, 2000. The Hizb also made sure to turn its guns on the Jamiat; Joshi quotes a letter from Salahuddin saying “the group of Nasirul Islam needs to be suppressed and eliminated.” Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 83. On Jamiat split from Hizb, a former senior member of the Jamiat explains that he did not approve of Jamaat meddling. Thakur, Militant Monologues, p. 132. Ghulam Rasool Shah, a senior commander of Jamiat, is profiled in “A Profile in Passion,” Newsline, February 2001, pp. 33-34.
The next important step in building the Hizb came in early 1991 when the Hizb integrated another major group, Tehrik-e-Jihad-e-Islami (TJI), led by a Jamaat sympathizer, Abdul Majid Dar. Dar had worked on Geelani’s staff in Sopore, a Jamaat stronghold, and, while not apparently a full-blown JI member, he was familiar with and sympathetic to the organization. TJI was originally linked to Rehmani’s faction of the People’s League, but the Jamaat ties won out. This was an important merger - “TJI was then the biggest militant outfit in North Kashmir.” It was viewed by observers from this region as a well-armed and well-trained organization. By smoothly combining the Hizb with the TJI, the organization expanded in size and power without losing significant internal cohesion, in part because of the Jamaat bonds that provided a basis for integration. Salahuddin “trusted [Abdul] Majid [Dar], who had once worked on Geelani’s staff in Sopore, and appointed him military adviser. Then Salahuddin crossed the Line of Control and in spring [1991] dispatched Jamaat-e-Islami loyalists Ashraf Dar, Maqbool Ilahi, and Wahid Sheikh from there as district commanders.” The Jamaat networks were being very clearly used to create and consolidate Hizb-ul Mujahideen’s command structure. Ironically, both Maqbool Ilahi and Mohammed Ashraf Dar, like many other Islamist

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216 Abdul Majid Dar, the leader of Tehrik-e-Jihad that merged with Hizb, had worked for Syed Ali Geelani in Sopore, a Jamaat bastion: “as a young boy growing up in the town he was quite influenced by the Islamic worldview that the Jamaat stood for.” Singh, A Tragedy of Errors, p. 220. Jaleel writes that he was a “Jamaat activist.” Muzamil Jaleel, “Hizb rebel Dar shot at Sopore House,” Indian Express, March 24, 2003. Dar himself in an interview says that he was “not a member, but I started supporting them and their activities. The protests continued. The Jamaat leadership adopted a democratic line of action against Sheikh Abdullah. The Jamaat participated in the elections, and I supported them. I was actively involved with Geelani’s election campaigns.” The Rediff interview: Abdul Majid Dar,” Rediff.com.
217 Majid’s Tehrik-e-Jihad Islami was linked to a People’s League faction (Qureshi). Devadas, In search of a future, p. 237; and Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 46.
218 Jaleel, “Spawning Militancy.”
219 Srinagar, July 2009.
220 Sinha, Death of dreams, does suggest that a significant number of TJI men joined the Muslim Janbaz Force, p. 91; this was also mentioned in interviewees in Srinagar with knowledge of the North Kashmiri political scene.
221 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 237.
222 “It followed that the newly-launched Al Badr would have a well-knit organizational and cadre-based structure at its disposal in the Valley.” Jaleel “Spawning Militancy.” Babar Badr, the MJF commander, suggests in Sinha, Death of dreams, that TJI members joined Al Badr and that the group may have consisted of as many as 2000 men.
fighters, had first been members of or trained by the JKLF, which would become a target of the growing HM.\textsuperscript{223}

The final act in forging a cohesive high command was making the Jamaat collective leadership supreme. Master Ahsan Dar was the Hizb’s chief commander in 1991, but he had grown accustomed to running his own show, with high levels of discretion. The Jamaat party leadership, both in J&K and Pakistan, preferred a more collective and institutionalized structure, in line with the organization’s overall profile and ideology. Ahsan Dar chafed under the pressure, particularly the imposition of Dar, Ilahi, and Sheikh as new district commanders and the attempts of the JI leadership to impose a shura council leadership on the Hizb. A profiler of Salahuddin writes that Ahsan Dar “did not accept the advisory system of the Hizb-ul Mujahideen. . . Dar had insisted frequently on a free hand.”\textsuperscript{224} According to Swami, Dar “found that the ISI had begun to choke funds and weapons flows to Hizb-ul-Mujahideen units who still acknowledged his authority.”\textsuperscript{225}

In 1991, Ahsan Dar was expelled from the Hizb by its Salahuddin loyalists. Joshi argues that “Dar’s expulsion was in part due to personality clashes and in part to the classic conflict between the ‘party’ and the ‘gun.’ When the party, in this case the Jamaat, did not have the gun, they depended on experienced cadres like Dar to lead the way. But once established, it wanted to validate its political supremacy.”\textsuperscript{226} Ahsan Dar took a small group of loyalists away with him to form the Muslim Mujahideen. With him out of the way, “by end of 1991, Geelani’s men

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\textsuperscript{223} Similarly, a senior loyalist of Nasir-ul Islam, Abdullah Bangroo, had been trained in JKLF camps.


\textsuperscript{226} Joshi, \textit{The Lost Rebellion}, p. 187.
controlled the Hizb.”

Not only was Dar’s challenge to Salahuddin and the Jamaat leadership blunted, but Ahsan Dar was kidnapped for a few days by Hizb cadres as a warning to keep his new tanzeem from directly challenging the Hizb. In fact, Dar’s new group, the Muslim Mujahideen, quickly fell apart after his 1993 arrest. Much of the MM would in fact end up joining pro-India counterinsurgent militias, turning on the Hizb in revenge, part of a broader pattern of Hizb overreach and blowback.

Both the Ahsan Dar and Nasir-ul Islam splits were low-intensity, quickly-cauterized affairs that marked not leadership fragmentation but instead ruthless leadership consolidation. Though numbers are not available, none of the existing secondary sources, nor primary interviewing, points to either split as being very significant in size or intensity. As we would expect from a cohesive group, the ruptures were over a fundamental issue of high politics – which religious sect and party would control the application of violence. However, these two splits do raise the “frequency” measure of the dependent variable a bit higher than I predict.

There would not be another Hizb split until 1998, and the next major one would be in 2000-1, a decade after Ahsan Dar’s break.

Thus the Hizb’s high command came to be dominated by Jamaat party members, well out of proportion both to their representation in Kashmiri society or even in the foot soldier ranks of the organization - “there is a clear pattern of top positions in the JKHM hierarchy being occupied by JI members, usually of long standing, and JI families and schools contributing their sons and

227 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 237.
228 However, Master Ahsan Dar himself would be released by India, and then periodically resurface in Kashmir before being arrested in early 2009. Somewhat unexpectedly, given his purging, he had apparently remained close to Syed Salahuddin and was acting as his agent to manage militancy-related issues in the Valley.
229 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 103 argues that as a result of the purges and Jamaat infusion, the Hizb’s “leadership problems [were] settled” by 1992. Dar would resurface in an ambiguous role in the early 2000s before being rearrested. This is not totally dissimilar to the slow discarding of some of the founding members of the Provisional IRA by others within the republican social milieu.
pupils to the JKHM.” This provided a party-led bonding network social base to the armed group, and as Schofield notes “the Jamaat’s support of its militant wing, the Hizb-ul Mujaheddin, had greatly contributed to the Hizb’s early successes and especially its ascendancy over the militant members of the JKLFP.”

Elite cooperation was built around the Jamaat’s shura council in J&K, and enforced at on the ground by local Jamaat members - “instructions were soon issued to Hizb area commanders that government informers... must not be killed without clearance from the Jamaat district chief.” The Hizb would come to resemble the Jamaat in important respects - “to maintain absolute control over the Hizb... [Hizb chief Syed] Salahuddin divided the organisation into administrative and military wings. The administrative wing, manned by Jamat-e-Islami leaders, controlled the military commanders in the field. District administrators, who were always senior Jamat activists, were also appointed.” This “formidable network of cadre across Jammu and Kashmir” underpinned the Hizb, combining elite cooperation at the top with local incorporation on the ground.

Organizational Structure and Expansion. With Salahuddin in control, the Hizb mobilized Jamaat and Jamaat-linked party and social networks to establish a robust presence across the Kashmir Valley – its “early bases were in Pattan and Budgam, the homes of its leaders, but by the time the Jamaat had taken over, Sopore [in the north] had become its bastion...like Shopian

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232 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 237.
233 Jaleel, “Spawning Militancy.”
235 This does not mean Jamaati support was universal – Devadas claims that “the Jamaat chief, Hakim Ghulam Nabi, was horrified at first – although he too fell in line after the first couple of years... he never sanctioned the kangaroo courts or Jamaat’s patronage of the Hizb but could do nothing to stop them.” Devadas, In search of a future, p 261. On the other hand, Devadas also places Nabi at a major strategy meeting with the Hizb leadership. My interviews in India and IJK suggest that the real ambivalence within the JI high command came only once the Ikhwan onslaught was taking its toll in the mid/late-1990s.
[in the south], that other home of guns and apples, it remained a Jamaat-e-Islami stronghold.  

Rather than the JKLF’s focus on Srinagar, the Hizb spread out into the valley, and then beyond into them mountainous Doda district of northern Jammu. Crucially, this Jamaat network offered access into rural Kashmir, where the JKLF networks were weak and loyalties to the JKLF uncertain. As the Jamaat increased in influence, it intentionally tried to focus on stabilization and cohesion, though it was criticized for over-expansion. We can recall the way the JI had grown as a geographically-dispersed organization, with pockets of support all over J&K.

Local incorporation of new recruits occurred through these preexisting networks - it expanded by “using its wide network of offices across the Valley, and stretching the resources of its administrative stronghold to the utmost.” This process was heavily driven by Jamaat local cadres. On the ground, the Hizb/Jamaat links were often informal (more so than at the level of the high command) but nevertheless clear and widespread. While most of the foot soldiers were not themselves Jamaati members, they were recruited and controlled at the local levels by members and sympathizers of the party. Preexisting social resources were converted into the underpinning of insurgency, and the Hizb could find support from “a vast network of over 6,000

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236 Devadas, *In search of a future*, p. 240.
237 “the Hizbul Mujahideen’s base has been concentrated in the Jamaat dominated apple-belt of Sopore, Pulwama, and parts of Anantnag and Srinagar districts...mostly motivated and recruited by the Madrassa teachers, Imams of rural mosques and the Jama-e-Islami activists.” Verma, *Jammu and Kashmir*, p. 278. “the Hizb was still weak in the city but the Jamaat men Salahuddin had dispatched in March 1991 to take charge had built a strong rural network by the time 1992 rolled around. Members of the Jamaat cadre had eagerly gotten into a symbiotic cinch with the Hizb.” Devadas, *In search of a future*, p. 256. See also Thakur, *Militant Monologues*, p. 131.
238 Quotes from letters: “it is necessary to pay more attention to the stability of Hizbul Mujahideen than merely expanding it. You have to ensure that only highly motivated persons are inducted as office bearers from grass-roots levels to the top and insulate the party from infiltrators... send a group of office bearers of the Jamaat who are underground. After training here they would be inducted to take over the overground leadership of the Mujahideen.” Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, p. 84. However, see “On the Turning Away,” *Indian Express*, August 2, 2000 on over-expansion leading to dilution of quality. Nevertheless, this was checked at the command levels.
240 “The organizational networks of the Hizbul Mujahideen spread down to the divisional and district levels in the Valley. Their cadre was better equipped, more disciplined, and highly trained... the Hizbul cadre was recruited by the Jamaat-i-Islami.” Behera, *State, identity & violence*, pp. 178-179.
militants and large upper-level base of Jamat-e-Islami leaders across the Valley."\textsuperscript{241} The inchoate surge of youth mobilization in 1989, 1990, and 1991 was ultimately best harnessed by the Hizb, in part because the Jamaat "came to be crucially involved"\textsuperscript{242} in armed struggle and had a "huge role" in recruitment.\textsuperscript{243}

Interviewees in both Delhi and Srinagar provided a surprisingly consistent account of how this local recruitment often worked. Prominent Jamaatis would "talent-spot" and approach promising young men, some of whom had been taught by or were related to the local cadre. Using their moral and religious authority along with social ties of obligation (especially kinship), they would persuade young men to join the Hizb, and then continue to monitor their behavior once in the organization.\textsuperscript{244} These JI party cadres and sympathizers were the crucial pivots linking local mobilization with broader organizational control and discipline. The JI's schoolteachers in particular played an important role in spotting, socializing, and monitoring young recruits; indeed, "the student cadres of the Jamaat came as a readymade force to the HM."\textsuperscript{245} Local cadres "had regular meetings called ijtimas, where their workers would try to convince young men to join the Hizbul Mujahideen,"\textsuperscript{246} and this proselytization and recruitment occurred in daily life as well.\textsuperscript{247}

Even though the JI is not broadly popular, as noted above its members are often local notables – educated, middle or upper-middle class, and seen as focused on schooling and piety. The sense one gets is that there not the kinds of people one would vote for or necessarily enjoy socializing with, but in the heat of the escalating war, especially in the presence of often-brutal

\textsuperscript{241} Jaleel, "Spawning Militancy."
\textsuperscript{242} Sikand, "The Emergence and Development," p. 749.
\textsuperscript{243} Interview, Delhi November 2007.
\textsuperscript{244} Interviews, Srinagar May 2008 and July 2009; Delhi September 2007-May 2008; July 2009.
\textsuperscript{245} Thakur, \textit{Militant Monologues}, p. 132.
\textsuperscript{246} Peer, \textit{Curfewed Night}, p. 184.
\textsuperscript{247} Example from Peer, \textit{Curfewed Night}, pp. 184-5.
Indian security mobilization, they had credibility and respect. Moreover, prominent Jamaatis lost their sons in the insurgency, showing the involvement of both the party infrastructure and personal relationships, as well as the level of commitment to bringing Kashmir to Pakistan through blood.248

Crucially, this mobilization was not isolated to the Valley. In the vast rural area of Doda in northern Jammu, for instance, “by 1993, the Hizb, led by Ahsan Ahmad, emerged as the largest group in the district with some 150 men on its rolls. Using the Jamaat overground network, they were able to tap into the madarsahs, trusts and charities for support.”249 Doda would become a major battleground, with militants using the close-knit rural communities and isolated terrain to challenge Indian forces once the Valley became increasingly pacified, so the ability of HM to set up and control militant mobilization in this area was essential for keeping its war alive.

The combination of geographic dispersion and organizational discipline helped the Hizb survive Indian COIN - “by contrast [to the JKLF], the JKHM, which in 1992 ‘liberated’ Sopore... was able to carry on a protracted guerrilla war of ambushes and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) elsewhere in the Valley and beyond after its fighters were evicted from Sopore.”250 Local rural orders were created, as “it was Jamaat men who now basked in fawning sycophancy... Jamaat activists set themselves up in different corners of the valley as arbiters of rectitude but functioned as little tyrants.”251 “Many across its villages had made peace with the Jamaat –

248 Jamaati sons killed are listed in Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 201 and p. 186; and Khan, “Kashmir Chalo,” p. 33 on religious leaders’ sons who have apparently fought in IJK. The involvement of JI sons was confirmed in interviews.
249 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 203. More on Doda: “Jamait-e-Islami runs schools and educational institutions that allow them to influence the youth. It is a mark of their influence that they could successfully erode the secular Kashmiri outlook and replace it with a Muslim identity, with fundamentalist overtones.” Harjeet Singh, Doda, an: insurgency in the wilderness (New Delhi: Lancer Publishers, 1999), p. 77, and “fundamentalists under the umbrella of the Jamait-e-Islami (JEI) made inroads into the district,” p. 79.
251 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 258.
building vested interests in the Hizb’s continued dominance.”

Interviews repeatedly referred to the use of Hizb guns to favor Jamaat interests, at both the personal and party levels, in local areas. Importantly, these local power struggles, while parochial, did not lead to the kind of spiraling disintegration that we will see in the case of the Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen below.

Thus emerged “the decisive ascendancy of HM as the dominant guerrilla group in the armed struggle,” even though in its early days it “did not have widespread support within the valley” and “because of the required strict adherence to Islamic ideology... Hizbul found it difficult to expand its social base and lacked popular support in the Valley.”

The bonding network base provided by the Jamaat led to a socially integrated armed group that advanced an otherwise-doomed political goal - “the Jamaat, never particularly popular in the valley, suddenly became a major force courtesy the gunmen of the Hizbul Mujahideen.”

Its importance can be found in the discussions of the role of the Jamaat by senior Indian security force officials involved in COIN in Kashmir.

There was, however, one significant exception to this pattern of Jamaat-led consolidation. At some point in the early 1990s, former Afghan and Pakistani fighters began to join the Hizb under a somewhat distinct organizational set-up, operating as a distinct regiment, Hizbul

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252 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 284.
253 Bose, Kashmir, p. 129.
254 Schofield, Kashmir in Conflict, p. 145.
255 Behera, Demystifying Kashmir, p. 155. “The Jamaat and Hizbul Mujahideen’s articulation of Kashmiris’ Islamic identity was not supported by a majority of Kashmiri Muslims,” Behera, State, identity & violence, p. 202. “while the majority of the Kashmiri population is, indeed, Muslim, it is not ‘Islamist.’ Only a few rural pockets controlled by the Jamaat and whose real importance is hard to assess, claim to be faithful to this ideology.” Frédéric Grare, Political Islam in the Indian Subcontinent: The Jamaat-I-Islami (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2001), p. 78.
256 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 51.
Mujahideen Al Badr. According to Rana, “Al Badr leaders were given important posts in Hizbul Mujahideen, while in Pakistan the Al Badar management remained separate and held the position of a sister organization of Hizb.” Though linked to Heymatyar’s Jamaat-backed organization, the Al Badr was not a Jamaati organization, and this would lead to future problems between the Al Badar’s fighters and the Jamaat-led Hizb. The Hizb certainly cannot be coded as an purely bonding network-based group, but it is by a large margin the closest of any of the indigenous groups. As we will see, the coalition between Al Badr and the Jamaat would, unsurprisingly, later falter.

*External Weapons and Funds.* The structured, disciplined Hizb could keep its fighters in line and regenerate new manpower through both Jamaati and local networks despite its political weaknesses. But in addition to social mobilization was large-scale, sustained Pakistani material support - “the rise of militant groups like the Hizbul Mujahideen, who believe that Kashmir’s future lies with Pakistan, was also the result of direct intervention by the Pakistan government.” The Pakistani state security apparatus “assisted by steering some of these militants [usually former JKLF-ers] towards the J&K Jamaat by providing them funds as well as ready access to training and weapons”; indeed, Pakistan “decided to dominate Kashmir’s insurgency too primarily through the Jamaat.” The Pakistani Jamaat, a “particularly well-

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258 According to Zaffar Abbas, “A Who’s Who of Kashmir Militancy,” *Herald*, August 2000, p. 30 this group had fought under Gulbuddin Hekmatyar’s Hizb-e-Islami in Afghanistan, which was linked to the Jamaat. These training camps were then opened to Hizb fighters until the Taliban, linked to the Deobandi JUI factions, defeated Hekmatyar and kicked out the Jamaati fighters.


260 See the interview with Bakht Zameen in *Herald*, August 2000, pp. 36-37.


263 Devadas, *In search of a future*, p. 207.
organized party,” also funneled large amounts of money into the organization. The Hizb was useful to sideline the JKLF, and as a result it became the prime recipient of external aid.

The ISI apparently saw an opportunity in Kashmir to repeat its successful strategy from Afghanistan and correspondingly began to favor Islamist groups. As the JKLF found itself losing guns, the Hizb was inundated with them, but it became “a sophisticated political movement, not just a bunch of gun-toting thugs.” Military strength was attractive to recruits, regardless of their ideology – “several members of the Hizb admitted that ‘their allegiance to the organization has more to do with access to weapons and training than with a commitment to Hizb’s aim of acceding to Pakistan.’” Normal, apolitical foot soldiers could be brought into an organization that had a proven ability to kill, and that was further bolstered by training camps in PJK and, frequently, covering artillery fire for infiltration. The Hizb established the northern city, and Jamaat stronghold, of Sopore into a “no-go zone” during much of 1993, before it was taken back by the security forces. It dramatically outgunned the JKLF from 1991 onward.

But this Pakistani strategy was not initially isolated to the Hizb – in the crucial early years of the insurgency Pakistan also spread the wealth to a variety of other pro-Pakistan organizations like the Ikhwan and Muslim Janbaz Force. The crucial difference was that the Hizb did not become an undisciplined proxy army or falter in battles over resource distribution,

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264 Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 426.
265 “In terms of organizational capability, media skills, political experience, and influence within state institutions, the JI was the most powerful religious lobby in the country.” Zahid Hussain, Frontline Pakistan: The Struggle with Militant Islam (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 132. The leader of the Pakistani Jamaat, Qazi Hussain Ahmed has been “long considered the self-styled godfather of the Kashmiri jihad.” Mubashir Zaidi, “The Himalayan Implosion,” Herald, June 2003, p. 59.
266 One Hizb fighter is quoted as saying “The JKLF is not even a true Islamic group. Their manifesto is in English, meant for Europeans, and talks of a secular Kashmir.” “Exporting Terror,” India Today, May 15, 1994, pp. 50-51.
267 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, 86.
268 Behera, Demystifying Kashmir, 151
270 “the ISI encouraged all of them, its only condition being that they maintain a relentless pace of attack on Indian security forces.” Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 78.
unlike the other indigenous groups I discuss below. It gained power and influence, violently elbowing aside competitors like the Ikhwan and JKLF in a spree of coercion and intimidation that helped to knock these groups out of the war. The Hizb “emerged wraith-like as a competitor to the JKLF”271 and played an important role in annihilating it. It also clashed with similarly pro-Pakistan, Pakistan-backed tanzeems.272 Rather than resource-richness generating apolitical disintegration, it fueled relentless political violence.273 Through its own violence on the ground it became dominant, even as the ISI in the early 1990s was trying to forge unity and discipline among the various pro-Pakistani tanzeems. The local dynamics of feuding and turf battles proved beyond Pakistan’s ability to easily manipulate. This is not to say that Hizb violence was purely political or ideological; much of it involved local feuds and score-settling. But this is endemic to civil wars, and not out of the ordinary.274

Even when there was intra-Hizb dissension during the 1989-1998 period it was overcome. The Ahsan Dar and Nasir-ul Islam splits were contained. When personal rivalries in Muzaffarabad in 1992-3 threatened the organization’s access to Pakistani weaponry, Abdul Majid Dar was dispatched and “was up to the task. Dissolving the council that ran the Hizb camp in Muzaffarabad he took control. . .the amounts Hizb received from the Kashmir Liberation Cell

271 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 214
272 “in 1994-1995 the Pakistan-backed Hizb-ul Mujahideen group tried to consolidate its dominance by killing large numbers of members and supporters of the JKLF and other insurgent groups, as well as prominent religious, social, and political figures who opposed the JKHM and its pro-Pakistan stance.” Bose, Contested lands, p. 181.
273 Geelani’s prison diaries from the early 1990s reflect the Hizb’s obsession with dominating and controlling the insurgent movement. He was upset that “the leaders of these [150 militant] groups are all selfishly seeking to ‘build their own mosques of one-and-a-half bricks (dhai int ki masjid),’ and refuse to work in tandem with each other for fear that they might lose their own leadership (sardari), power, and privileges. . .fragmentation of the movement has resulted in a loss of direction, growing indiscipline in the ranks of the militants, and a dispersion of efforts.” Yoginder Sikand, “The Jama’at-i-Islami of Jammu and Kashmir,” in Paul R. Brass and Achin Vanaik, eds., Competing nationalisms in South Asia (Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2002), p. 279. Moreover, “he [Gilani] writes that the youth ought to have entered the movement [sic] under the leadership of a ‘truly’ Islamic and honest political leadership (saleh siyasi qayadat) – an obvious reference to the JIJK as it sees itself – and carried on the struggle under its direction and supervision on strict ‘Islamic’ lines,” Sikand, “The Jama’at-i-Islami,” p. 280. See also Yoginder Sikand, “For Islam and Kashmir: the prison diaries of Sayyed Ali Gilani of the Jama’at-I-Islami of Jammu and Kashmir,” Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs 18, no. 2 (1998): 241-249.
soared thereafter.” Being able to overcome internal disagreements and to control the use of the gun on the ground meant that “using the funds and guns that the Pakistanis made available to them preferentially, the Hizbul Mujahideen became the main militant group in the valley. Its efforts were boosted by the quality of its commanders. . .as well as the network of the Jamaat-e-Islami across the valley.”\textsuperscript{275} As a result, “Kashmir by and large continued to revile the Jamaat. . .but could do little but watch in horror as the Jamaat slowly but surely took control.”\textsuperscript{276} The ISI would continue a “policy of all-out support”\textsuperscript{277} for the rest of the 1990s.

The historiographic and analytical consensus is that it was the combination of Pakistani support and the Jamaat social base that forged Hizb military effectiveness.\textsuperscript{278} Noorani is in a sense correct that “the Hizb has suffered grave losses in life and through defections. Without popular support it could not have survived as the only authentically indigenous militant tanzeem which matters.”\textsuperscript{279} However, “the sources of JKH strength and resilience have also been its most serious limitations. The group’s ideological commitment to Pakistan renders it suspect at best and unacceptable at worst to the mainstream of pro-‘self-determination’ opinion in IJK. . .compounding the problem are JKH’s linkages with the JI, which is viewed by the vast majority of people in the Valley and other pro-‘self-determination’ areas of IJK as a sectarian, ‘fundamentalist’ party at odds with the dominant, Sufism-influenced regional culture of

\textsuperscript{275} Joshi, \textit{The Lost Rebellion}, p. 77.
\textsuperscript{276} Devadas, \textit{In search of a future}, p. 238. My sense is that Devadas significantly overstates the level of revulsion.
\textsuperscript{277} Bose, “JKLF and JKH,” p. 239.
\textsuperscript{278} “the Hizbul Mujahideen group on account of being the favoured child of Pakistan has emerged stronger than the JKLF. In the valley the Hizbul has greatly benefited from its affiliation with the Jamaat-e-Islami and its cadre.” Verma, \textit{Jammu and Kashmir}, p. 266. “The JKH owes its resilience to several factors, among them consistent Pakistani/ISI support in provision of weapons, logistics, finances, and training (which the JKLF lost from 1991 onward); the existence of well-organized JI networks in IJK as well as in “Azad” Kashmir and Pakistan, far superior to anything the JKFL could muster; and a supply of young recruits ensured by the brutality of Indian counterinsurgency to the largest guerrilla group active in the field and the only one since the mid-1990s with roots \textit{within} IJK.” Bose, “JKLF and JKH,” p. 235.
\textsuperscript{279} Noorani, “Contours of Militancy.”
kashmiriyat.\textsuperscript{280} It is this \textit{contrast} that is so striking – the nature and structure of popular support, not its breadth or level, was the crucial social underpinning of the group. Though this section does not take us into the Hizb’s more troubled period since 2000, it remains the case that “despite difficult times and setbacks, the JKHM has, unlike the JKLF, survived as an insurgent force and continued guerrilla warfare.”\textsuperscript{281}

\section*{C. The Other Indigenous Groups: Weak Parties and the Limits of State Sponsorship}

The previous two sections have discussed the trajectories of Kashmir’s two major indigenous insurgent groups. But in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Hizb and JKLF were only two of the significant militant players, even if they were the most important. While most of the armed groups were trivial, four others deserve closer attention – these were organizations that drew primarily on pro-Pakistani sentiments and Pakistani aid. In the early days of the insurgency they were large and prominent, but had largely broken apart by 1996. This separation between the Hizb and its pro-Pakistan contemporaries was driven by “the rising effectiveness of the security forces and the fact that the Indian state had not collapsed. . . . once the Indian security machine got going, it began to extract a terrible price.”\textsuperscript{282} Just as the British state in Northern Ireland dug in for the long haul, so too did India in Jammu and Kashmir.

This put enormous pressure on groups that, like the pro-independence JKLF, arose in the much less risky environment of 1989 and 1990. The drive of the Hizb on the ground further challenged its contemporaries, who found themselves caught between a rising Hizb and an overwhelming state. In the face of this fragmentation, “Pakistani handlers made heroic efforts to promote unity among the various militant groups through 1991, even as they sought to sideline the JKLF and boost the abilities of the Islampasand groups that openly favoured merger with

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\textsuperscript{280} Bose, “JKLF and JKHM,” p. 235. \\
\textsuperscript{281} Bose, “JKLF and JKHM,” p. 247. \\
\end{flushright}
Pakistan. But this intervention by Pakistan alone was insufficient, since discipline and control within the war zone determined whether groups, even if well-armed, could endure as a coherent fighting forces.

Relatively shallow, poorly-integrated social bases led to organizational fragmentation and even collapse, despite having access to weaponry. Inter-militant competition made it impossible for the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), a coalition of separatist political groups, to present a unified political face - “while all the leaders within the outfit swore by self-determination and unity, each of them ran a tanzeem which was, on the ground, trying to dominate or eliminate the other one.”

Here I focus on the trajectories of two offshoots of the People’s League, the Muslim Janbaz Force (MJF) and Jehad Force, and two organizations that emerged from the JKLF, the Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen (nee JKSLF) and Al-Umar Mujahideen. All of them were significant militant players at some point in first seven years of the war. The Ikhwan is the most important of these groups – ironically, it would play a key role in the counter-insurgency campaign as some of its breakaway factions joined hands with Indian security forces to take on the Hizb, while other splinters launched a terrorism campaign within India proper, foreshadowing the numerous bloody attacks that marked the first decade of the 21st century. This section examines why these all of these groups were unable to sustain their early momentum and presence, arguing that they followed a fairly characteristic state-reliant course in which feuds over turf and material resources, driven by a coalition or localized social base, undermined the military strength they

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283 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 88. Islampasand here refers to groups favoring Pakistan and with an Islamist tinge.
285 Two other significant tanzeems in this milieu were Hizbullah and Al Barq. I may add Hizbollah to the mix, but it followed a remarkably similar course. Al Barq is a much more opaque group. “Hizbullah had been one of the more virulent groups of fanatics in the valley. Its leader Mushtaq Ahmed Butt had Islamicized his name to Mushtaq-ul-Islam.” Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 96.
gained from Pakistani support. As these groups faltered, they in turn began to lose Pakistan’s aid, in a vicious cycle of organizational collapse.\footnote{Joshi argues that “the ISI encouraged all of them, its only condition being that they maintain a relentless pace of attack on Indian security forces.” Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, p. 78. Once fractures began to show, Pakistan was less interested in supporting these groups.}

*Tanzeems of the People’s League: Muslim Janbaz Force and Jehad Force/Al Jehad.* The Muslim Janbaz Force (MJF) began, and ended, its life as an armed wing of Shabir Shah’s People’s League (S), while the Jehad Force, also later known as Al Jehad, was the military wing of the Farooq Rehmani’s sub-faction of the People’s League. The first-hand account by the MJF’s primary commander, Firdous Syed Baba (who went by the nom de guerre Babar Badr) provides far more information on this group than would otherwise be available in the secondary literature, though it must be taken with a rather distinct grain of salt.\footnote{Aditya Sinha, *Death of dreams: a terrorist’s tale* (New Delhi: HarperCollins Publishers, India, 2000) is his biography. The political interpretations contained therein are not necessarily very credible but the factual information is useful.} We know far less about Al Jehad, but in important ways these two organizations appear to have followed a similar script.

The MJF advanced a pro-Pakistan agenda, but claimed to be more liberal and less communal than the Hizb. By drawing on the name of the People’s League (S) it attracted a significant number of recruits to its banner and to gain Pakistani material aid. It had significant numbers of men under arms at its height, with strength in north Kashmir as well as presence in Srinagar.\footnote{Interviewees said that MJF had a major following in Baramulla in the north, for instance.} However, the PL(S) was a poorly-organized party with weak internal social ties of trust and commitment. Its personalized nature stands in sharp contrast to the Jamaat. Despite receiving significant Pakistani aid up until at least 1995, the MJF was beset with a combination of splits and high factional autonomy. Ultimately, “the outfit affiliated to the People’s League. . . would witness more ego-inspired splits than any other group in Kashmir.”\footnote{Devadas, *In search of a future*, p. 164.}
As the JKLF spun up its war, Badr got clearance from Shabir Shah to cross the LOC to make contact with Pakistan in August 1989. He is described as a “man of exceptional caliber” to whom the leadership of the MJF was bestowed when it formally launched in early 1990. It would become the catchment for sympathizers of Shah – “activists of the PL(S) who crossed the border and sought Pakistani help were directed to join this force,” while in the Valley “boys from all over Kashmir show[ed] up everyday [at MJF HQ], demanding that they be enlisted in Shabir Shah’s group – such was the appeal of his secessionist message, even if it was built on an edifice of symbolism.” The problem was the weakness of the People’s League actual, on-the-ground, social organization. This faction of the party was held together by Shah’s personal charisma and appeal, not a robust set of local actors who knew and trusted one another. There are indications that local leaders were involved in recruiting, but there is no evidence to suggest a disciplined and structured process.

As a result, despite both the apparent quality of Badr as a leader and the ideological appeal of the PL(S), the organizational structure of the MJF was shambolic. To begin with, “there was no proper recruitment or indoctrination,” and despite a formally sophisticated organizational structure, “the MJF, like every other militant outfit in Kashmir, chaotically and indiscriminately recruited cadres. It was an anarchic beginning that could only culminate in disaster.” No preexisting social structure channeled and disciplined mobilization, as “the first MJF boy to train became the local district commander. . . . anybody who landed up, and looked strong and tall enough, became a militant. The MJF hierarchy did not know who was going

293 Baramulla chief of PL(S) was used for recruiting, Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, p. 151.
294 Sinha, *Death of dreams*, p. 49.
295 Sinha, *Death of dreams*, p. 58.
across to Pakistan. It was an absolute mess... when Babar became Salar-e-Allah he had absolutely no idea how many boys there were in the ranks of the MJF.” Similiarly, “when the trained militants returned [from Pakistan], Babar had no choice but to assimilate them into what was slowly growing into an unwieldy outfit. All he could do was try and slowly consolidate the organization, which was a tough job.” At its height, the MJF may have had as many as 4,000 cadres, though this seems like a highly optimistic estimate.

An early split by Al Madad was a classic squabble over guns, while factional autonomy was fairly high. The central leadership was given the power to distribute guns and money, but this was an imperfect process since they had to rely on their cadres infiltrating the LOC to bring the guns. This opened the possibility of ISI-driven manipulation and “splitism.” The Hizb turned it guns on the MJF in 1990 and 1991, and “bumped off many of Babar’s boys.” At the same time, however, the MJF allegedly also would “appropriate” cadres intended for Hizbullah who found themselves on the Pakistani side of the LOC. The fluidity and competitiveness of Kashmir’s militant milieu affected the MJF no less than others.

“Squabbling” amongst cadres in AJK was frequent, and “it was common for [PL(S) chairman] Hamid to go missing.” This was a poorly institutionalized, weakly integrated organization, just like its party patron. The reliance of the MJF on two key individuals is clear – Badr found upon returning from Pakistan that after Shabir Shah had been arrested, his followers

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296 Sinha, Death of dreams, p. 59.
297 Sinha, Death of dreams, p. 60.
298 Sahni, Kashmir Underground, p. 153. That said, a former militant in Kashmir claimed there were 10,000 men in MJF. This seems even more implausible.
299 “Jamshed Khan... stomped into the MJF headquarters and demanded that his quota of weapons be immediately handed over. Like other tanzeems, the MJF had its own line of arms delivery,” Sinha 2000, p. 77; and “he made such a song and dance that Babar had no option but to concede,” Sinha 2000, p. 78.
300 Sinha, Death of dreams, p. 77.
301 Sinha, Death of dreams, p. 77.
303 Sinha, Death of dreams, p. 104.
304 Sinha, Death of dreams, p. 99.
“sat around twiddling their thumbs; they had become aimless after Shabir Shah’s arrest.”

When Badr himself was arrested in 1991, as I will discuss below, the MJF would be unable to even maintain itself as an independent fighting force.

While the MJF was fighting the Indians, so too was the Jehad Force, linked to the Rehmani faction of the People’s League. We have relatively little information on this group, but it appears to have followed a similar trajectory in its early years, of fairly rapid indiscriminate expansion followed by internal fissures. In 1991, after MJF leader Babar Badr was arrested, the MJF was merged into Jihad Force to forge the Al Jehad. The dynamics of the merger are unclear; Badr claims “Jamaat sympathizers” pushed it but given the Jamaat’s interests in bringing everyone under their suzerainty in the form of the Hizb, this seems problematic. With Badr and Shabir Shah under arrest, perhaps the natural home for the disorganized MJF was its semi-fraternal People’s League faction’s armed wing. Regardless, “two factions of the People’s League, a pro-Pakistan political party formed in the 1970s, spawned two separate tanzeems: Muslim Jaanbaz Force and Jehad Force, which were only uneasily amalgamated as Al Jehad.”

As a compromise, Al Jehad apparently announced that People’s League rivals Shah and Rehmani would be co-patrons of the armed group.

The Al Jehad that emerged was fractious and uninstitutionalized. An interviewee referring to it as a “floating” tanzeem, even though it was “a well-armed outfit,” but one that was constantly being attrited at the leadership level. By 1993, “the Al Jehad’s ‘supreme commanders’

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305 Sinha, Death of dreams, p. 57.
306 “the Jamaat’s sympathizers took over, merged the tanzeem with the Jehad Force, and called the new group Al Jehad.” Sinha, Death of dreams, p. 154.
307 Bose, Kashmir, p. 125.
309 Srinagar, May 2008. Interestingly, this is the exact same word used to describe the JKLF’s social base in July 2009, by a different interviewee.
310 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 237.
kept getting arrested in almost bimonthly succession.”311 There were “huge funds”312 available to Al Jehad, but they, and large amounts of weaponry, do not seem to have provided sufficient incentives for tight cooperation. “Al Jehad had never really integrated the old MJF and the Jehad Force,”313 and so, while individually troubled to begin with, this coalition of socially dis-integrated organizations was not a cohesive fighting force.314 The comparison to the Hizb’s ability to integrate multiple groups through the deployment of homogenized Jamaatis is instructive. Allegedly, some MJF recruits “were poorly motivated and, in fact, Bilal Ahmed, a leader of the Al Jehad, had promised them Rs 5,000-10,000 each.”315 Attempts to expand into rural Doda south of the Valley were initially successful, but the Hizb’s “appeal had more potency” due to its greater fighting power.316

When Badr was released from jail in 1993, he decided that the MJF needed to be revived. With the backing of some of his loyalists he gained approval and thus material support from the ISI, and broke away, leaving the old Jehad Force and a few followers of S. Hamid behind. Al Jehad’s remnants continued to get pounded by the Indian security forces; the group renamed itself Al-Fateh in 1995 but quickly slid into irrelevance, though parts of it straggle on in PJK.317 Part of the group, under Javed Hussain Shah, flipped to the Indian security forces.

The MJF, still bolstered by the “cult”318 surrounding Shabir Shah, was back in business for awhile. It continued to attract ISI support. However, Badr gave up the fight in 1995 and 1996, deciding that Pakistan was not the model to emulate. Along with some other former senior

311 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 249.
312 Sinha, Death of dreams, p. 155.
313 Sinha, Death of dreams, p. 157.
314 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, pp. 237-8 on more arrests.
315 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, pp. 144-5.
316 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 196.
317 Thakur, Militant Monologues, p. 70, p. 57. In Abbas “Who’s Who” Al Fatah Force is described as “a relatively small group”; Al Jihad is said to be headed by M. Aslam Wani and “in recent months no one has heard anything about its activities” p. 31.
318 Sinha, Death of dreams, p. 195.
commanders (including one from Al Jehad), he entered into dialogue with the Indian government. Some of his MJF cadres followed him but in general he did not attract major defections (though at the same time there was a major shift by insurgents into Indian-backed militias). Badr would ultimately join the National Conference as a politician. With his defection, the MJF for all intents and purposes disappeared from the historiography of the conflict. The ISI had no strong reasons to prop it up, with the Hizb riding high as a pro-Pakistan group. Weak People’s League social organization and internal divisions between key political elites undermined the MJF and Jihad Force, despite high levels of Pakistani aid. While Pakistan has certainly been waging proxy war in Kashmir, “the ISI’s leverage was limited” when it came to forging a enduring insurgent group if it lacked a robust social infrastructure.

*Al-Umar Mujahideen.* We now move on to the two major Islamist splits from JKLF. The first, in late 1989 and as already mentioned, was by Mushtaq Zargar (also known as Latrum), and “illiterate, loutish chain-smoker” with a background as a common criminal. He had become involved in militancy through People’s League activists he met in jail, and was inducted into the JKLF as a member on the very first day he crossed the LOC into Pakistan. The low levels of socialization and monitoring within the JKLF, whether formal or informal, are quite remarkable. He then broke away from the JKLF in late 1989/early 1990, carrying with him a group a friends and loyalists from the old city Srinagar area, also the home base of the mirwaiz.

As far as can be discerned, this was a fairly straightforward split over personality; Zargar and a few friends had broken over the JKLF leadership making fun of another friend of theirs.

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319 Babar was, however, unable to bring over many others. Devadas, *In search of a future*, p. 310.
320 Rana, *A to Z of Jehadi Organizations*, pp. 488-489, argues that it remained active in the late 1990s but it does not have a significant presence in any of the historical or journalistic studies from the Indian side of the LOC after the mid-1990s.
321 Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, p. 245.
322 Devadas, *In search of a future*, p. 179.
Their ability to make a significant impact was made possible by the ISI’s willingness to sponsor them. They received money, weapons, and training in PJK.\textsuperscript{323} Zargar would thus become “one of the founding fathers” of militancy in the state.\textsuperscript{324} Through an unclear series of events, the new Al-Umar Mujahideen became linked to the Mirwaiz of Srinagar and his Awami Action Committee (AAC), the Srinagar-centric political organization of the mirwaiz. Some argue that the mirwaiz formally started the organization to maintain a presence in the rapidly-militarizing politics of Kashmir, while others view this as a more informal linkage driven by Zargar’s home base in downtown Srinagar, the mirwaiz’s power base.\textsuperscript{325} In any case, the Al-Umar is widely described as being “linked” and “very close to” the AAC – “Srinagar’s downtown was seen as an Al-Umar hub, providing open armed cover to Mirwaiz’s family especially after his father’s assassination in 1990.”\textsuperscript{326} We can recall that the AAC was a personalized source of mobilization, somewhere on the border between a coalition network and a localized network, which kept the Al-Umar fairly concentrated in Srinagar, especially the areas around the mirwaiz’s Jama Masjid.\textsuperscript{327} This means that Al-Umar was built around a comparatively weak mobilization vessel in the Awami Action Committee.

Al Umar Mujahideen would have a very fractious and troubled course. In 1990, a split by the Al Umar Commandos (who consequently have almost no presence in any of the literature) occurred when a leader of an infiltration group held onto his weapons and demanded a senior

\textsuperscript{323} Joshi, \textit{The Lost Rebellion}, p. 50.
\textsuperscript{325} South Asia Terrorism Portal says there was “tacit endorsement.” http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/Al_Umar.htm
\textsuperscript{326} Interviews made it clear that this relationship, and this time period, were extremely murky and unclear.
\textsuperscript{328} “being in the main in Srinagar, the Al Umar’s activity was providing security to the Jasma Masjid area, the headquarters of the Awami Action Committee to which it was linked.” Joshi, \textit{The Lost Rebellion}, p. 78.
appointment in the group. When Zargar refused, he took his weapons with him and formed a new organization; as with many other state-reliant groups, the distribution of guns and money took center stage in these feuds, not high politics or ideology. However, Al Umar was soon joined by Al Madad, a group that had split off from the Muslim Janbaz Force (through a similar process). By the summer of 1991, “Al Umar had begun to function smoothly” and acquired a reputation for brutality. It was one of the major players in the Srinagar-focused insurgency of the 1989-1992 period, and delved into criminality as well.

Internal unrest occurred in early 1992 that essentially signaled the end of the group. First, fluidity in the command elite continued. According to Joshi, a factional leader of the Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen (nee JKSLF) broke away from the Ikhwan, joining Al Umar, which then upset a Srinagar leader of Al Umar, who in turn broke away with some of his loyalists to the JKL. But a JKL regional leader then moved over to the Al Umar. The first major defector to the Al Umar from the JKL, Khalid Javed/Khurshid Ahmed Bhat, then in turn got in a “scuffle” with group commander Zargar, leading to his expulsion from the group. This shows the high level of splitting and factional autonomy within both the JKL and Al Umar. Recurrent feuds with the JKL continued in the close confines of Srinagar city, driven both by resentment over Al Umar’s original split from the group, and by the new series of defections.

The culmination of this process of organizational fragmentation came with the arrest of founder Mushtaq Zargar - “his Al Umar was broken with his arrest in the spring of 1992. Inordinately suspicious, he had not told any colleague where the weapons or money were

328 Devadas, *In search of a future*, p. 236 on split by Shabir Zargar. It led to “a fracas . . . after much wrangling, a split. The new group took a share of the group’s weapons.”
330 Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, p. 78.
332 Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, p. 79.
Almost entirely confined to Srinagar, and then bereft of its leader, the Al Umar faded into near-irrelevance, being pushed aside by the Hizb and decimated by Indian security forces. Bits and pieces of Al Umar would end up with other militant groups; its deputy chief allegedly joined a faction of the Ikhwan in 1995. It would pop back into relevance briefly between 1999 and 2002, when Mushtaq Zargar was released from prison as part of a deal to free a hijacked Indian airliner; this was accompanied by claims that the Al Umar had been revived as a local partner of Jaish-e-Mohammed. If true to begin with, this apparent partnership has had no effect. The personalized, local Al Umar was unable to overcome its own social weaknesses, and in many respects resembled the kind of resource-rich groups Weinstein writes about.

*Ikhwan-ul Mujahideen.* A rather more interesting case is that of the Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen, which we have already seen as Hilal Beg’s Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKSLF). The Ikhwan’s trajectory is more substantively important than the Al Jehad, MJF, or Al Umar because not only would it, for awhile, be “one of the most virulent tanzeems,” but its dramatic fragmentation also contributed to the rise of a new counter-insurgent force in Kashmir that played a central role in containing the indigenous insurgency. Yet even as large factions of the Ikhwan broke to defect to the Indian state, the remnants would launch an early harbinger of the all-India terrorism that came to characterize the 2000s. The same flaws of the JKLF would be repeated – loose indoctrination, open recruitment, and rapid expansion in the absence of a significant, preexisting network of locally-embedded leaders.

Hilal Beg was a Srinagar tin salesman who had been recruited into the JKLF in its early

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333 Devadas, *In search of a future*, p. 238.
335 In 2000, Abbas “Who’s Who,” p. 31, called Al-Umar a “very small militant outfit” that “started to fade out rapidly” after 1992. See also interview with Zargar in *Herald*, July 2002, pp. 34-35. Interviews in Srinagar suggest that individuals linked in some capacity to Al Umar in inner city Srinagar have been involved in rock-throwing and street protests over the past couple of years.
days after becoming involved in the political mobilization of 1987. He was not linked in to the JKLF by any particular robust social ties; he was approached and agreed to join by people he only knew from the previous protests. Beg set up the Jammu and Kashmir Students Liberation Front (JKSLF) and quickly acquired Pakistani backing, as we saw above in discussing the fragmentation of the JKLF. During this period, “JKLF was trying to expand the influence of the outfit in Kashmir by opening a unit in every village. This idea was, however, objected to by commanders like Yasin Malik, Javed Mir, and others who thought this would dilute their influence.” This strategy of wide-ranging expansion would come into effect under Beg’s auspices when he formally broke away from the JKLF and transformed the JKSLF into the Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen.

At some point in this process, the Ikhwan became a pro-Pakistan group, moving away from its original pro-independence ideology. He carried a fairly diverse group of followers with him from the JKSLF, reflecting the similar heterogeneity within the JKLF. Probably self-serving, but nevertheless informative, accounts from former Ikhwan members who later flipped to the Indian side reveal how varied and chaotic their path into the eventual IuM was. New factions and units appear to have been amalgamated as they appeared, rather than flowing through preexisting channels of collective action. In 1991 and 1992, the Ikhwan built itself a sophisticated-looking organizational apparatus, with a central committee and a variety of district commanders throughout Kashmir; it had at least 1,500 members at its height.

337 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 160.
338 This is McAdam et al.’s “brokerage” in action. Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, Dynamics of Contention (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
339 Thakur, Militant Monologues, p. 45.
340 There are conflicting accounts of why this name was chosen — some contend it was the result of a threat from JKLF; others than it was done to curry favor with Pakistan by signaling its Islamist tendencies.
341 Thakur, Militant Monologues.
342 There was also a “central body coordinating with the ISI and organizing the training of personnel in Azad Kashmir.” Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 80 and p. 106.
However, clashes were recurrent on the ground between the Ikhwan and the Hizb, as the Hizb’s “bid for hegemony did not halt at the JKLF. It wanted complete dominance over all other tanzeems,” including other groups that advanced a broadly similar ideological line – “the persistent quarrels came in the face of great efforts to promote unity. There was only so much that could be done by the handlers across the border. . .the ISI’s leverage was limited.” While there is no doubt of Pakistan’s role in managing and sustaining the insurgency in Kashmir, this example, among many others, shows that the ISI was not all-powerful or omniscient.

Beg would be unable to control the fragmentation that resulted from the escalation of these local clashes with the Hizb. Most dramatic was the increasingly disconnected behavior of an Ikhwan unit in north Kashmir, led by a folk singer named Mohammed Yusuf “Kukka” Parrey. The son of a prominent local landlord, Parrey had joined the JKLF primarily as a hedge against local Jamaatis his family was allegedly involved in confrontations with. He followed Beg into the JKSLF and Ikhwan, but his loyalties appear to have been above all to his local area and family, not to broader social networks. A series of Hizb incidents against Ikhwan fighters and in the Bandipore area led to Parrey’s faction of the Ikhwan going to war with the Hizb - “furious, Kuka had turned his guns on the Hizb.” This area, around Wullar Lake, was previously a Hizb stronghold that the security forces had struggled to subdue.

War with the Hizb was distinctly not the preferred strategy of Beg, Sajjad Ahmed Kenoo, and Mitha Sofi, the Ikhwan leaders, and they lost control of the Parrey faction, which edged increasingly close to the security forces. Sofi briefly forced Parrey to disarm his fighters by

343 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 423.
344 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 245.
345 Thakur, Militant Monologues, chapter on Parrey. Sources in Delhi suggest that Parrey was actually much closer to the Jamaat than he claimed.
346 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 286.
347 “the area between Sumbal-Hajan and Bandipore was the first scene of their activities. . .members of this group considered activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen as ‘enemies of Kashmir.’” Sahni, Kashmir Underground, p. 201.
abducting him, which shows the dubious level of control and obedience within the
organization.348 Once Parrey returned to the north Kashmir area, he received the active backing
of the security forces and began to attack the Hizb and Jamaat supported by his local
followers.349 As he said, “I knew the day I stopped fighting the HM, I would be terminated along
with my gang.”350 Parrey’s unit renamed itself the Ikhwan-ul Muslimoon.

The local feuds between the Ikhwan and Hizb units spiraled all the way up through the
command structure, as Parrey’s behavior triggered further organizational disintegration in the
Ikhwan, next by “a south Kashmir branch of the Ikhwan-ul-Muslimoon...who more or less
neutralized all opposing militant groups.”351 Liaquat Ali (alias Hilal Haider)352 and Usman
Majid353 both jumped to Parrey’s pro-India splinter force, expanding the flipped-insurgent
dynamic into areas of south Kashmir.354 The Ikhwan’s local units were being “adopted” by the
Indian state as counter-militias, providing the resources and military power that would be
otherwise lacking if they had split - in essence these factions went from being state-reliant on
Pakistan to being state-reliant on India. Moreover, suspicion developed in the high command
between Mitha Sofi and Hilal Beg as a result of mysterious messages appearing in Srinagar
newspapers, allegedly from Sofi.355 This was likely a piece of Indian intelligence manipulation
but it led to distrust between Beg and Sofi that undermined their cooperation, just as the local
units were defecting.

348 Thakur, Militant Monologues, pp. 50-1. Selznick’s “spontaneous regularity of response,” this was not.
349 This Ikhwan faction “became the most effective instrument for counter-insurgency in the strategic area around
the Wullar Lake.” Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 425.
350 Thakur, Militant Monologues, p. 50. As Joshi notes, “a major factor in the establishment of counter-insurgency
groups lay in the need of the surrendered militants to protect themselves from their erstwhile colleagues,” Joshi, The
Lost Rebellion, p. 426.
351 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 426.
352 “cornered by alien forces in his own district.” Thakur, Militant Monologues, p. 89.
353 Usman Majid similarly flipped from Ikhwan after clashes with Hizb. Thakur, Militant Monologues, p. 115.
355 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 415.
As a result of this spiral of factional defection and internal suspicion, “by mid-1995 it became clear that the Ikhwan was in trouble.” Yet even as the Ikhwan in Kashmir was coming apart at the seams, its remaining insurgent leadership would try to take the war to “mainland” India through terrorism strikes. Joshi notes that after the escape from prison of valley commander Sajjaf Ahmed Kenoo, he “tried to unite the Ikhwan, hard hit by Kukka Parray’s defection and Mitha Sofi’s strange behaviour. Failing this, he and Hilal Baig consolidated the remnants of their old group into the Jammu and Kashmir Islamic Front [JKIF].” The Ikhwan was left behind, and “Ikhwanis” came to refer to the counter-insurgents of Parrey and the other factional defectors, not Beg and Kenoo. Both of these leaders would be killed in 1996, with leadership passing to Bilal Ahmed Baig. The JKIF then spent two years trying, with some fairly mixed success, to bomb New Delhi and other cities, before going into “terminal decline” by 1998. The Ikhwan rose through a coalition social base, and fell in large part because of the weakness of its internal bonds of commitment and trust, which proved too weak to control the dynamics, and cascading spirals, of local violence and feuding that tore the group apart.


We now take theoretical stock of the history laid out above. The theory I offer generates significant, though far from total, explanatory power. Table 5.2 below assesses the match between theory and reality in the crucial first decade of the Kashmir insurgency. Where there is a dramatic misprediction, I bold the cell. As can be easily seen, my theory is wrong in asserting

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357 “the lead outfit in the larger war against India was the Kashmiri group, the Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen.” Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 173.
358 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 429.
that groups with external support will be able to keep tight command of their factions through the control of guns and money. Units in all groups had significant autonomy on the ground. On the plus side, there remained variation, with the Hizb having the lowest internal autonomy and the post-1991 JKLF the highest, that systematically tracks with the direction of predictions.

The other predictions are generally borne out. First, the state-reliant groups tended to have more internal unrest than the cohesive Hizb (which suffered only two over a decade), and fewer than the dramatically factionalized JKLF. The JKLF had the most, and most intense, internal unrest (at least three serious splits, and a variety of lethal feuds and smaller splits, between 1988 and 1995); the Hizb the fewest on average (two incidents between 1989 and 1998, generally non-violent), and the state-reliant groups between two and four serious incidents of internal violence over the period 1990-1995. Second, the unrest within the Hizb that did occur was over politics, not the distributional and personality issues that tore other groups apart. The JKLF fragmented dramatically over a broad range of issues once it lost its Pakistani support.

Finally, in the process evidence provided we saw strong support for the elite cooperation, local incorporation, and military capacity mechanisms highlighted in my theory (if weak support for the resource centralization mechanism). These groups were built, and fell apart, through most of the mechanisms specified in Chapter 3. In the Hizb, a shared bonding network base in the form of the Jamaat-e-Islami provided high levels of trust, internal policing, and convergent worldviews, while its presence on the ground led new fighters to be identified, recruited, and monitored by network members. It rose to dominance within the indigenous insurgency by channeling Pakistani aid through a robust social structure, relying heavily on the overlap between the Jamaat and Hizb at the command levels of the organization. New recruits from heterogeneous backgrounds were inducted and indoctrinated into compliance and lethality
through local networks and the attractions of weapons and power. Despite this, however, there was a moderate level of factional autonomy on the ground.

By contrast, the largely open recruiting of the JKLF and Ikhwan encouraged divisions between leaders at the top, and the rise of new challenging factions from below. Leaders with either few social ties to one another or to local communities ended up dominating these groups, with disastrous consequences once the Indian state turned up the counterinsurgency heat. Young toughs, idealistic teenagers, and a wide variety of other types of recruits dominated these groups, undisciplined and without a well-grounded social infrastructure that could sustain high-risk insurgency. Even groups with high levels of popular ideological support were unable to translate this popularity into organizational survival and cohesion, and even groups with Pakistani support could not hold themselves together very effectively. This left the door open to the comparatively unpopular, but socially-embedded, Hizbul Mujahideen to dominate Kashmir’s indigenous insurgency in the 1990s.

Table 5.2. Predictions and Reality, Indigenous Groups 1988-98

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group and DV Prediction</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hizbul Mujahideen (Cohesive)</td>
<td>Theory: Low Actual: Low/Medium</td>
<td>Theory: Low Actual: Low</td>
<td>Theory: Low Actual: Medium</td>
<td>Theory: Political-Military Actual: Political-Military</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessing Alternative Explanations

What do the other theories I outlined in Chapter 2 have to say about indigenous militancy in Kashmir? First, the level of popular support did not matter in determining the cohesion and endurance of armed groups, most dramatically in the case of the JKLF. Both social integration and external support proved to be more important, with the Hizb riding a combination of Jamaati social base and Pakistani sponsorship to dominance. Ethnic homogeneity had no apparent effect, since purely ethnic Kashmiri groups collapsed, while the somewhat-more-diverse Hizb (with Pakistanis and Afghans) did not. Second, external support alone also was indeterminate in explaining cohesion and fragmentation. The MJF and Ikhwan, for instance, received very substantial Pakistani aid but this was not enough to maintain organizational cohesion and integrity. The Hizb, by contrast, was able to do so while also receiving external support. Third, ideological arguments do not carry sway, as the internal battles within these groups were over turf, money, and control, not high politics. Though there were some very politicized insurgents, there were also many with no discernible ideology beyond opposition to India.

Finally, counterinsurgent state policy was not a major driver of variation in this period, though it did play a role that needs to be acknowledged. Early Indian COIN was indiscriminate and lacked good intelligence, but it was soon able to clear and hold Srinagar. This had a disproportionate effect on the JKLF – but only because of the structure and limits of the JKLF’s preexisting social base. The Hizb was better able to handle the loss of urban Sopore in 1993 because of its bonding network base dispersed across Muslim areas of J&K. The rise of the Ikhwanis was crucially supported by the state, and was directly linked to the fragmentation of
Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen. This could not have happened without Indian support, but the “supply” of counter-insurgents would not have occurred in the first place if the Ikhwan had not already been feuding and internally divided. Overall, existing explanations do not offer a superior account of the trajectories of indigenous militancy in Kashmir.

**F. Fractures in the Hizb, 1997-2008**

Having traced the rise (and fall) of indigenous armed groups in the 1988-1997 period, I now return to the last indigenous Kashmiri organization that survived this period as a serious, functioning fighting force. Above I argued that the Hizbul Mujahideen was the most cohesive of the indigenous insurgent groups in the first major phase of the insurgency. As long as we maintain this indigenous comparative focus (i.e., not comparing it to Lashkar-e-Taiba), the Hizb remained so after 1996. However, the incidence and intensity of significant splintering accelerated, most dramatically in 2000. This section seeks to explain the over-time shift towards values on the dependent variable that seem to lie between cohesive and state-reliant trajectories – more frequent and intense splits, but still occurring over high politics and ultimately contained.

*The “Renegades,” Indian Security Consolidation, and Retreat to the Hinterlands*

The shattering of the JKLF and most of the other militant groups fundamentally changed the militancy in Kashmir, along two dimensions. First, insurgency spread into distant rural areas after originally having been focused on urban Srinagar, Sopore, and Anantnag. The security forces were able to move in force into Srinagar in 1990/1, and take back no-go-zones in Sopore in 1993. In response, the mountainous areas of Doda in particular became a massive, sparsely-populated new battleground.\(^{361}\) The shift to Doda and other parts of the rural hinterland further undermined the JKLF’s Srinagar-based leadership, and put more pressure on the coalitional

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\(^{361}\) Jammu overall is also much more communally divided than the nearly-homogeneous Valley, leading to Hindu-Muslim tensions in the rural areas. For an overview of counterinsurgency in this area, Singh, Doda: Insurgency in the Wilderness.
networks of the other armed groups, whose J&K-wide networks tended to be quite weak. The
Hizb and its geographically-dispersed Jamaati base were the important exception, giving it a
clear advantage when the initial battlegrounds came to be saturated with the security forces.362

Second, as mentioned above, the offshoots of some of the insurgents, mainly from the
Ikhwan, “flipped” to join the Indian security forces, most dramatically in 1995 and 1996.363
Though the key early players were from the Ikhwan (as outlined above), other groups lost
splinters to the Indians, as “the key to the rise of these groups lay in the incessant quarrels
between the various tanzeems.”364 The counter-insurgents came to become known as the
“Ikhwanis,” “renegades,” or, more formally, “Special Operation Groups,” and played a crucial
role in targeting local militants, their families, and sympathizers. The rise of “India’s Secret
Army in Kashmir” triggered the shift to a new phase of the armed struggle. They “used counter-
terror brutally but effectively to decimate militant ranks.”365 The flipped counter-insurgents also
became involved in fairly extensive skullduggery of various sorts366 and suffered from
disunity.367 These groups would form another part of the political economy of insurgency and
countersinsurgency in Kashmir.368 Most importantly for our purposes, these counter-insurgent
militias were a key player in containing the Hizb-ul Mujahideen.

362 “With the Jamaat-i-Islami commanding a significant following, the Hizbul Mujahideen, which has close ties with
it, is the most powerful group in the area [Doda].” “Resisting Militancy,” India Today, May 31, 1994, p. 42.
363 The first major defection I can find reference to was by a small ethnic Gujjar armed group called the Muslim
Liberation Army in Kupwara in north Kashmir. “
364 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 422.
365 Evans, “The Kashmir insurgency,” p. 75. “it was this collaboration that enabled the Indian security forces to
reassert control over Srinagar and other Valley towns, as well as over some rural areas in the Valley.” Bose, “JKLF
and JKHM,” p. 244. “Ashok Patel’s series of covert catch-and-kill encounters. . . had been savage but effective.”
Devadas, In search of a future, p. 279.
366 “Loyal sycophants among the mercenaries were happily used for all kinds of dirty work.” Devadas, In search of
a future, p. 312.
367 Over time “several efforts to reunite the remnants of the Ikhwan leadership, torn apart by disputes over ideology,
368 An evocative description of one of the more successful ‘renegades,’ Javaid Hussein Shah, is in Blank,
This matters because by the mid/late-1990s, "except for the Jamaat-e-Islami cadres, the bulk of the people were indifferent" to the armed struggle. These Jamaat cadres were in turn being hammered by the ikhwans and Indian SFs, as "the emergence of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and its claim to be the militant wing of the Jamat invited risks of life and property for the unarmed cadres of the Jamat spread in the vastness of the state." The Jamaat was targeted in the local feuds that helped spur the rise of the Ikhwani, and up to 2,000 party members and sympathizers, who played a major role in the organization, were allegedly killed, though the sources for these numbers are unclear. Regardless of the precise level of damage, the consensus is that "numerous Jamaat activists were eliminated together with Hizb militants," battering the bonding network base of the Hizb through pure attrition. I argue here that the Hizb would suffer significant organizational degradation in the early 2000s in large part because of this process of local counterinsurgency.

Two major breaks occurred – first, the Al Badar organization that had existed as a co-coalitional partner within the Hizb command structure broke off in 1998, and, second, attempts to launch a 2000 ceasefire fostered both pro- and anti-ceasefire splinters, led, respectively, by Abdul Majid Dar (the former TJI leader who merged his group into Hizb in 1991) and Sarfraz Masood, a PJK-based Jamaati and leader of the Pir Panjal Regiment. By 2003, the Hizb’s internal cohesion had suffered serious fragmentation, both within Pakistani Kashmir and across the LOC between PJK and IJK. However, it proved able to maintain itself as a coherent group - "it is no small achievement that Syed Salahuddin has continued to rule the roost."
Mujahideen has undergone four splits since 1990, all of them aimed at removing Syed Salahuddin. However, he has survived till now and is in total control of the party. What triggered this growing fragmentation, and why did the Hizb survive it?

**Jamaat Attrition and Coalition Unraveling.** The primary impetus for Hizb over-time change was the extensive attrition of the Jamaat and broader Hizb social base on the ground in IJK. While the ISI favored new Pakistani groups discussed below to a greater extent, it continued to back the Hizb, so the state support variable remains roughly constant. Instead, the major change was that the risks of participating and joining increased, veteran elites and fighters were killed or driven into exile, and as a result bonds of internal commitment and trust began to substantially decay. The rise of splinters from the Ikhwan and Muslim Mujahideen, among others, and improved COIN learning led the Indian security forces to gain greater local intelligence and even more capacity for lethal ruthlessness. By the end of the 1990s, the SFs and Ikhwans had combined to “have largely beaten back” the Hizb.

Above I mentioned the toll the Ikhwans and other pro-India militias took on the Jamaat. As Sikand notes, “participation in the armed struggle has cost the JIJK heavily, losing hundreds, if not thousands, of its leaders, cadres, and sympathizers, in battles with and illegal killings by the Indian forces.” What effect did this have? First, the Jamaat began moving away from open support for the Hizb. While tight links remained, in 1997 the JI and Hizb both attempted to gain some public distance from one another. As Gauhar notes, “the cream of the Jamat was

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374 Amir Mir, *The True Face of Jehadis: Inside Pakistan's Network of Terror* (New Delhi: Roli, 2006), p. 89. The four splits were “the Jamiatul Mujahideen of General Abdullah, Muslim Mujahideen of Ahsan Dar, Hizb-e-Islami of Masood and Al-Badr of Bakht Zameen, all broke away from HM,” p. 89. The Jamiat split was also led by Nasir-ul Islam, not just General Abdullah/Ghulam Rasool Shah.
375 Devadas, *In search of a future*, p. 322.
377 Jamaat distancing discussed in Bose, “JKLF and JKHM,” p. 245.
physically eliminated or had to migrate." Elements of the Jamaat that had been skeptical of a full-bore commitment to politics began to rise in power and try to preserve the remnants of their networks. Interviews made it clear that the organization was on the verge of being annihilated, and the JI leadership responded by distancing from the Hizb, though this was a slow and messy process on the ground.

Second, there was sustained attrition of the command base of the Hizb, weakening social integration as a huge number of Hizb fighters have been killed or arrested. From Ashraf Dar on, numerous unit leaders have been killed, including a number of very senior military commanders. With its social base under pressure and its command ranks being decimated, the organization faced increasingly severe problems generating and controlling new cadres. The group fought back - by killing Kukka Parrey and several other pro-India militiamen the Hizb “has over time wreaked a terrible vengeance on its tormentors during the second half of the 1990s, the ‘renegades.’” This was not enough to undo the damage they inflicted in the 1990s, however, and the degradation of the organization’s social integration had lasting effects.

The Hizb’s internal politics increasingly centered in Pakistan, and on the links between Hizb field commands in IJK and the high command in Muzaffarabad and Islamabad across the LOC. It is to these relationships we now turn. The first significant rupture since the 1991 Ahsan Dar/Muslim Mujahideen split occurred in 1998. The Al Badr faction of the Hizb, linked to Afghanistan and Pakistan rather than Kashmir itself, had operated as a semi-autonomous unit

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378 Gauhar “Jamat-I-Islami”, pp. 81-82. See Bose, “JKLF and JKHM,” p. 244. The party’s active role left it particularly vulnerable - “had it only offered hideouts, moral support and material assistance to the militants after 1989 as other organizations did and remained politically aloof, its cadres would not have fallen easy pretty for elimination,” Gauhar “Jamat-I-Islami,” p. 83.
379 Arif Jamal, Shadow war: the untold story of jihad in Kashmir (New York: Melville Pub. House, 2009) has several detailed discussions of the Jamaat backing away from the Hizb due to the extraordinary blood cost that the insurgency took on the organization and its supporters.
within the organization. According to Al Badr members, the group detached itself from the Hizb in 1998 because it “disliked the Jamaat-e-Islami’s interference in organizational matters.” Rana quotes an Al Badr leader saying that “Jama’at-e-Islami had so much control over Hizbul Mujahideen that it could not move an inch without orders from the Jama’at.” It became “a very well organized and strong organization with a formulation similar to that of Hizbul Mujahideen.”

Though there was tension surrounding the Al Badr break, it was of very low intensity: “[Al Badr split] came as a serious blow to the Jamaat. However, the party continued to support the Hizbul Mujahideen under the command of Syed Salahuddin. The militant outfit was reorganized and rejuvenated... while it [the Pakistani Jamaat] was quick to recover from Al Badar’s defection.”

Thus, though the 1998 rupture, the first Hizb split in 7 years, represented a loss of fighting power, it was not a split within the core Jamaati and Jamaat-friendly bonding network at the heart of the Hizb leadership. Al Badr continued to operate in IJK as an autonomous armed group with ISI backing, as did the Hizb.

Ceasefire and Fratricide. The Al Badr split was very much in line with the two previous splits in the Hizb – debate over whether the party would control the gun, and how closely. While personality issues may have been involved, these were political disputes between the central Jamaat-based leadership and significant, discontent commanders ultimately unable to summon the loyalty of most of the organization. As such, none of them caused a major rift. The period between 2000 and 2003, however, would finally see a major split and internal warfare that badly damaged, though did not destroy, the Hizbul Mujahideen. We were introduced to Abdul Majid

382 In an interview, Al Badr leader Bakht Zameen said “our mujahideen also went into Kashmir with them, but they had a different set-up in Kashmir. Here [in Pakistan] too, we had a different set-up. But we did coordinate with the Hizb in the field.” Zaigham Khan interview w/Zameen, Herald 2000, p. 36.
383 Herald, Zaigham Khan, May 2000, p. 56.
385 Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 461.
Dar earlier, the Jamaat-linked leader of Tehrik-e-Jihad-e-Islami (TJI) from Sopore who had integrated his group into the Hizb and become a trusted commander of Syed Salahuddin. By 2000, Majid Dar was the field commander in Indian Kashmir and well aware of the battering the Hizb had taken.

Majid Dar, apparently with the cautious support of Salahuddin and elements of J&K Jamaat, began to enter into discussions with Indian security officials about the possibility of a Hizb ceasefire that could set the stage for more ambitious negotiations; this is particularly interesting because he was “known until then to be a hard-liner.” At that point, the Hizb was regarded as “the leading militant group in the armed struggle against the Indian troops.” Some argue that Pakistan supported a ceasefire that demanded terms India would never accept as a publicity ploy, but that Majid Dar altered the terms to make it more likely to lead to negotiation. Swami claims that from the Indian perspective, “broadly, the ceasefire hoped to bring about a frontal schism between pro-dialogue ethnic-Kashmiri cadre of the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and foreigners.” In any case, after a delicate series of negotiations and discussions with Indian intelligence agencies, Majid Dar announced a unilateral ceasefire in August 2000, becoming known as the Ramzan ceasefire when the Indians reciprocated.

However, this move towards a possible peace deal met with two serious challenges. First, a unit commander from Pakistan-administered Kashmir named Sarfraz Masood disagreed with the

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389 Devadas, In search of a future, pp. 329-331. He, and hints in personal conversations I had in India and IJK, suggests that Pakistani intelligence may have influenced him during a trip to see his wife in Dubai. See also Jamal, Shadow war, on this process.
391 Details on the ceasefire discussions can be found in Herald, August 2000, p. 24. Salahuddin interview during this period says he didn’t tell Pakistani Jamaat, did inform IJK Jamaat (p. 26), and defends in interview – “it was a well considered move on part of the Hizbl,” p. 33. He claimed “not many people are aware that these smaller groups were created specifically to counter the Hizbul Mujahideen’s popularity,” p. 34.

Sarfraz “opposed the cease-fire announced by Hizb on July 24 and that was what triggered the conflict.” He said that as soon as he opposed the cease-fire, the Jamaat froze all jihad funds for the Pir Punjal regiment.”\footnote{Azmat Abbas, “Factional fighting between Kashmiri militants leaves 10 dead,” \textit{Herald}, November 2000, p. 25.} This was a significant but not devastating split. The Hizb-e-Islami would continue to operate as a very minor, but autonomous, force in J&K.

Much worse was to come. The Pakistani intelligence services, Kashmiri hard-liners, other jihadi groups, and even the Pakistani Jamaat-e-Islami turned on the Hizb and demanded it pull back from its peace offensive. Salahuddin was removed as chair of the United Jihad Council, an umbrella group of militant groups in PJK. Violence by other groups escalated - “Majid, who could barely keep a lid on Hizb’s violence, could do nothing to stop the more lethal Harkat and Lashkar.”\footnote{Devadas, \textit{In search of a future}, p. 331.} This pressure on the Hizb led it to end its ceasefire after two weeks and after a series of negotiating blunders on both sides. India saw that the Hizb’s Kashmir field commands seemed either unwilling or unable to halt the Pakistani groups’ lethal spree. From the Indian side of the LOC, Abdul Majid Dar and his loyalists looked on with serious concern at the rapid shift in Muzaffarabad-based Hizb policy, away from dialogue and engagement.\footnote{This despite Majid Dar’s April 2001 claim that “There is no problem [with Salahuddin]. Up till now, all steps that we have taken were taken after discussions.” “The Rediff Interview: Abdul Majid Dar.”} Internal disagreements grew to such an extent that Majid Dar was replaced in 2001 by Saif-ul-Islam/Ghulam Hassan Khan as the Kashmir Valley military commander.\footnote{Bose, “JKLF and JKH,” p. 249. He was killed, and then replaced by “Ghulam Rasool Dar, a Jamaat-e-Islami veteran who enjoyed the personal confidence of Salahuddin.” Ghulam Rasool Dar was then killed in 2004. Mir in Rana, \textit{A to Z of Jehadi Organizations}, p. 64.}
As the rift grew, in May 2002 Majid Dar was formally expelled from the organization, and took a number of supporters from IJK with him. Behera argues that “the bulk of the midlevel command in the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen’s south and central Kashmir divisions threw their weight behind the expelled leader.” However, Rana suggests that at least on the Pakistani side of the LOC by the summer of 2002, “any influence that commanders sympathetic to Majeed Dar may have exercised was completely eliminated from Hizb.” Interviews in Delhi and Srinagar lean more towards the Rana interpretation of most commanders and fighters ultimately deciding not to join Dar’s faction. Dar and his loyalists in IJK were wooed by the Indian security and political establishment, but he was killed by Hizb gunmen in March 2003, shattering the most severe challenge to Hizb cohesion. Ironically enough, some of Majid Dar’s supporters Dar’s loyalists “joined the Hizb-e-Islami led by Commander Masood Sarfraz,” which had split in 2000 in opposition to Dar’s favored ceasefire strategy.

Since Dar’s death, the Hizb has continued to operate in IJK, including significant violence against election workers of the National Conference in 2002 and a steady, if not frequent, string of stand-off attacks with mines and IEDs. In 2004 it was assessed as “though it has gone through a number of splits, the most recent being in early 2003, and has lost several of its top commanders in clashes with Indian troops, it is still regarded as one of the most influential groups involved in the conflict over Kashmir.”

397 Behera, *Demystifying Kashmir*, p. 158. “the Pakistani-based leadership decided to expel Abdul Majid Dar and other Valley-based commanders (Zafar Abdul Fateh and Asad Yazdani) for favoring a dialogue with the Indian government.” immediately after Dar’s expulsion, fissures showed up in the Hizbul field commands.” Mir in Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 65.

398 Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 453.

399 Mir in Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 66.

the Kashmir militancy because of being the largest and the most important in terms of its effectiveness in perpetrating violence across Kashmir.\textsuperscript{401}

The Hizb’s trajectory in the first decade of the insurgency closes, though not perfectly, matches the trajectory of a cohesive group — few, low-intensity splits and feuds over high politics. The second decade, from 1997 on, does not easily align with an ideal-type cohesive or state-reliant group. It had more splits and feuds, of greater intensity, but still these were still waged over high politics like ceasefires and party-gun relations. This shift towards a pattern more resembling state-reliance, but with enduring elements of cohesion, is unsurprising when we keep in mind the severe damage Indian COIN inflicted on the group through the improvement of the security force operations and by the raising of indigenous pro-India militias in Hizb-dominated areas. The value of the social base variable inevitably was pushed closer to a coalition rather than a bonding network as physical attrition tore apart the Hizb’s social infrastructure, particularly the Jamaat, which responded by distancing itself from the group.\textsuperscript{402} The unwillingness of the Pakistani state in 2000 to abide by a legitimate ceasefire effort placed further strain on group cohesion. The two variables at the center of my account of organizational cohesion — social base and external support — are crucial to understanding the patterns of Hizb cooperation and control over time.

**IV. Pakistani Armed Groups: A New Wave Dominates Militancy, 1998-2008**

Mumbai’s burning, blood-stained hotels brought the Lashkar-e-Taiba to global prominence in November 2008. But the Lashkar’s war on India has primarily been focused on Kashmir, and


\textsuperscript{402} Some may be concerned that this was endogenous — the Hizb was not as cohesive as I claimed, and so was infiltrated and attacked due to preexisting weaknesses. The nature of the COIN success, however, belies this interpretation. It was non-Hizb factions (of the Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen and Muslim Mujahideen in particular) that provided the bulk of local knowledge and intelligence, not Hizb internal schisms. Hizb COIN infiltration was due to policies and dynamics *exogenous* to Hizb internal organization.
even when pursuing all-India terrorism it has continued to wage guerrilla war in the state. By the late 1990s, “the JKLF was crushed, most of the other local guerrilla groups formed in the early 1990s had disbanded or become defunct, and the sole survivor, HM, was facing a determined offensive from the counterinsurgency forces and their new allies, the ‘renegades.’” Separatist politics remained meager - the Hurriyat Conference remained divided and ineffective, while the People League had split into up to five factions. The violence would not be replaced by political bargaining.

The next stage in the war was the rise of Pakistani groups as key combatants in the conflict - “after the decimation of the Hizb by Kashmir’s mercenaries, Pakistan had taken to sending in more jihad recruits from Harkat and Lashkar, most of them Pakistani boys” and “the Kashmiris were dropping out of the struggle, but the Pakistanis were coming in and raising the level of violence.” Suicide and fedayeen attacks would occur from 1999 on, as well as a series of pitched gunbattles with new militants flowing across the LOC - “this reflected a new high-risk strategy by a new generation of militants with more experience, better training, and greater firepower.” The Lashkar has been joined by two other major jihadi groups, the Harkat-ul Ansar/Harkat-ul Mujahideen (the same organization, sporadically renamed to avoid terrorism bans – HuM/HM/HUA) and the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM). I focus on these three, and their splinters, because they “became a dominant guerrilla force that sidelined the indigenous and pro-

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403 Bose, Kashmir, p. 136.
404 Noorani, “Contours of militancy.”
405 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 310.
406 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 282. “The Harkat-ul Ansar and Lashkar-e-Taiba were the only groups capable of a direct fight.” Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 406. Moreover, “the jihadi groups’ ideological beliefs, organizational networks, training camps, and sources of funding and recruitment had acquired a predominantly Pakistani character.” Behera, Demystifying Kashmir, p. 159. A deeply credulous, in that it asserts that the Pakistani state was trying to stop militants crossing the LOC, but very interesting article exploring the world of Pakistani militants heading to Kashmir is Aamer Ahmed Khan, “Kashmir Chalo,” Herald, November 1994, pp. 27-35 (“Chalo” here basically means “go to” or “let’s go to”).
407 Behera, Demystifying Kashmir, p. 159; pp. 160-1 has a chart of groups.
independence Kashmiri fighters.408 Despite some important similarities, they have taken very
different trajectories over their existences.409

Studying these organizations moves us into Pakistan, and even Afghanistan, and very
significantly loosens the tight comparative framework we used to study indigenous Kashmiri
armed groups. The pressures being faced by these groups are very distinct from those facing the
JKLF or Hizb, which were mobilizing on the ground in IJK in the presence of an Indian security
apparatus. The theory will be less useful here than in the context of intense counterinsurgency
that it was originally built for – the relentless pressure of COIN did not characterize the social
and military environments in which these groups were constructed; rather, they emerged in
Pakistan with active and tacit support from the Pakistani state.410 For the leaders, the risks have
been far lower (at least until approximately 2002) than for Kashmiri insurgents raising the banner
of revolt, and thus the emphasis in my argument about the importance of geographic dispersion
for keeping groups alive is basically irrelevant. So I feel very uncomfortable directly comparing
these groups based in IJK with those based in Pakistan, especially since the former much more
closely fit my scope conditions than the latter.

Nevertheless, the Pakistani organizations share in common with each other a broadly
similar combination of challenging military operations in Indian J&K with a fluid and

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since 2002 have caused dozens of smaller ‘jihadi’ outfits to close shop, leaving five major groups in the field,
namely Hizbul Mujahideen, Harkatul Mujahideen, al-Badr Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Jaish-e-Mohammed.”
Another important group is referred to below is Harkat-ul Jehad Islami (HJI or HUJI). While important in
Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and terrorism in “mainland” India, HUJI has not been a comparatively significant player
in Kashmir’s guerrilla conflict and so I exclude it, as I do Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, a major Sunni sectarian group linked
to the Deobandi militant milieu, though I also reference LJ below.

409 In terms of similarities, Hussain argues that “all these paramilitary groups, originally from the same source, had
similar motivations and goals, and recruited from the same kind of people (often unemployed youth from Punjab
and the North West Frontier Province). The only difference was in patronage: HuM and HJI were both strongly
linked with the Taliban, whilst LeT had strong links with Wahabi groups in Saudi Arabia.” Hussain, Frontline
Pakistan, p. 52. I will argue that there were significant differences in terms of mobilization base and strategy.

410 “what is certain is that ISI has a fair amount of influence over the militant organizations.” M. Ilyas Khan,
unpredictable domestic-political environment in Pakistan. These groups “are neither the products of the army’s intelligence nor a simple puppet in a proxy war”\textsuperscript{411}; instead, though tightly tied to Pakistani state policy, they are marked by significant differences in mobilization bases and organizational cohesion.\textsuperscript{412} Thus here I try to get a preliminary sense of whether the explanatory framework offered in this dissertation can offer systematic, if admittedly partial and highly contingent, insights into the trajectories of these organizations.

This section examines the trajectories of the Harkat-ul Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Lashkar-e-Taiba and their splinters since 1980. While my theory does not explain their patterns as tightly as I would like, it still provides significant explanatory power. I argue that the major Deobandi groups, Harkat and Jaish, have both relied on extremely loose coalition social bases combining weakly-institutionalized political parties and a highly decentralized and competitive set of Deobandi religious institutions and power centers. Their command elites have been consequently heterogeneous in their loyalties and linkages, and thus the groups have been primarily state-reliant organizations lacking in significant internal social integration. The Lashkar, while also receiving state and Gulf patronage, appears to have built itself around a narrow but robust core of educational and Ahle Hadith religious networks that provided an organizational core to steady the group as it expanded. Atop this social base the Lashkar has been able to indoctrinate and incorporate in remarkably successful fashion, without suffering the

\textsuperscript{411} Amelie Blom, “The ‘Multi-Vocal State’: The Policy of Pakistan on Kashmir,” in Christophe Jaffrelot, ed., \textit{Pakistan: Nationalism Without a Nation} (New Delhi: Manohar, 2002), p. 301. “the ISI finds them useful in Kashmir and assists them. They are not its creatures, however, and are not amenable to its control.” Noorani, “Contours of militancy.”

\textsuperscript{412} In conversations with Indian security analysts, Islamist militants are sometimes dismissed as “interchangeable.” From the Indian security perspective, that may be true, but as Howenstein notes, they “cannot be lumped into one monolithic movement.” Nicholas Howenstein, \textit{The Jihadi Terrain in Pakistan: An Introduction to the Sunni Jihadi Groups in Pakistan and Kashmir} (Birmingham: Pakistan Security Research Unit, 2008), p. 38. These differences are important both for scholarly purposes but also for policy responses – as noted elsewhere in this thesis, factionalized or state-reliant groups present a different set of dangers/opportunities than cohesive ones.
schisms of the Harkat and Jaish - “compared to other similar organizations, the Lashkar-e-Taiba has proved to be a resounding success.”

Shifts in state support have exacerbated existing patterns of cohesion since 9/11, with the Harkat and Jaish being unable to control their factions, dissident factions targeting the state, and the state responding more harshly against them than against the more-disciplined Lashkar. As Abbas argues, “Elements from groups such as Lashkar-i-Tayyiba (and its associated group, Jama`at-ud-Da`wa), however, are apparently not linked with the Punjabi Taliban because their command and control as well as hierarchical structure has remained intact over the years. In comparison, LeJ and JeM splintered into smaller groups due to policy differences among leaders and disagreements over properties and finances.” The Jaish has broken into a variety of splinters in the wake of state policy shifts, the Harkat has experienced high factional autonomy, and the Lashkar has managed to maintain significantly higher cohesion. I can explain Jaish and HM’s state-reliant (and for Jaish, then factionalized) trajectories better than Lashkar’s cohesion, however. LeT represents a case only partially explained by my theoretical framework, as the group has managed to both build military power and social integration at the same time. It thus emerged as something of a hybrid armed group, without (apparently) the deep preexisting roots of the Hizb but with a much more disciplined form of mobilization than the Harkat or for that matter JKL.F.

415 To keep track of name changes:

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<tr>
<th>Original Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jaish-e-Mohammed</td>
<td>Khuddam ul-Islam</td>
<td>Jamaat-ul-Furqan; various unnamed smaller factions</td>
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<td>Lashkar-e-Taiba</td>
<td>Jamaat ud-Dawa</td>
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<td>Harkat-ul Mujahideen</td>
<td>Jamiat ul-Ansar</td>
<td>Jaish; Harkat-ul Mujahideen Al Alami; HuJI de-merger; Al Faran</td>
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Table 5.3. Predictions: Pakistani Armed Groups

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<td>Cohesive/State-Reliant</td>
<td>SB: Bonding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harkat-ul Mujahideen</td>
<td>SB: Coalition</td>
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SB = Social Base; ES = External Support; Prediction = pattern on DV predicted by my theory

A. The Harkat’s Fractious History: Deobandi Factionalism and Organizational Decay

The Deobandi Social-Religious Milieu. We begin with the two major armed groups from Pakistan’s Deobandi sect, Harkat-ul Mujahideen (HuM) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), that have fought in Kashmir. I will argue that both have followed a state-reliant course, with the Jaish slipping into factionalization after 9/11 when it lost significant state patronage. Deobandi Islam is a distinctly South Asian school of Islamic thought, following the “Hanafi fiqah (juridical school). The tradition is so named because of its origins in the town of Deoband” in India.416 The major Deobandi political parties are primarily breakaways from the original Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), which was established in British India as a party of clerics.417 Since 1980 it has spawned JUI(F), JUI (S), JUI (Q), and Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP).418 As this list indicates, the Deobandi milieu is highly fractious and weakly institutionalized – “the JUI has been subject to factional splits coalescing around personalities more than issues, and there were perhaps a half-dozen factions and reorganizations over its first half-century.”419 For instance, Rana writes

416 Fair and Chalk, Fortifying Pakistan, p. 90.
419 Metcalf, Islamic Revival in British India.
that the “JUI (F) has a network in all four provinces and Azad Kashmir but there is an absence of internal communication and its local leaders give more importance to their personal views while ignoring the central policies of the party. However, everyone agrees on the leadership and sectarian issues.” The contrast to the Jamaat-e-Islami’s high (though far from absolute) level of political discipline is quite striking.

These local mosques and schools appear to act in a highly autonomous, indeed deeply localized, manner, as fiefdoms and pockets of personal authority. For instance, the Darul Uloom Islamia Banuri Town mosque in Karachi operates autonomously from most other such institutions (it also has a network of subsidiaries), providing a focal point for competition and parochialism; another seminary (Jama Darul Uloom Haqqania), of the JUI(S)’s Maulana Samiul Haq in NWFP, also acts as a power center within the Deobandi milieu. The Deobandi militant groups’ leaders, though (surprisingly) not necessarily their foot-soldier level fighting cadres, draw heavily from Deobandi schools, parties, mosques, and networks, and the lack of a robust, regularized social integration within the armed groups has much to do with the lack of social integration within the overall Deobandi movement. Indeed, “the local [JUI-F] administrator

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420 Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 163.
421 Metcalf, Islamic Revival in British India, offers a detailed overview of the rise of Deoband in the second half of the 19th century. For instance, in p. 106, fn 40: “schools forged new social bonds in this period”; and “emphasis that the Deobandis placed on the position known as taqlid-i shakhsi: that each Muslim follow a single ‘alim, trusting him completely as his definitive guide to the Law. The Ahl i Hadis opposed the Deobandis on this position.” p. 143.
usually favours a Deobandi jehadi organization of his own preference" rather than following a central mandate.

Even large-scale state patronage and support has not overcome this fissiparous tendency, which stretches back decades and more. If anything, access to state resources seems to entrench particular politicians and religious notables, as the jostling for state patronage "led to factionalism and fragmentation of the religious parties." This social context is crucial for understanding patterns of mobilization among the Deobandi groups - it is no surprise that "HuM is considered to have a loosely organized structure" and that "differences permeated the Deobandi jihadi organizations." Patterns of religious politics established decades before the onset of the Kashmir insurgency would play an important role in determing militant cohesion. Within the Deobandi milieu, "there are seven large jehadi organizations of the Deobandi sect and most of the time they are at odds with one another for a variety of reasons." The primarily local/parochial politics and interests of key players militate against a cohesive bonding network social base, and shifts in state strategy can exacerbate this tendency – the history of Deobandi militancy reveals "‘strategic handling’ and the never-ending internal feuding that went on within these rather loosely organized outfits."


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425 Even in the late 1800s, there was a personalistic element to Deobandi Islam - “by stressing the need to remain loyal to a single *pir*, the Deobandis provided a corollary to the juristic position that in matters of the law one should turn only to one *mufti* for guidance,” Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India*, p. 163.
426 Shafqat, “From Official Islam to Islamism,” p. 138. The involvement of JUI-F leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman in politics has provided him with various perks and privileges, including commercial access to transportation routes into Afghanistan in the 1990s that earned him the nickname “Maulana Diesel.”
427 Howenstein, *The Jihadi Terrain in Pakistan*, p. 27.
(HuJI). Sponsored by General Zia ul-Haq, Pakistan’s military dictator, the HuJI was founded by Qari Saifullah and Maulana Mohammed Irshad, with links to Nabi Muhammedi, an influential Afghan cleric and politician. The group appears to have been primarily built around Deobandi madrassas; at least at the present it is “the only Deobandi organization that gets the majority of its manpower from religious schools.”\(^{431}\) As the war effort in Afghanistan heated up, fueled by the US and Saudi Arabia, western Pakistan became a launching point for a whole variety of armed organizations. In this environment, “until 1984, HuJI was the sole Islamist organization affiliated to Deobandi seminaries engaged in that [Afghanistan] jehad. After the death of its founder, Maulana Mohammed Irshad, the HuJI began to disintegrate.”\(^{432}\)

In the wake of Mohammed Irshad’s death, in 1985 one of the key HuJI commanders, Maulana Fazlur Rehman Khalil, and a group of other HuJI elites opposed the leadership succession passing to Qari Saifullah.\(^{433}\) I have not found any detailed discussion of why this split occurred; Abbas, for instance, simply describes it as “following some differences, HJI parted ways with HUA and, under the leadership of Qari Saifullah, decided to operate as a separate entity.”\(^{434}\) Rana argues that the splitters, who went on to form Harkat-ul Mujahideen, were supported by mujahid seminary students at Mianwali, Kundian, and Dera Ismail Khan.\(^{435}\) The latter source of support may be linked to the fact that Maulana Fazlur Rehman Khalil “was a student in madrass Jamia Naeemia in Dera Ismail Khan.”\(^{436}\) In any case, in 1985 “Maulana Khalil, backed by money coming from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia, soon started

\(^{431}\) Rana, *A to Z of Jehadi Organizations*, p. 266.


\(^{433}\) HM “emerged as an offshoot of Harkatul Jihadul Islami in 1984. The new organization was created by Maulana Fazlur Rehman Khalil, Maulana Mohammad Masood Alvi, and Saifullah Shaukat.” Rana, *A to Z of Jehadi Organizations*, p. 244. Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion*, p. 179 argues that Fazlur Rehman Khalil was HuJI’s chief military commander at the time. Zahab and Roy, *Islamist Networks*, argue that the split occurred in 1991 but the bulk of other evidence does not support that conclusion.


\(^{435}\) Rana, *A to Z of Jehadi Organizations*, p. 244.

\(^{436}\) Rana, *A to Z of Jehadi Organizations*, p. 258.
training his own cadres in Afghanistan.” Balochistan and NWFP are areas of strength for the Deobandi JUI factions, which in the 1980s had split into the JUI-F and JUI-S factions over the question of Zia’s dictatorship.

Hum built its command elites around figures linked to the mosques and schools of the JUI factions and their subsidiary organizations, as the leadership of Harkatul Mujahideen “does comprise of people who have graduated from religious madrassas.” As such, “HUM has enjoyed close links with both factions of Pakistan’s Jamiat-e-Ulema-Islam (JUI).” This would also take the organization’s reach into Karachi and interior Pakistan via these networks, stretching away from the Pashtun highlands of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Initially, “a large number of its cadres came from the Deobandi madrasa network in the North West Frontier Province.” The Harkat was significantly involved in both the war against the Soviets and then the war against the Najibullah regime that fought on until 1992. It stood up thousands of fighters to participate in the militia clashes of the early 1990s, expanding in size dramatically to feed the needs of conventional (or at least quasi-conventional combat) in areas like Khost in eastern Afghanistan - “a recruitment drive was also launched and the qualifications were simple: only those with beards and only those who had been trained in Afghanistan.” From the mid-1990s onward, the Harkat and the JUI factions would become supporters of the Taliban. Reflecting the regional links between armed groups, the Hizbul Mujahideen was in turn

438 Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 254.
440 Hussain, Frontline Pakistan, p. 71.
441 Rana and Bukhari 2007, p. 15 note links between Harkat and the Arabs involved in the conflict.
disadvantaged in Afghanistan by the marginalization of Jamaat-e-Islami ally Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in the face of the Taliban’s conquest.443

As the war in Afghanistan degenerated into a miserable struggle over the scraps of the post-Soviet state, the Harkat, as well as HuJI, began to look east to Kashmir. The first Harkat fighters crossed the LOC around 1991.444 Local Hizbul Mujahideen networks became the method through which the new Pakistani and, to a far lesser extent, Afghan fighters were initially supplied and transported.445 The new influx were better trained and hardened fighters than the indigenous Kashmiris, and posed a new set of challenges to the Indian security forces. The primary battle in IJK at this point, however, remained between the state and its proxies and the Hizb and other pro-Pakistan indigenous forces. Devadas argues that during the early and mid-1990s, the Indian Army was “largely ignoring the Lashkar and Harkat bands that had begun roaming the upper reaches, gradually digging in.”446 This was pronounced in Doda and other highly rural, isolated areas where the Pakistanis would make their most effective efforts.

As the Harkat looked east, “the ethnic composition of the organization changed with new recruits coming from Pakistani-controlled Azad Kashmir as well as Punjab and Karachi.”447

443 Harkat “had been formed in the same Pakistani madrassas where the Taliban too had been forged,” Devadas, In search of a future, p. 325. “the two factions of the JUI...have remained involved in a kind of a race to woo the Taliban,” Zaigham Khan, “Fazlur Rehman’s Laden Connection,” Herald, September 1999, p. 50. On Taliban/HUM ties: “their leaders shared common origins, personnel, and especially patrons. Most HuM activists came from the same seminaries in the Pakistani border region that the Taliban emerged from.” Hussain, Frontline Pakistan, p. 72. The Hizb was kicked out of eastern Afghan training camps in 1996 when the Taliban pushed aside Hekmatyar’s Hizb-e-Islami faction. 444 “first group of Harkatul Mujahideen entered Occupied Kashmir in 1991...up till 1991 the basic source of new recruits was still the religious madrassa, but now students of regular school and other young men were also targeted,” Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 245.
445 “more alarming was the network that the Hizb had developed to utilize the services of the mercenaries,” Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 363. Many Indian sources refer to foreign fighters as mercenaries.
446 Devadas, In search of a future, p. 327. See also Evans, “The Kashmir insurgency,” p. 71.
447 Hussain, Frontline Pakistan, p. 71. Rana concurs – “up till 1991 the basic source of new recruits was still the religious madrassa, but now students of regular school and other young men were also targeted,” Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 245. Indeed, many foot soldiers not from madrassas, and only 118 of 800 martyrs in Kashmir were madrassa grads - Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 254. Praveen Swami, “A Bloody Trail,” Frontline, Mar 11-24, 2006, p. 24 - “much of Harkat’s cadre are drawn from Karachi seminaries, notably the Jamia Islamia at Banori, the Jamia Ehteshamia, and the Jamia Farooqia.”
However, HuM “did not require its cadres to go through the same kind of religious training as conducted by LeT.”448 This set up a situation in which local recruiting was fairly open and the elite power centers within the organization, centered around a variety of schools, mosques, and religious organizations, were parochial and competitive. Factional autonomy was high and social integration weak, but extensive state sponsorship provided incentives for joining and staying in the coalition that made up HuM. As a result, HuM was (and is) “considered not as well organized as other big jehadi organizations.”449

HuJI was also operating in Kashmir from 1991 onwards, and HuM “worked in competition with Harkatul Jehad Islami and sometimes clashed with it.”450 As a result of these feuds between the two groups, “when things became worse leading to fights, Maulana Rashid, Maulana Hafiz Yusaf Ludhianvi, Maulana Dr. Sher Ali, and Maulana Samiul Haq [of the JUI-S] initiated reconciliation attempts between the two parties. Finally in June 1993 the leaders of both organizations agreed to the proposal of a merger with Maulana Shahadatullah as Chief Commander.”451 The new group, combining HuJI and its former component, HuM, renamed itself Harkat-ul Ansar (HuA) in 1993 – this was almost by definition a coalition social network, with the elites having a clear history of feuding and distrust stretching back nearly a decade.

Maulana Masood Azhar, the Information Secretary of the group, was sent into India and IJK in 1994 “to bring about a reconciliation between the fractious cadre of the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and the Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami, whose parent organizations had merged.”452 Azhar, who later started Jaish-e-Mohammed, was “the organizational genius behind Harkatul

448 Hussain, Frontline Pakistan, p. 71.
449 Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 249.
451 Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p 245.
Mujahideen.”453 From a deeply religious family in Bahawalpur in south Punjab, Azhar had become a noted writer and orator in the Jamia Islamia in the Banuri Town religious complex in Karachi, a major power center within the Deobandi milieu.454 However, while in Kashmir Azhar was arrested, and the HuJI and HuM components of the HuA on the ground remained largely autonomous from one another.455 While Azhar would resurface in dramatic fashion, until 1999 he was stuck in an Indian jail.

The HuJI/HuM re-marriage ended in a second divorce. During the summer of 1995, a group of HuA fighters centered around Srinagar decided to try to get Azhar released from prison by kidnapping five western tourists in Kashmir.456 This appears to have been a fairly autonomous decision by this faction, which called itself Al-Faran.457 The kidnappings were widely denounced, including by the Hizb and separatist politicians of the APHC. These stresses began to tell on the Al Faran sub-faction, which engaged in internal feuding; it apparently ignored a direct order from Fazlur Rehman Khalil, the HuM commander.458 The remnants of Al Faran ultimately killed all of the hostages (only one of their bodies has been found, beheaded). The Al Faran fiasco, which did not lead to any prisoner release, led to the dissolution of the HuA - “the HJI faction blamed Maulana Khalil of HM for allowing this to happen since the two commanders who set up Al Faran belonged to his group.”459 In 1996, the HuJI and HuM went their separate ways. HuJI was temporarily hammered by the arrest of Qari Saifullah in connection with a 1995

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453 Khaled, “Great Banuri Town.”
454 “All in the family,” Herald, Feb 2002, pp. 36-37. “he grew up in an intensely religious atmosphere and most of his family members had been associated with radical Islam...the [Banuri town] seminary was the bastion in Pakistan of the fundamentalist Deobandi movement.” Baweja, “Maulana Masood Azhar,” p. 63.
455 Rana reports that “nothing really changed in the organizational structure of Harkatul Jehad during its merger with, and separation from, Harkatul Ansar,” Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 264.
456 Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 371.
457 Joshi argues that this occurred with Pakistani support, bypassing the Harkat Valley command structure; I have not been able to get a sense of how widely this view is held.
458 Harkat “leadership was so divided,” Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p. 382; Joshi, The Lost Rebellion, p 384.
459 “HM reincarnates,” The Friday Times.
coup attempt, and would devote its energies to Afghanistan and terrorism in urban India, rather than the on-the-ground fighting in Kashmir.\footnote{The organization became tightly intertwined with the Taliban - http://www.dailymail.co.uk/default.asp?page=story_9-8-2004_pg3_1}

Harkat-ul Ansar returned to its previous name of Harkat-ul Mujahideen to get around being listed by the US as a terrorist group. At its inauguration ceremony in 1997, its links to the Deobandi parties were clearly on show as both JUI(S) and JUI(Q) leaders attended.\footnote{Azmat Abbas, “Double Standards,” \textit{Herald Annual}, January 2005, p. 41.} The Harkat took part in the 1999 Kargil war as a non-state partner to the Pakistani Northern Light Infantry and other conventional forces engaged in combat along the northern reaches of the LOC.\footnote{For an overview see Sawney and Sood 2002, and the Kargil Committee Report.} In 1999, an Indian Airlines flight was hijacked and eventually ended up in Kandahar, where the Indian state was forced to hand over three prisoners in exchange for the plane’s passengers – Mushtaq Zargar, who we already met at the head of al-Umar Mujahideen, Harkat senior figure Masood Azhar, and Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, a Harkat-linked operative who later played a central role in the killing of Daniel Pearl. With the release of these prisoners, a dangerous new phase in South Asian militancy began.

\textit{The Rise and Fall of the Jaish-e-Mohammed, 1999-2003.} Masood Azhar had been a senior Harkat cadre, but upon his return he avoided the Harkat leadership for several weeks, and then dramatically announced the creation of a new group, the Jaish-e-Mohammed. “The formation of the outfit was endorsed by the chief of three religious schools, Mufti Nizamuddin Shamzai of the Majlis-e-Tawan-e-Islami, Maulana Mufti Rashid Ahmad of the Darul Ifta-a-wal-Irshad, and Maulana Sher Ali of the Sheikh-ul-Hadith Dar-ul-Haqanlia”\footnote{Amir Mir, “Trailing the Militants,” \textit{Herald}, Dec 2003, p. 61.} Once again the factionalism of Deobandi religious mobilization found reflection in militancy, as local power centers broke off from the HuM in favor of the Jaish. Shamzai was a major figure in Deobandi militancy, and
decided to back Azhar over his former commander, Khalil. Azhar had apparently decided that the time had come for a new organization that would unify the struggle under its umbrella. The consensus is that the Pakistani security apparatus and its allies in the religious establishment supported Jaish: Azhar was allowed to make public speeches surrounded by armed men.

The split was messy and violent. While “the outfit’s creation can be linked to the popularity surrounding Masood Azhar after his release from India,” it triggered a serious rupture within the Harkat – “the leadership of HuM unanimously decided to distance itself from their former secretary general.” As this hostility spiraled, “a large number of HM activists joined JeM and Azhar’s organization captured HM assets in the Punjab. The feuding cost HM the lives of some of its activists” and “the maulana’s [Azhar’s] supporters took over the organisation’s property all over the country. Some reports suggest that the breakaway jihadi faction grabbed assets worth over one-and-a-half billion rupees.” According to Mir, “hostility developed between the two groups when a large number of the former Harkat activists managed to wrest control of over a dozen Harkat offices in Punjab.” Broadly speaking, HuM cadres in Punjab and Karachi were more likely to support Azhar over Khalil, a Pashtun. The Harkat lost

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464 Mufti Nizamuddi Shamzai “was the founder and patron-in-chief of Jaish-e Mohammed when it was formed. . .we was also a member of the governing council of Jaish as well as the governing council of JUI” (“Mufti Nizamuddin Shamzai: A Profile,” The Friday Times, June 4-10, 2004); “he was the patron of the foremost Deobandi jihadi outfit Harkatul Mujahideen and was seen as an elder by the two leaders of Harkat: Fazlur Rehman Khaleel and Masood Azhar. . ., Shamzai was clearly inclined to favor Masood Azhar and became a member of the Jaish shura (governing council),” “Khaled, Great Banuri.”

465 Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 216, quotes from early edition of fortnightly Jaishe Mohammed from Karachi: “it the leaders are permitted to retain their positions in a joint forum they will never accept each other at heart. . .they never give up on their first allegiances”

466 As Hussain notes, “Backing for the new party by Shamzai and other Deobandi clerics, who were considered to be very close to Pakistan’s military establishment, raised many questions. Jamia Binoria had played a key role in promoting a state-sponsored jihadist culture.” Hussain, Frontline Pakistan, p. 65.

467 Swami “In Retrospect,” p. 58.

468 Mir in Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 24.

469 “HM reincarnates,” The Friday Times.


471 Mir in Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 24. See also Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 221.

472 Punjabis go with Jaish; Pashtuns stay with HuM, Zahab and Roy, Islamist Networks, p. 28. They claim the split
a number of veteran jihadis and was badly damaged in its ability to project violence into IJK.

The Jaish consolidated itself around a set of Deobandi power centers, from mosques in Karachi to the cadres of the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), a virulently sectarian Deobandi party that had split from the JUI. It also had ties with the militant offshoot of SSP, the extremely violent and fractious Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. The coalition social base of the Harkat was repeated in the rapidly-expanding, heterogeneous umbrella of the Jaish. With “many leaders from Harkatul Mujahideen and Harkatul Jehad-e-Islami,” the new guerrilla group was more ambitious than any seen before. It launched the era of suicide bombing in IJK and “grew at an astonishing rate during its two-year existence.” Abbas speculated in 2000 that it “seems to have the support of a large number of Deobandi madrassas in the country.” As this occurred, state support was extremely evident - Herald quotes a Punjab police official saying “we were told to mind our own business and not worry about Azhar.” As of the early 2000s, its command structure consisted of “seven departments supervised by a twelve member Central Majlis-e-Shura.” Azhar was riding high in 2000 and 2001, and even “true to Deobandi tradition he began shooting off his mouth against General Musharraf which embarrassed his handler, the ISI.” This was a classic state-reliant organization, charging ahead fueled by guns,
money, and prestige despite a fractious, coalition social base upon which to rest.

However, the aftermath of 9/11 fundamentally changed the game for Masood Azhar and the Jaish-e-Mohammed. As long as it was focused on Kashmir the coalition held together. But the US move into Afghanistan and Musharraf’s willingness to work against the Taliban (however reluctantly) led to serious dismay among hardline activists. In contrast to the Lashkar, which weathered this massive shift, the Jaish leadership would splinter apart and its lower-level members would pursue their own agendas. The Pakistani state decided that it needed to rein in militant groups and prevailed upon Azhar to hold his fire as the Americans invaded Afghanistan (though Jaish was involved in a dramatic attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001 that led to extreme tensions). The group renamed itself Khuddam-ul-Islam to avoid a ban.

By 2002 and 2003, however, “not willing to wait any longer for Masood’s approval, the dissidents launched a spate of attackson what they described as ‘US interests.’”482 Spiraling fragmentation occurred in the standard manner of factional splits - “the ameer of Jaish-e-Mohammed Sindh chapter, Maulana Abdullah Sha Mazhar, was the first one to leave Masood Azhar in October 2001 to launch his own faction, Tehrikul Furqaan. He was soon joined by Maulana Abdul Jabbar alias Maulana Umer Farooq – Nazim, Military Affairs and 12 more commanders. And they all decided to confront their parent group.”483 Jabbar’s group, which named itself Jamaat-ul-Furqan, had formally split by 2003 after a series of attacks (including suicide assaults) by local factions in 2002 against western interests throughout Pakistan.484

This split seems to have combined dissatisfaction over Azhar’s unwillingness to target the

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482 Mir, True Face, p. 53.
483 “the first group to break away from Jaishe Mohammed was Maulana Abdullah Shah Mazhar’s group,” and he was Karachi Ameer of HuJI before joining Jaish and “he separated from Jaishe along with his entire team.” There is a list of 9 leaders – 5 from HuM; 1 from SSP; 2 from HuJI. Information drawn from Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations and Mir in Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 25.
484 On Jaish members becoming suicide bombers, see “Men with a Mission,” Herald, July 2003, pp. 49-56.
US with a more pecuniary feud over control of various mosques. On the one hand, 2003 “Jaish sources claim that the distribution of finances was the primary cause of conflict between Jabbar and Azhar”485 and “the present split in JeM is however also a story of bitter wrangling over the organization’s finances. Some of the group’s insiders accused Masood and his cohorts of misusing these to enrich themselves.”486 On the other, a police official said in 2002 that “disillusioned with their leadership’s inability to prevent the government from forming an alliance with the US against Afghanistan, many of their top-level activists have broken away into splinter groups, united in the common goal of destabilizing the government.”487 Some combination of political and material grievance on both sides seems most likely.488 There was violence and tension over control of mosques and resources.489 The “internecine struggle within the various factions . . . triggered a battle for assets – control over mosques, madaris, donation collection channels, and weapons caches – in which Furqaan seemed to be gaining an upper hand.” Azhar was able to secure state support in cracking down on the Furqaan splinter, but the security forces realized that “these dissidents were not operating under a coherent structure and were spread throughout Pakistan.”490 As a result, “apart from these two factions, militant and intelligence circles say, the Jaish had broken into many splinter groups that had chosen to [defy?]
the military establishment’s diktat.”

Since the 2002-3 split, Jaish “seems to be in disarray after losing the support of the Inter Services Intelligence. The ISI had to tighten the noose around its own creation, once the outfit was found involved in the 25 December 2003 twin suicide attacks on General Musharraf’s life in Rawalpindi” and “the Jaish chief used to receive patronage of the intelligence apparatus. But all this seemed to be changing towards the end of 2003.” Azhar’s inability to keep either local elites or foot soldiers under control had led to a loss of state aid, and a shift further into factionalization. The game of propping up various Deobandi groups, and helping them with strategic splits, was found its limits. As Abbas noted in 2004, “it also became apparent that some of the militant groups had run out of control but the realization dawned on Islamabad only after it tried to reverse its policy vis-à-vis the Taliban.”

Current State of Play. Since 2003, the course of both Jaish and Harkat has been amorphous and hard to credibly trace. Harkat also renamed itself, as Jamiat ul-Ansar (JA). Its chief, Khalil, was detained but then released “after just a few months.” It lost another apparent splinter, Harkat-ul Mujahideen al-Alami (HuMA), which engaged in several attacks but appears to have now disappeared as a prominent force. Credible information on the Jaish is scarce – some reports have placed Masood Azhar in his home town of Bahawalpur, while others put him with the Pakistani Taliban in the NWFP. Some fighters claiming to be members of Jaish-e-Mohammed regularly surface in Indian Kashmir.

491 Mir in Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 27.
492 Mir, True Face, p. 45.
493 Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 21.
497 “police say while the HMA is an independent outfit, it ahs [sic] close links with Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. The HMA works through a number of sub-groups that operate in their respective areas.” Hasan Mansoor, “Terrorist groups’ profile,” The Friday Times, May 21-27, 2004.
In any case, both the Jaish and Harkat have been badly fractured since 2002, with high levels of factional autonomy and several significant splits. Coalition social bases and shifts in state strategy have fostered internal unrest, which has been further fueled by “disillusionment setting in within the amorphous militant cadres spread from Kandahar to Kashmir.”\textsuperscript{498} In part because of this fractiousness and indiscipline, Jaish and Harkat have “lost their primacy to the Lashkar, seemingly forever.”\textsuperscript{499} The effects of the localism and parochialism of Deobandi power centers can also be found in the chaotic trajectory of the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi.\textsuperscript{500} The big next stage for Deobandi militancy is likely to be linked to the escalating insurgency in NWFP, a stronghold for several Taliban-friendly Deobandi groups, rather than India and IJK. The fluid and shifting social underpinning proved vulnerable to state manipulation, while state manipulation in turn proved insufficient to control the fractious consequences of the coalition social base.

B. Lashkar at War: Origins and Evolution

A very different group emerged from Pakistan’s Ahle-Hadith tradition, which is more linked to Wahhabi understandings of Islam from the Middle East.\textsuperscript{501} The smallest of Pakistan’s major Sunni sects (after the Barelvi and Deobandi), the Ahle-Hadith had been traditionally avoided by most South Asian Muslims, but has made major inroads in the last thirty years.\textsuperscript{502} The Afghanistan conflict and money from Saudi Arabia expanded the Ahle-Hadith’s reach, and the Lashkar-e-Taiba has emerged as the most prominent and cohesive Ahle-Hadith armed group.


\textsuperscript{500} LeJ, an armed splinter of the SSP, has had a number of major splits; a particularly important one was between senior commanders Riaz Basra and Qari Abdul Hai. “Media reports indicate that the LeJ is an amalgam of loosely co-ordinated sub-units in various parts of Pakistan, particularly in the districts of Punjab with autonomous chiefs for each sub-unit,” South Asia Terrorism Portal: (http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/terroristoutfits/Lej.htm). Zahab and Roy argue that “ideology was never really a factor in the splits within the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, personality clashes among the leaders being the main cause,” Zahab and Roy, \textit{Islamist Networks}, p. 64.

\textsuperscript{501} Also referred to as Ahle Hadees.

\textsuperscript{502} “Their adoption of Hanbali religious rites and their strict condemnation of many rituals widely practiced by South Asian Muslims did not sit well with the vast Hanafi Sunni population.” Haqqani, “Ideologies,” pp. 23-24.
Overall, “parties belonging to Ahle Hadees point of view are very well organized”503 and the Lashkar in particular “is currently the leading militant organisation operating in Kashmir”504 and the “best organized jehadi tanzeem.”505 The Lashkar is tightly linked to the Markaz Dawa Wal Irshad (renamed Jamaat-ud-Dawa in 2002), a religious/educational/proselytizing organization with its major compound near Lahore.

The Mumbai attacks of November 2008 highlight the motivation and ruthlessness of the organization, whose fighters engage in “suicidal,” but not suicide, missions. Despite reports in 2004, the Lashkar appears to have survived up until Mumbai without any significant splits or splinters, in sharp contrast to its Pakistani contemporaries (much less the indigenous Kashmiri groups, though they faced a far more difficult challenge). In large this is because it has remain focused on India and Kashmir without turning on the Pakistani state by managing to control its cadres in a manner very different than the Jaish or Harkat (or Lashkar-e-Jhangvi). It became, and appears to remain, “an organization of highly trained militants who are willing to go to war wherever and whenever the Amir (commander) orders.”506

The problem with making arguments about the group is the paucity of detailed, reliable information about its social composition and internal organization - “the Markaz and the Lashkar-e-Toiba are extremely secretive organizations and take great care to conceal the identities of their office-bearers.”507 The claims I make are thus extremely caveated. I suggest that the Lashkar has been able to keep its cadres under control because it has built itself around a core set of relatively dense and socially integrated organizational elites, from Wahhabi networks,

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503 Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 295.
505 Noorani, “Contours of Militancy.”
university professors, and refugees from Partition (often from Jammu) in central and south Punjab, rather than cobbled together a coalition of competing religious elites. This social infrastructure has combined with massive material support from the Gulf and Pakistani state to create a “totalizing” environment in which commitment and discipline are instilled to new recruits entering the organization. The mixture of social and material endowments has forged “a closely knit jihadi group”\textsuperscript{508} that “strictly controlled [and controls] its cadres.”\textsuperscript{509}

This argument reflects a partial success for my theory, and a partial failure. The social infrastructure of the Lashkar has drawn on some preexisting lines of collective action and mobilization to homogenize and control its base, in combination with extensive state and Gulf support. However, the initial social core was fairly small and geographically concentrated, while the Markaz/Jamaat-ud-Dawa social institutions were built largely alongside the Lashkar rather than preceding it by any significant period of time. The success of the Lashkar has much to do with the permissive environment within which it emerged, allowing it to engage in on-the-fly institutionalization that would not have been possible in the heat of war.

*The Rise of Markaz and Lashkar: Mobilization and Warfare, 1986-1999.* The Ahle Hadith have traditionally been a minority within Pakistan, more in line with the Islam of the Persian Gulf than of South Asia; it represents a “small minority”\textsuperscript{510} of Pakistani Islam. Nevertheless, there have been significant pockets of Ahle Hadith followers in Pakistan, particularly in Punjab. In the 1980s as the Afghanistan jihad was raging, Saudi Arabia expanding its reach, and Pakistani migrants working in the Persian Gulf, this creed grew in power and influence. In the mid-1980s a group of Ahle Hadith faculty at the University of Engineering and Technology

\textsuperscript{508} Haqqani, “Ideologies,” p. 25.
\textsuperscript{509} Hussain, *Frontline Pakistan*, p. 60.
(UET) in Lahore founded Markaz Dawa Wal Irshad (MDI) as an Islamist religious-political
organization. Their aim was to combine education and preaching with armed struggle, with the
latter occurring under the aegis of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (Army of the Pure).

The founders of Markaz/Lashkar, as mentioned, were all “teachers of the Ahle Hadees
sect associated with the Department of Islamiat.” One of the key leaders, Hafiz Mohammed
Saeed, had been involved with the Jamaat-e-Islami’s student wing during his earlier education
but had left it in the 1970s while working in Saudi Arabia, where he “developed close links with
Wahhabi clerics.” According to at least one observer, he is “not a charismatic man,” casting
doubt on personality-centered explanations for organizational outcomes. Saeed and his
collaborators received assistance in forming Markaz from Abdullah Azzam, the famous
Palestinian Islamist who had become deeply involved in the Afghan jihad. Jaleel argues that in
addition to the UET social core, “when Saeed founded Lashkar in 1987, its entire top brass came
from non-Kashmiri speaking belts on either side of the divided Jammu and Kashmir, and were
essentially Gujjars and Mirpuris.”

Others have made reference to a heavy Gujjar presence at the top of Lashkar, but informed
observers cast doubt on this being a major cause of leadership cohesion. Leaving the Gujjar

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51 They “decided to participate practically in the Afghan jehad. The teachers included Professor Hafiz Mohammed
Saeed, Professor Zafar Iqbal, Hafiz Abdul Rehman Makki, Hafiz Abdul Islam bin Mohammed, Sheikh Jamiluddin,
and Mufti Abdul Rehman.” Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 317. This is a consensus on the membership
base: “in 1986, the teachers of the Islamiyat faculty at Lahore’s Engineering University had founded Markaz Dawat
wal-Irshad.” Khaled Ahmed, “Hafiz Saeed and the alleged nuclear connection” The Friday Times, March 25-31,
2005. Finally, “the top leadership of the group, including Hafiz Saeed, had been on the faculty of that university.”
Hussain, Frontline Pakistan, p. 56.
512 Hussain, Frontline Pakistan, p. 54.
513 Hussain, Frontline Pakistan, p. 53.
514 “According to sources, Mohammad Ashraf of Mirpur, Tahir-ul Islam of Rawalakote, Mohammad Ibrahim of
Poonch and Molvi Ubaidullah of Sadduti district in PoK have been key members in the Lashkar hierarchy.” Muzamil
515 Mariam Abou Zahab, “‘I shall be waiting for you at the door of paradise’: the Pakistani martyrs of the Lashkar-e
Taiba (Army of the Pure),” in Aparna Rao, Michael Bollig, and Monika Bock, eds., The Practice of War:
contrary view comes from personal correspondence with veteran Pakistani journalist.
issue aside, the preexisting professorial basis of the organization combined with initial access to existing Ahle Hadees mosques and religious networks ("in the beginning Ahle Hadees mosques and madrassas cooperated with it") to underpin Lashkar in its early years. 516 There is also some evidence that refugees of Partition and their descendants have been particularly prone to joining LeT, in both Punjab and PJK. Though "as an Ahl-e-Hadith group [it] did not enjoy the same built-in support base as Deobandi jihadi groups," 517 this was certainly not an organization that emerged as a crystallization of mass ethnic/religious grievances or endogenous "brokerage" – instead, it drew on prior patterns of friendship, religious loyalty, refugee flight, and social mobilization to create a new organization that could recruit and train adherents. 518 The process of institution-building was fueled in large part by Gulf money – its Muridke compound was allegedly "built with Arab money" 519 – and the acquiescence, even support, of the Pakistani state.

Various scholars date the founding of Lashkar itself to different years, from 1986 to 1991, but it seems that Lashkar in some form began functioning in 1987 and had links to armed groups in eastern Afghanistan that provided training grounds. Despite some of this base in Afghanistan (especially Kunar Province), 520 "the group did not play a major part of the fight against the Soviet forces... however, the Afghan campaign helped the LeT leadership to gain the trust of the ISI." 521 By 1992, the group was actively mobilizing and training its fighters for

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516 However by 1994 "this cooperation died out" due to intra-Wahhabi factionalism and ideological divergences. Rana, A to Z of Jehadi Organizations, p. 318.
517 Tankel, Lashkar-e-Taiba, p.7.
518 Zaigham Khan, "Playing with Fire," Herald, September 1998, p. 26 claims that "most Ahle Hadith political groups are affiliated with the Lashkar-e-Taiba" but others claim the exact opposite and it's clear there has been recurrent tensions between different Ahle Hadith factions.
519 Ahmed, "Challenge within," The Friday Times.
520 Tankel, Lashkar-e-Taiba, p. 18 reports that LeT "has historical ties to Kunar Province, an Ahl-e-Hadith stronghold, and has maintained contacts there... the LeT preserved its relationship with the Jami’at al-Da’wa al-Qur’an wa’l-Sunna."
521 Mir, True Face, pp. 61-2.
Kashmir, and originally funneled them through existing Kashmiri groups like Al Barq.\textsuperscript{522} “within a short span, LeT emerged as the fiercest militant organization – it possessed not only thousands of well trained and highly motivated fighters, but also a huge propaganda network”\textsuperscript{523} Lashkar moved beyond its original university and Ahle Hadith networks to build new ones – “attention was focused in 1994 on setting up educational institutions and madrassas”\textsuperscript{524} MDI built a subsidiary set of organizations throughout Punjab (but especially central and south Punjab) that could monitor and socialize possible recruits. Unlike the JUI-linked institutions, these appear to have been centrally controlled and disciplined.

Who were these recruits and where did they come from? The Lashkar is a predominantly Punjabi organization, and one that is primarily centered in cities and towns of Punjab and PJK. Its recruits appear not to be predominantly from madrassas or religious schools - “LeT, unlike some of the other jihadist groups, drew its recruits from universities and colleges as well as from among unemployed youth. The traditional Islamic madrasas provided only ten per cent of the volunteers”\textsuperscript{525} while “in the countryside, LeT recruits were largely from families which were influenced by Wahabi Islam. . .the majority of LeT recruits came from Punjab, particularly from Lahore, Gujranwala, and Multan where Ahle Hadith had its strongholds.”\textsuperscript{526} The prior Ahle Hadith areas of strength became the early areas of strength for the Lashkar, just as Kunar in Afghanistan had provided a hospitable original training ground. Mir also notes that the Lashkar

\textsuperscript{522} Pakistanis of LeT were initially coming over “under the banner of the Gujjar dominated Al Barq” before Lashkar was given clearance to operate autonomously. Devadas, \textit{In search of a future}, p. 266.
\textsuperscript{523} Hussain, \textit{Frontline Pakistan}, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{525} Hussain, \textit{Frontline Pakistan}, p. 56. Also, “Contrary to the perception that extremism incubates in religious seminaries, most recruits to militant organizations in major cities of Punjab have come from government schools and colleges,” Jalal, \textit{Partisans of Allah}, p. 287.
\textsuperscript{526} Hussain, \textit{Frontline Pakistan}, p. 56.
has not the same reliance on clerics as some of the other armed groups, which as we saw in the previous section can drive competition and factionalism.\footnote{527}

Zahab and Roy argue that “the social profile of the mujahidin is identical to that of non-commissioned officers in the army... in the countryside the Lashkar-i-Taiba recruits from two social groups: families of Wahhabi inclination... and the poor sections of society.”\footnote{528} According to Shafqat, “Lashkar-e-Taiba congregations are dominated by the lower-middle classes, peasants, traders, merchants, petty government employees, and mostly young men from various parts of Punjab and some from NWFP.”\footnote{529} In this way, the Lashkar appears to have escaped a reliance on the madrassa culture of Pakistan and expanded into a broader social base – the ranks of the MDI are “staffed by educated young men primarily recruited from the middle classes.”\footnote{530} The resemblance to the social base of the Pakistan Army is quite interesting and has relevance in explaining state responses to Lashkar behavior.

Atop these social moorings was built a powerful organization that extended its reach into a variety of areas - “The driving force behind its massive success in recruitment is deceptively simple: using its impressive organizational networks, which includes schools, social service groups and religious publications, to stir up outrage against the injustices meted to Kashmiri Muslims, the Dawa wal Irshad creates a passion for jihad.”\footnote{531} Education has also been used to socialize younger generations; Saeed has been quoted saying that “children are like clean

\footnote{527} “the Lashkar’s jihadi network is the largest, the most efficient, and also has greater independence than other militant organizations since the Makaz Dawa Al Irshad has a Wahabi orientation and does not have to follow any of the four Muslim religious leaders or imams. On the other hand, three other fundamentalist organizations – the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, and the Jaish-e-Mohammed – are Deobandis and follow the imams,” Mir, “Hafiz Mohammed Saeed,” p. 60. However, Hizb-ul Mujahideen is not a Deobandi organization, since the Jamaat is generally considered non-sectarian.

\footnote{528} Zahab and Roy, *Islamist Networks*, p. 36.

\footnote{529} Shafqat, “From Official Islam to Islamism,” p. 132.


\footnote{531} Zaigham Khan, “Allah’s Army,” *Herald*, January 1998. 125. Mir appears to almost-verbatim lift this passage without any attribution or reference- “the driving force behind its [Lashkar/MDI’s] success in recruitment is deceptively simple. It uses its impressive organizational network, which includes schools, social service groups, and religious publications, to create a passion for jihad.” Mir, “Hafiz Mohammed Saeed,” p. 66.
blackboards – whatever you write will mark them forever.”532 Community building and value infusion are emphasized - “once in the Lashkar, the youngsters are drawn into a pattern of community life, epitomized by the shared, common meal.”533 Moreover, after a multi-stage period of training (including religious instruction), Lashkar recruits are often sent home or to another city in Pakistan to do organizational work and are monitored and further socialized by more senior MDI/LeT members in the area.534 Only a small proportion of trained manpower is operational in Kashmir at any given point in time. Family networks are also deployed to attract and maintain recruits.535 Donations from businessmen, mosques, and Gulf patrons are funded this expansion, as “most Jamaat-ud-Dawa [nee MDI] funds still came in the form of anonymous donations sent directly to its bank accounts from various parts of the world.”536

By the mid/late-1990s, the Indian security forces were noticing the Lashkar - “this group is well motivated, well trained, and well equipped.”537 Along with its discipline, “analysts point to another factor behind the Lashkar-e-Toiba’s success: the Punjabi base of the outfit. The Lashkar mujahideen mix easily with the local population of Jammu, who are linguistically allied to Punjab.”538 Interviews in New Delhi and Srinagar made it very clear that the major Indian fear is of a growing Lashkar presence on the ground in J&K – concern has been raised over the expansion of Ahle Hadith mosques and schools in the state, as a Wahhabi counterpart to the Jamaat-e-Islami. Fedayeen attacks against military installations and sectarian massacres of Sikhs

535 “it is not uncommon to find all the able bodied men of a single family joining the Lashkar,” Zaigham Khan, “Allah’s Army,” Herald, January 1998, p. 129.
536 Mir, True Face, p. 68.
537 Singh, Doda, p. 268.
538 Mir in Most Wanted, p. 65; “its Punjabi base also works in its favour as it makes it easy for Lashkar militants to blend with the local population of Jammu, which is linguistically allied to Punjab.” Mir, True Face, p. 67.
and Hindus show the ferociousness of the Lashkar onslaught.\textsuperscript{539} It played an important role in the 1999 Kargil conflict, infiltrating across the LOC with and supported by Pakistani infantry forces. By 9/11 it was “the most effective, prolific, and fearsome jihadi force fighting in Jammu and Kashmir.”\textsuperscript{540}

\textit{Lashkar since 9/11: Flexibility and Force.} In the account above we saw the Jaish-e-Mohammed launch itself on a dramatic trajectory of expansion and collapse in the wake of 9/11. Despite facing a similar set of constraints, Lashkar has emerged as a cohesive and disciplined force. Impressively “the Markaz Dawa wal Irshad has grown at an incredible rate”\textsuperscript{541} but there has not been the fragmentation that accompanied the rapid expansion of the Jaish – the elite core of the Lashkar has controlled and directed lower-level mobilization rather than cobbling together a loose inter-factional coalition. The LeT’s high command has been able to control its cadres and prevent fragmentation; it has established institutions from the center outward in a classic instance of “core formation.”\textsuperscript{542} Though there were reports of a feud in 2004, there was ultimately no split and the organization remained intact.\textsuperscript{543} As of 2009, the Lashkar has gone two decades without a split, a record matched in this dissertation only by the LTTE and PIRA. However, again we should be careful about comparison – the Lashkar has mobilized in a conducive and supportive environment, so Harkat and Jaish are by far the more appropriate comparisons.

\textsuperscript{539} In addition, “it recruits have the best weapons and state-of-the-art communication technology.” Mir in Rana, \textit{A to Z of Jehadi Organizations}, p. 61.
\textsuperscript{543} The name of the new group was allegedly Khairun Naas, and it was reported to have been joined by senior military commander Maulana Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi. However, this split appears not have ever actually occurred – Lakhvi was actually still with Lashkar at the time of the Mumbai attacks and nothing else was ever heard of Khairun Naas consequently. This shows the difficulties of getting information on the organization.
However, the state has an important role to play in this story. After 9/11 and then the 2002 bans of jihadist groups (triggering various name changes), the Lashkar changed its official leadership but otherwise “escaped almost unscathed.” Pakistan’s security services appear to have decided that Lashkar could be tolerated, indeed encouraged, as long as it kept itself focused on India and Indian Kashmir. Jalal argues that “the Lashkar has escaped the tightening noose on militant groups because the state’s intelligence agencies needed an alternative to the troublesome Jaish-i-Mohammed” and LeT has in turn “agreed to work within new parameters and restrict its activities to a ‘controlled jihad’ in Kashmir while keeping a low profile in Pakistan.” With its ability to stop its cadres from going rogue against American interests or the Pakistani state, and the state’s continued patronage of it, Lashkar “has continued to thrive.” The November 2008 Mumbai attacks represent a dramatic escalation in scale, but not kind, of Lashkar attack, echoing a series of fedayeen attacks in Kashmir and bombings throughout urban India. Though the future is too hazy to predict, there are not signs yet that Lashkar is losing cohesion or purpose; as long as war in Kashmir remains an option its cadres will have an outlet for their training and motivation.

C. Trajectories of Pakistani Insurgency in Kashmir

We now take theoretical stock of the history laid out above. The theory I offer generates significant, though very far from total, explanatory power. The Deobandi groups, Harkat-ul Mujahideen and Jaish-e-Mohammed, were undermined by the highly localized, personalized...
nature of religious mobilization. The fractious and competitive Deobandi religious-political milieu was clearly reflected in the trajectories of Deobandi militancy, in which rival clerics, religious compounds, and funding networks coalesced and fell apart on a regular basis. With this coalition social base, shifts in state support exacerbated preexisting fissiparous tendencies and sparked feuds and splits that badly undermined the fighting and staying power of these groups. Trajectories of first state-reliance and then, in the case of Jaish, factionalization appear to be plausibly explained by my simple theory of organizational control.

The Lashkar-e-Taiba works less well for my theory because the preexisting social base of the organization, while existent, lacked the kind of geographic dispersion and decades-long processes of socialization that I argue should underpin cohesive groups. The reason why these did not forestall the rise of Lashkar appears to be the political context – the group was able to build itself atop a small but disciplined set of networks without facing constant security force harassment and counterinsurgency, and thus could create and augment social networks. A combination of structure and choice led to a more reliable and robust social infrastructure than that of the Deobandis. Throughout the group’s existence, Pakistani state support and Gulf financial flows have been enormously helpful in centralizing control over the distribution of resources and attracting and maintaining cadre loyalties. A small but growing bonding network social base at the core of the group makes it a disciplined and dangerous organizational weapon.

Table 5.4. Predictions and Reality, Pakistani Armed Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group and DV Prediction</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harkat-ul Mujahideen</td>
<td>Theory: Intermediate</td>
<td>Theory: Low</td>
<td>Theory: High</td>
<td>Theory: Multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual: Intermediate</td>
<td>Actual: Moderate</td>
<td>Actual: High</td>
<td>Actual: Multiple</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual: Intermediate</td>
<td>Actual: High</td>
<td>Actual: High</td>
<td>Actual: Multiple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lashkar-e-</td>
<td>Theory: Low</td>
<td>Theory: Low</td>
<td>Theory: Low</td>
<td>Theory: Political-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The rise of all of these groups and their various splinters has increasingly undermined the writ of the Pakistani state. Even as early as 2002, militant armed groups were “functioning independently” in Pakistan. The intervening years appear to have not changed much, as militancy afflicts both urban and rural areas of the country. The spillover of the Kashmir war, along with the Afghan conflict, has fundamentally undermined Pakistan’s sovereignty and shows the clear limits and dangers of state sponsorship of militancy.

Assessing Alternative Explanations

There is not enough reliable data to clearly test theories in the case of the Pakistani groups, but we can nevertheless ask if other theories also provide insights into patterns of cohesion. First, it is not clear that popular support necessarily leads to organizational cohesion. Deobandis are far more populous than Ahle Hadith in Pakistan, but the Deobandi groups have been much less cohesive than the Ahle Hadith LeT. Second, state sponsor support alone also was indeterminate in explaining cohesion and fragmentation, but was nevertheless important. Even during periods of state support, HuM and JeM were not very cohesive. Pakistani decisions to cut off support or change policy definitely accentuated already low levels of discipline, but this makes sense in the theoretical framework I have offered, and does not fit neatly into a Weinstein/Collier and Hoeffler “greed” approach. Third, ideological arguments are only somewhat helpful, as the internal battles within these groups tended to be over turf, money, and organizational control, not high politics. The closest to a “political” battle we can find is the post-9/11 disagreement within JeM over policy towards the US, but this was also overlain with competition for resources and

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551 This has been part of a much longer process - “the last two decades have witnessed Pakistani religious parties turning into monsters in terms of materials resources, fire-power, and the pressure they can exert on policy makers.” Zaigham Khan, “Losing Control,” Herald, May 2000, p. 53.
status. Finally, counterinsurgent state policy was not a major driver of variation in this period, largely because these organizations were not generally mobilizing under the Indian gun.

V. Kashmir and Militant Cohesion

In Kashmir, violence ebbs and flows, with an overall downward trend since an Indo-Pak ceasefire in 2003. The Hizb clings to life, with an enduring but badly-battered local network and organization. The JKLF retains street power and public presence, but its boycotting of elections and lack of a military wing undermine its influence in Jammu and Kashmir, while the remnants of other parties and tanzeems link up with either mainstream electoral parties or various factions of the Hurriyat Conference. Elections have occurred repeatedly, but with widely varying turnout and impact. The state’s politics lie perpetually on the edge of another round of mass protest and internal division, as during massive marches and protests during the summer of 2008. Pakistan remains roiled by political instability, making a deal over Kashmir unlikely in the medium-term future. In the meantime, the state will continue to mix militancy, politics, and daily life.

What does this conflict teach us about insurgency? First, it shows the limits of pure popular support. Armed groups need fighters and supporters, and so popular support is essential. But it appears that there is no clear linear relationship between popular backing and organizational outcomes. The early 1990s in Kashmir saw the apparently most popular group, JKLF, being systematically sidelined by the Hizb, while other groups that might have been able to politically appeal to portions of the population (like the Muslim Janbaz Force of the People’s League) also faltered. The Hizb pulled ahead both because of its Pakistani support and because it could fall back on a preexisting set of Jamaat local and regional networks that provided a ready-made command structure for militancy. In Pakistan, the Deobandis are a greater proportion of the populace than the Ahle Hadith, but the Lashkar has proven far more cohesive and militarily
effective than the Deobandi armed groups. Above a certain, admittedly unclear, *threshold* of popular support, discipline and cooperation matter more than numbers, and mass popularity does not necessarily lead to insurgent success or even survival.

Second, Kashmir suggests both the power and limits of external state support. It is not necessary to accept some of the more maximalist views of Pakistani involvement to see that Pakistan has been deeply implicated in shaping the trajectory of the Kashmir insurgency. It has favored some and dismissed others, distributing guns, money, and sanctuary in a strategic manner that has left some organizations shattered and others riding high. But it is important not to make the ISI out to be omniscient. The Pakistani security establishment attempted to hold together a variety of pro-Pakistan forces in the early/mid-1990s in order to maintain a diversified strategic portfolio, but the fragmentation of the Ikhwan and Al-Umar occurred despite ISI attempts to hold them together. Similarly, the Hizb’s activities on the ground are influenced only at the macro-level by ISI manipulation, as local dynamics of rivalry, greed, and collusion also shape patterns of violence. The failure of Pakistan to control jihadi splinters on its own soil shows the most dangerous limits to state sponsorship; while it may bring benefits, it can also involve profound unintended consequences.

Finally, this case points out the importance of “factional flipping” in counterinsurgency campaigns. The fragmentation of indigenous groups provided the Indian state with opportunities to then gain intelligence and local presence on the ground that it used to blunt and ultimately contain the insurgency. In a dynamic similar to what we will see in Sri Lanka in the next chapter, the state exploited internal divisions to improve its COIN capabilities. Insurgent fragmentation can play an important role in reconfiguring patterns of power and authority, as “ugly stability” is
sometimes built around an amorphous combination of government security forces, politicians, and flipped pro-state militias.
Chapter 6
Trajectories of Tamil Militancy in Sri Lanka, 1972-2009

Introduction

Sri Lanka’s most recent insurgency appears to have ended in the bloody overrunning of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam’s (LTTE) final battle lines in May 2009. The annihilation of the LTTE, one of the world’s most innovative, disciplined, and ruthless insurgent groups, brought to a close, at least in this phase, over three decades of terror, guerrilla warfare, and counterinsurgency in the island country of 20 million. Though the LTTE was the most distinctive of the Tamil groups fighting the Sri Lankan state, it was far from the only one during the war – at least six other significant organizations were involved in the conflict to some extent and in some capacity. At times, several of these organizations rivaled the LTTE in size and firepower.

This chapter traces out the rise and evolution of the Tamil militant organizations in Sri Lanka, focusing on the LTTE in comparative perspective with its contemporaries. It also much more briefly delves into the world of pro-state paramilitarism, exploring the shift of Tamil insurgent groups into Tamil counter-insurgent groups. This comparative study allows for a more rigorous examination of the LTTE’s organization (indeed, state)-building project than currently exists in the literature. As Hellman-Rajanayagam notes, “other militant groups have been ruthless and fanatic, but it is only the LTTE which has managed to hold on against the odds, and we have to ask ourselves why this is so.” Most existing analysis takes Tiger cohesion as a historical given, but this outcome itself needs to be explained.

Though acknowledging the crucial importance of both individual personality and state policy, I find that the two factors identified in my theory – the structure of groups’ social bases

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1 Sri Lanka has also had two major leftist-nationalist rebellions by the JVP, in 1971 and 1987-90.
and the presence or absence of external material support – were important in creating variation between Tamil groups, especially in the 1980s. The militancy that emerged amidst intense linguistic outbidding, pogroms, and international interventions was influenced by many factors, but the social and material underpinnings of the organizations played a major role in determining which group would emerge as the dominant flag-bearer of violent Tamil nationalism. By contrast, the effect of mass popular support was at best hazy, external support was indeterminate on its own since there was wide variation in outcomes across externally aided groups, and fine-grained ideological differences amidst peace processes did not usually drive internal feuds and violence. None of the theories assessed in this dissertation do spectacularly well in Sri Lanka, but my argument has the most systematic support.

Specifically, I find that the caste-regional base of organizations and access to first Indian and then diaspora support played important roles in determining the levels of cooperation and control within organizations. The LTTE’s command elite was very disproportionately built around a fishing caste bonding network (and continued to be over time), particularly in the Jaffna Peninsula, that had historically been both autonomous and possessed a self-conscious social identity. Regional social networks within Jaffna among students also played a secondary role in building an integrated command core. Combined with the decision by its leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, to limit and indoctrinate new recruits, the LTTE emerged by the mid-1980s as the most socially integrated armed group. Prabhakaran’s decisions lie beyond my ability to explain, but his social capacity to implement organizational policies was determined by the kinds of fighters whose loyalties he could call on.

This social integration was complemented by Indian and then diaspora aid that funneled massive quantities of guns and money into the organization. The LTTE would become an
extremely cohesive and militarily-capable insurgent group that controlled swathes of the north and east of the island for decades – the group’s “internal cohesion seems to be remarkable and who [the LTTE] thus have an inordinate advantage over the other groups.”³ This argument calls into question accounts that claim the Tigers represent an organic representation of unified Tamil nationalism. Though nationalist sentiment has been hugely important in propelling Tamil militancy, the Tigers’ leadership showed a strong bias in caste and regional terms, and the organization relied heavily on coercion and socialization rather than spontaneous support. This mixture of specific social networks, violence, and ensuing discipline propelled the LTTE to the dominant position within the militancy.

By comparison, the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS), and Eelam People’s Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) had either a coalition network social base or lacked significant access to external support for all or most of their existence (EPRLF briefly, partially combined the two in the late 1980s). The People’s Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOT) had both a coalition network base and could not rely on either India or the diaspora for significant external aid. Dramatic, often bloody, factionalization ensued. These combinations of social base and external support left these groups vulnerable to LTTE fratricide (which occurred during periods of internal unrest in its rivals) and Sri Lankan counterinsurgency. Interestingly, Indian decisions about which groups to support, and in what quantity, were largely driven by ideology and personal relationships (particularly with Tamil Nadu politicians), not preexisting cohesion or fighting power. The social base variable was largely determined by structural access to caste and regional social networks, and also to some extent by strategic choices about the best path to political influence.

³ Hellmann-Rajanayagam, The Tamil Tigers, p. 147.
This chapter does not offer the same depth and detail that the Kashmir and Northern Ireland chapters were able to (at least on the major insurgent groups), because of my linguistic failings, the difficulties of research in a highly politicized and violent war zone, and the simple fact that much of history has been lost due to the incredibly high levels of attrition among key players in Tamil militancy. Nevertheless, it attempts to move beyond some of the common assumptions in the literature and to link this conflict to broader comparative studies of civil war.

The chapter proceeds in five sections. First, I introduce the origins of Sri Lanka’s ethnic conflict, trace the escalation of violence up until the 1970s, and then outline the variation on the dependent variable that would ensue. Second, I then discuss the first decade of serious Tamil militancy, from the early 1970s until 1983, introducing the various insurgent groups and their characteristics and origins.

Third, the chapter outlines the rapid growth of the insurgency from 1983 to 1987, which involved both serious Indian involvement in shaping militancy and intra-militant fratricide that knocked several groups out of the war altogether. These were the crucial years in which the long-run trajectories of Tamil militancy were established. I then deal with the Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) intervention from 1987 to 1990, and how different insurgent groups reacted to the IPKF presence. Fourth, I study the period of LTTE dominance from 1990 to 2006, including periods of internal unrest within the organization in 1990-1 and 2004. I also discuss the fates of the other former insurgent groups, which found tenuous shelter either in exile or the arms of the Sri Lankan state. The final sections discuss the annihilation of the LTTE from 2006 to 2009, and what it tells us about both militant cohesion and the future of ethnic violence in Sri Lanka.

I. Cohesion and Fragmentation in Sri Lanka: An Introduction and Preview

Sri Lanka is a small island of 20 million people, composed of three major ethnic groups –
Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims (who often speak Tamil or both Tamil and Sinhala).

Independent since 1948, and despite high levels of economic and human development relative to other South Asian states, Sri Lanka has experienced three serious civil wars – uprisings by the left-nationalist Sinhalese Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) in 1971 and 1987-90, and by Tamil militants originating in the early/mid-1970s until 2009. The latter conflict presents an important comparative laboratory within which to study the mobilization and organization of insurgency.

The variation I examine is in the ability of different armed groups to survive Sri Lankan counterinsurgency, shifts in Indian support, and often-bloody internal political contestation over three decades. This section summarizes the case and the variation under study in order to provide a quick roadmap to the empirically dense chapter to come.

An Introduction to the War

Here I offer a brief overview of the military, social, and political nature of the conflict between 1972 and 2009 to provide context for the empirical analysis. The war in Sri Lanka pitted five major Tamil insurgent groups against a Sri Lankan state that over time grew militarily powerful and highly resolved to destroy militancy. It was primarily fought in the northern and eastern areas of Sri Lanka, from the heartland of Sri Lankan Tamil nationalism in the northern Jaffna peninsula to the southeastern city of Batticaloa. In the initial years, much of the fighting was in urban Jaffna and its environs, and then shifted over time to the jungles and lagoons of the Wanni jungles (see map).

Between 1972 and 1990, this was primarily a guerrilla conflict, though in the 1980s Tamil militants did hold significant chunks of territory. There were five major groups at war in the 1980s. Between 1987 and 1990, the Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) attempted to pacify the north and east, engaging in a bitter counterinsurgency against the LTTE, while supporting the
EPRLF as a proxy paramilitary. After 1990 the conflict resumed between the LTTE (which had dispensed with its rivals) and the state. The war then resembled a mixed conventional/irregular war, with the LTTE establishing state-like territorial control and administration (though linked in curious ways with Sri Lankan government revenues). In both periods, mass-casualty suicide and car bombings occurred in populated areas, as well as massacres of civilians. The LTTE’s apparent theory of victory was to carve out and hold territory to create facts on the ground that would eventually compel the international community to recognize an independent Tamil Eelam. The government’s response has been consistently militarized, though there were several peace initiatives that ultimately failed.

The war ended in May 2009, after a 3-year campaign by the state’s forces to destroy the Tigers and re-establish control over the entire island, amidst mass population displacement, a government military build-up, and civilian casualties. The bulk of the LTTE leadership was killed, including Prabhakaran, and many of its foot soldiers were killed or captured. The remnants of the organization are now overseas (including a still-potent diaspora infrastructure) or desperately trying to avoid capture in Sri Lanka. Over the course of the war, as many as 70,000 people died, including a high percentage of civilians and large areas of Sri Lanka became nearly-permanent war zones. As this chapter is written, hundreds of thousands of Tamils remain in camps in the north while the government positions itself for upcoming elections.

**Variation on the Dependent Variable: Tamil Insurgents**

Tamil militancy involved five major insurgent groups – the LTTE, PLOT, TELO, EPRLF, and EROS. They varied dramatically in their ability to create and sustain disciplined violence and to forge internal consensus. All represented some variant of Tamil nationalism, with PLOT, EROS, and EPRLF offering a Marxist/leftist variant and the LTTE and TELO
essentially advancing a simple nationalist demand for an independent state. TELO and PLOT were largely wiped out by the LTTE while engaged in bitter factional feuds that were the culmination of widespread, pervasive indiscipline and unrest within these organizations. The EROS was generally factionalized throughout its existence, including a split by the EPRLF in 1980 and then another split over whether to be absorbed into the LTTE in 1989-90.

EPRLF maintained higher, though far from perfect, internal control and cooperation but was physically annihilated in the wake of the IPKF’s 1990 withdrawal. It relied heavily on Indian support, and mobilized some lower-caste networks in the Eastern Province. After 1990 it was militarily inactive. The ruthless tormentor of most of these groups was the LTTE, which suffered only two splits over its nearly 40-year existence, by PLOT in 1980 and by “the Karuna Group” (which became the pro-state paramilitary TMVP) in 2004. It was otherwise unmarked by serious internal unrest, with a very partial exception found in the quick, relatively clean purging of deputy commander Mahattaya in the early 1990s. The fighting cadres and leaders of the LTTE were marked by extreme discipline, resembling a “cult” in the eyes of many. It quickly became, and remained, “the most powerfully motivated, disciplined, and deadly of the militant groups.”

*Preview of the Argument: Explaining Tamil Insurgent Cohesion in Sri Lanka*

I will argue that some, though very far from all, of this variation can be explained by the theory advanced in Chapter 3. The LTTE built itself around a Karaiyar fishing-caste command core with presence especially in Jaffna but also the east, while also mobilizing student networks involved in 1970s protests. It was a consensus-contingent group from the early 1970s until the early 1980s, when increasingly large-scale support from India, Tamil Nadu state, and then the Tamil diaspora provided it with significant military power. This does not mean that the hard-line policy of the Sri Lankan state did not provide the LTTE with political credibility or that the

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decisions of Prabhakaran about recruitment and strategy were not important. These mechanisms are repeatedly mentioned in interviews and the literature; indeed, a single-minded focus on Prabhakaran is common in Sri Lanka and elsewhere.

However, the problem with focusing too much on personality or macro-politics is that other groups were affected by these variables in various ways—TELO was also a hard-line Tamil nationalist group, while there were a variety of smart, ruthless militants other than Prabhakaran (a few of whom have now helped the government destroy the LTTE and become state-sponsored warlords in Tamil areas). These factors were important, but the variation in the ability of insurgent entrepreneurs to draw on robust preexisting caste (Karaiyar) and regional networks was crucial to forging the LTTE's early cohesion. Prabhakaran then smartly used that social infrastructure to indoctrinate new recruits from a variety of social backgrounds. Disproportionately at the core of the LTTE throughout its existence would be northerners and members of the Karaiyar caste even as it expanded into the east and Vanni. This social structure created an organizational environment into which new recruits from increasingly diverse backgrounds would be homogenized.

The TELO, PLOT, and EROS were all built around coalition network social bases, for reasons of both structure and choice. TELO and PLOT were primarily upper-caste-dominated groups, which actually created problems given the relatively large size and diffuse structure of the Vellala caste in comparison to the more clearly defined and self-consciously distinct Karaiyar fishing caste. PLOT lacked external support, and was a highly factionalized group throughout its existence before being essentially wiped out by the LTTE. TELO was a state-reliant group heavily backed by India but marked by internal feuds over organizational control and access to resources. The Tigers took advantage of a major factional clash with TELO to destroy it. EROS
suffered badly from being based in London, which forced it to mobilize in Sri Lanka and India in a fairly indiscriminate and undisciplined way. Though EROS received some Indian support, it did not attract the same levels of external aid as TELO, LTTE, or EPRLF, and continued to be torn by internal unrest until much of it was absorbed into the LTTE in 1989-90.

The EPRLF represents a more complex picture, at least to the extent that we can tell. It combined elements of a bonding network caste and student base with more indiscriminate recruiting, particularly when it was acting as an Indian paramilitary in the late 1980s. The EPRLF thus occupies an intermediate position, combining Indian support with some degree of social solidarity, but not as much as the LTTE on either count. The EPRLF would be wiped out once it lost Indian sponsorship, but managed to avoid serious internal rifts even while being annihilated in clashes in both Sri Lanka and India.

Sources of Evidence

The evidence in this chapter is the weakest of the three conflicts studied here, with far less detailed and reliable information than Northern Ireland and Kashmir. As a retired Indian army intelligence officer with experience in Sri Lanka writes, “the LTTE is a complex organisation, totally shrouded in secrecy.” The bulk of evidence is from historical and journalistic sources, including memoirs and writings by participants in militancy and by armed group propaganda. I rely more heavily in this chapter than others on a rich anthropological literature has emerged on Sri Lankan social structure; it is far more sophisticated and detailed than much of the strictly political analysis.

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These sources are supplemented by two trips to Sri Lanka interviewing politicians (including a number currently or formerly linked to militancy), analysts, academics, and journalists and going through newspapers and publications. One of these trips occurred before the end of the war, and the second occurred after it. The interviews offered a variety of often-divergent perspectives that were valuable in sorting through the other evidence available.

The tight, often dangerous, constraints under which political discourse and analysis occur in contemporary Sri Lanka made these interviews more fraught and in some ways circumscribed than elsewhere. I do not explicitly name or quote sources: while limiting the credibility of my argument, I felt this was an extremely worthwhile trade-off for the insights the interviewing provided. The often-dangerous and tense political environment contributes to what Whitaker refers to as the “almost hallucinogenic mutability and obscure complexity of Sri Lanka’s military-political history.” Despite these significant data limitations, I hope that the comparative framework both within Sri Lanka and across other conflicts bolsters my findings, which cut against some of the conventional wisdom.

I. Language, Caste, and Political Cleavages in Sri Lanka up to 1972

The politics of history in Sri Lanka are complex and often politicized. The specific origins and timing of Sinhalese and Tamil settlement on the island (in both cases from India) remain unclear, and historiographic debates over these patterns of migration have important political aspects. For the purposes of this chapter, however, it is possible to avoid that discussion. By the period of partial Portuguese colonization in the XXXs, there were Tamil and Sinhalese

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kingdoms in Sri Lanka (known until 1972 as Ceylon). Though these were distinguishable identities, their actual salience varied significantly across time and across areas – caste and regional divisions within both blocs were enormously important, while some Tamil royal families were linked to the (Sinhalese) Kandyan kingdom. While historical memories and myths of Tamil-Sinhalese conflicts endured and have deep potency, their political relevance was often obscured by the politics of alliance, political expediency, and intra-ethnic division. For centuries, differences between Sinhalese castes and between the up-country Kandyan kingdom and low-country coastal populations were the primary axes of political competition among Sinhalese, not the Tamil issue, for instance.

*Caste in Tamil Society.* Among Tamils, a caste structure was developing, centered on Vellala land-owning caste. Interestingly, the caste structure was quite different from that of Tamil Nadu, with a far lower-profile role for Brahmins and a dominant position for agricultural groupings that in Indian contexts were lower in status.\(^9\) Vellala caste dominance was contested in three ways. First, lower groups on the Jaffna peninsula tried to assimilate themselves upward, leading to concerns among “true” Vellalas that their category was being rendered impure. Second, groups in the east, especially Batticaloa and environs, tried to distance themselves from Vellala dominance, and often looked more to Kandy than to Jaffna.\(^10\) An enduring, though not

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\(^9\) Tamil caste structure is “an inversion of the pyramidal structure prevailing in South India. As such, it bore remarkable likeness to the caste structure of the Sinhalese-Buddhists in Ceylon, in which the inverted pyramidal characteristic was the dominant feature, the goigama, the highest caste being numerically the largest.” Jane Russell, *Communal politics under the Donoughmore Constitution, 1931-1947* (Dehiwala, Sri Lanka: Tisara Prakasakayo, 1982), p. 7.

profound, distinction between northern and eastern Tamils has characterized Sri Lanka. This included quite different social and caste structures.

Third, and most important for our purposes, the Karaiyar fishing caste used its distinct sea-faring occupation and higher levels of conversion to Christianity as means of maintaining autonomy distinct from Vellala control. The Karaiyar and Vellala would become two of the main caste groupings in the north, especially around Jaffna, while the east had a somewhat distinct, lower-status, position. The Karaiyar appear to have been able to carve out an autonomous, if distinctly minority, social space for themselves; Wilson argues that “the Karaiyars constitute an independent and powerful entity in Tamil society.” The Karaiyar would reproduce their autonomy over time while gaining a specialized niche in smuggling and trading activities along the northern and eastern coasts of Sri Lanka, including significant links to south

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11 “the relative geographic separation of the two areas, along with differences in traditional social organization and historical background, marked the east as distinctive from the north.” Chris McDowell, A Tamil Asylum Diaspora: Sri Lankan Migration, Settlement and Politics in Switzerland (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1996), p. 208. He also argues that easterners were less likely to migrate due to agriculture.


14 “R.R. Perinpanayagam’s contention that the Karaiyars constitute ‘an independent caste, owing service to no one and entitled to slaves, property and privileges of their own.’ Since about the mid-1980s, they have come to rank very high, socially, as patriots and warriors in the forefront of the war of Tamil independence. That the Karaiyars constitute an independent and powerful entity in Tamil society is further reinforced by records of their historical progress. They spent large sums of money in building Saivite temples in their traditional town, Valvettithurai (nicknamed ‘VVT’) and they engaged in seafaring entrepreneurial activities, especially in transporting rice, tobacco and chanks (shells) between the northern coasts of Ceylon, south-eastern India and Burma. Their leading families still possess great wealth.” Wilson, Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism, p. 19. “in VVT, members of the more enterprising and wealthier sector are known as Kadalodiekal (trading seafarers) as distinct from the working seafarers, the Karaiyars (dwellers of the coastal areas).” Wilson, Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism, p. 19. For background, see Sinnappah Arasaratnam, “Sri Lanka's Tamils,” in Chelvadurai Manogaran and Bryan Pfafffenberger, eds., The Sri Lankan Tamils: ethnicity and identity (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).
India. As Asaratnam notes, "the coastal villages of Vadamarachchi became their power base and remain so to the present day. They vigorously maintained their autonomy though the colonial period, and after, because their strength lay in their independent economic activity, unrelated to the lands and its rules." Importantly, there were some Karaiyar land-owning elites in the east around Batticaloa, who were recurrently brought into contact with northern members of the caste through trade. Nevertheless, the east remained distinct from the north.

During the period of British colonial rule, the Vellala became the favored caste grouping in Jaffna, reflecting British and missionary interests in a particular form of social stability that reflected broader trends in colonial rule in the Indian subcontinent. Nevertheless, "the karaiyar or fishing caste had to a great extent engineered its emancipation from Vellala domination by the 1930s. Endowed with notions of peer status, a characteristic which the Tamil karaiyar caste

15 "one group of castes, the fishing castes, has always stood outside the vellalar hegemonic system and been in constant rivalry with vellalars. A number of fishing castes settled all along the west coast as far south as Mannar and Puttalam and along the east coast as far south as Puttavil. Of these, by far the most numerous and socially significant were the karaiyars. According to myths, their origin can be traced to the streams of migrations from various parts of south India under caste heads. These myths claimed emphasized their independence from the vellalar, and the autonomy they exercised in the management of their own affairs. Their caste heads were titled talaiyar or patangaty, the latter reflecting the conferring of a pattam, or title of honor. In time, the coastal villages of Vadamarachchi became their power base and remain so to the present day. They vigorously maintained their autonomy though the colonial period, and after, because their strength lay in their independent economic activity, unrelated to the lands and its rules. They were fishermen, all of whom, retained a continuing contact with the south Indian coast from where they originated and often received assistance from fellow caste-men." Arasaratnam, "Sri Lanka's Tamils," pp. 39-40. The petty coastal trade and the shipping of goods to south India were largely in their hands." Arasaratnam, "Sri Lanka's Tamils," p. 40.

16 Arasaratnam, "Sri Lanka's Tamils," pp. 39-40. See also Fuglerud, Life on the Outside, p. 27 on Karaiyar as an exception to the dominance of mudaliyar local notables.

17 "during the nineteenth century the Kadalodiekal of VVT began to invest their wealth in the newly-opened paddy and coconut lands of the Eastern Province. Their enterprise in these parts resulted in the establishing of links with the Karaiyar landlord class of Batticaloa." Wilson, Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism, p. 19. More recently, McGilvray notes that in certain areas of the east, and despite their "stigmatic profession as fishermen," Karaiyars are viewed as having "generally acknowledged prosperity and political influence"; McGilvray, Crucible of Conflict, p. 156. These members of the [eastern Tamil] community who did acquire an education – the English-speaking elite – developed a separateness from the northern people, and constituted a distinct group of their own." Wilson, Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism, p. 16.

18 "British rule undermined the rising Karaiyar notables." Wilson, Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism, p. 20. "the Kadalodiekal could not not invest their capital in land in the Jaffna peninsula [due to its being own by Vellalas]. . . it was this lack of investment facilities that resulted in the Kadalodiekal engaging in large-scale smuggling between India and Ceylon. VVT thus became the virtual smuggling capital of Ceylon." Wilson, Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism, p. 20.
shared with its Sinhalese counterpart the karava, the karaiyar had utilized the vehicle of the Catholic Church to free themselves from the trammels of caste obligation. The fishing caste grouping was able to maintain its autonomy and its self-conscious separation from the Vellala-dominated caste hierarchy of Jaffna. About 10% of Tamils in Sri Lanka are Karaiyar. Among the Vellala, who constitute 50% of the Tamil population, there have been recurrent fears of assimilation from below as rising sub-castes adopted Vellala traits in a form of upward mobility. This is not to say that the Karaiyar have been free of internal distinctions, however.

While the caste structure remained extremely rigid, there was a persistent sense of unease and fragility within the Vellala community, which does not appear to have had the coherence of the Karaiyar, who retained their identity and autonomous social presence over the centuries.

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20 “Catholic missionaries recorded phenomenal success in evangelization among the karaiyar before and after the demise of the Jaffna kingdom. . . . a large section of the karaiyar community was converted to Christianity, though it is obvious that Hinduism continued to be practiced simultaneously.” Arasaratnam, “Sri Lanka's Tamils,” p. 40.

21 The rough demographic breakdown of Tamil castes is “the Vellalas constitute 50 per cent of the total Tamil population, the Karaiyar 10 per cent, the Pallar and Nalavar 9 per cent each, the Koviyar 7 per cent and the Paraiyar 2.6 per cent.” Wilson, Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism, p. 21.

22 Some of the specialist literature focused on Jaffna suggests tensions between Karaiyar Hindus and Karaiyar Roman Catholics (for instance, McDowell, A Tamil Asylum Diaspora), though the latter distinction does not arise frequently.

23 “the pre-eminence of the Vellalar never remained unquestioned, either in the past or the present. The Karaiyar especially always constituted a threat. As Pfaffenberger shows, the insecurity about their pre-eminence, primarily among the Vellalar themselves, resulted from the system’s own premises and mechanisms which assisted in undermining it. We can illustrate this with the well-known proverb ‘Slowly, slowly, they all become Vellalar’. Anybody can become a Vellalar by acquiring Vellalar attributes.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, “From Difference to Ethnic Solidarity,” p. 103. “a non-Vellalar, even a Tamil-speaking one, was not considered a Tamil until the end of the nineteenth century.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, “From Difference to Ethnic Solidarity,” p. 104.
Instead, processes of capital accumulation and social emulation left the Vellala category simultaneously fluid and rigid, as those holding this status attempted, often futilely, to prevent climbers below them from achieving the same status. These cleavages and tensions would remain salient even when Tamil ethno-linguistic mobilization become the primary axis of mobilization. Though often overlooked in the popular literature on Tamil militancy, these caste divisions and mobilization bases would be important to understanding the rise and trajectories of insurgency.

*Linguistic Mobilization among Tamils and Sinhalese through 1948.* As British colonial rule in Ceylon marched on, caste divisions remained the dominant cleavage within Sinhalese society. The British consolidated their control of Ceylon after a series of wars with Kandy, establishing dominance throughout the island by the mid-1820s. The expansion of first coffee and then tea plantations was a potent source of British interest in the island, as was its strategic Trincomalee deep-sea harbor. To fuel the manpower needs of the tea plantations the British encouraged an influx of Indian Tamil laborers into the highlands where the tea was grown. These “Indian Tamils” would remain a feature of the island’s demography, though would not be drawn into later Tamil militancy. An urban economy emerged in the lowlands along the sea, particularly around Colombo.

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“the most ferocious opposition against the attempts by the Vellalar to exclude other castes from Karaiyar. They are the second strongest caste in the Tamil areas. They, however, did not so much demand inclusion as equal rights on the basis of separatism. The Karaiyar consider themselves as standing outside the social hierarchy of the Tamil castes, but as equal or at least not inferior to the Vellalar.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, “From Difference to Ethnic Solidarity,” p. 105. Hellman-Rajanayagam quotes Russell: “the Karaiyar or fishing caste had to a great extent engineered its emancipation from Vellalar domination by the 1930s...the Karaiyar had used the vehicle of the Catholic Church to free themselves from the trammels of caste obligation.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, “From Difference to Ethnic Solidarity,” p. 106.

24 Fuglerud, Life on the Outside, p. 149 and passim.

25 Matthews writes that among Tamils “an often overlooked inter-caste rivalry continues to have crucial effects on the political and cultural destiny of these people.” Bruce Matthews, “Religious and Ideological Intransigence among the Sinhalese,” in S. H. Hasbullah and Barrie M. Morrison, eds., Sri Lankan society in an era of globalization (New Delhi: SAGE, 2004), p. 85.
During this period, Tamil and Sinhalese upper-castes often supported one another to prevent the lower-castes from exercising “undue” political influence. The lack of mass political enfranchisement meant that politics was largely an elite game, not a game of numbers or mass mobilization. British officials found Ceylon to be a wonderfully pleasant posting compared to the likes of Burma or Nyasaland. However, a hugely important wave of Sinhalese Buddhist mobilization in the latter decades of the 19th century and early years of the 20th century pushed against Ceylon’s political and economic elites (clustered around Colombo and English-medium schools). Demanding greater power and representation for non-English-speaking Sinhalese, and tapping into resonant myths of Sinhalese glory and dominance, Sinhalese Buddhist political entrepreneurs like Anagarika Dharmapala began to push against the elite consensus. Buddhist monks, the sangha, played an important role in this movement, despite deep divisions and rivalries within the clergy. However, rather than a simple attack on Tamils, much of the ire of the lower-middle class and rural Sinhalese was directed at their own co-ethnics and at the island’s Muslim population, the Ceylon Moors. The major ethnic riot of the pre-independence period was not Tamil-Sinhalese, but instead directed against the Moors in 1915.

As Ceylon moved towards greater political liberalization, the result both of the comparatively cozy relationship between its elites and the British and of the mass mobilization accompanying the Sinhalese movement, the political incentives of the key elite players began to shift. If majority rule, even if highly circumscribed by British suzerainty, was to become a major feature of the island’s politics, voters would need to be found. Since Sinhalese formed the clear majority of the population winning their votes became the key quest for Sinhalese politicians with ambition. This shift in political structure led to a growing salience for language

27 An excellent discussion of this period is Russell, Communal politics.
issues compared to intra-ethnic caste battles (though the latter would remain extremely important); there were votes to be had by trying to mobilize Sinhalese as an ethno-linguistic bloc.

The minority Tamil population attempted to blunt the rising tide of Sinhalese majoritarianism by demanding a kind of power-sharing arrangement. The hope was that Tamils could retain greater voting power in the colony’s political arrangements than their pure proportion of the population. This was important both to prevent discriminatory Sinhalese policies and to preserve the privileged position of Tamils within the state apparatus.\textsuperscript{28} The broad dividing lines of post-independence political contestation became visible in the period from the 1920s through 1948.

\textit{Independence and Violence, 1948-72.} Upon independence, the Sri Lankan political elite began to fracture. The collusive relationship with the British shifted to an increasingly bitter battle for domestic votes. By 1956, it had become clear to Sinhalese political leaders that there were strong opportunities to win votes by outbidding on nationalist lines. Deep distrust of the English-speaking Colombo elite among the Sinhalese rural masses could be profitably tapped into and the contentious mobilization of Buddhist nationalists put further pressure on political elites who lacked robust, institutionalized party structures. The lack of a strong left further pushed political clashes toward the linguistic issue. Sri Lanka was, and remains, a "patronage democracy"\textsuperscript{29} in which the state plays an important role in employment. The Tamil political bloc attempted to maintain its position of predominance within the state structure: "What they have always wanted, in effect, is to maintain the status quo as it existed in British times."\textsuperscript{30} A discourse of Tamil "traditional homelands" emerged in Tamil political circles, though the

\textsuperscript{28} The Tamils were more educated and English-literate, which had led to the upward mobility within the colonial bureaucracy.


\textsuperscript{30} Wilson, \textit{Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism}, p. 12.
historical accuracy of this concept is hotly contested.³¹ Sinhalese tried to pry open the doors to state patronage and used the Sinhalese language as they battering ram, trying to downplay Tamil and English. The language of state business was thus centrally important to both Tamils and Sinhalese.

S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike took the first plunge by declaring a “Sinhala-only” language policy; his attempts to backtrack and reform led to his assassination by a hardline Buddhist monk. In India, the federal system of the Indian Union eventually allowed a set of linguistic compromises but Sri Lanka’s highly unitary political system reduced the room for bargaining. As De Silva notes, “the British policies of centralization have to be surprisingly difficult to change.”³² The lures of outbidding were not universal, but they were strong enough to undermine two major political compromises on the language issue. The intense electoral competition was accompanied by riots, civil disobedience, and a rhetoric of dominance among Sinhalese and defiance among Tamils.³³ Under the SLFP’s Sirimavo Bandaranaike in particular after 1970, the language issue took a further pro-Sinhalese tilt with a shift in standards for university education that favored Sinhalese over Tamils. Given the importance of education as a route to prosperity for Tamils this was a hugely salient issue that further polarized the population.


This social and political mobilization provided the political impetus for the rise of Sri Lanka’s ethno-linguistic conflict. As Sinhalese outbidding spurred a clear downgrading of Tamil, there was a strong reaction from Tamils, particularly those who had aspired to crucial

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government jobs. Particularly under Mrs. Bandaranaike, state employment was a major source of employment and so language policy was incredibly salient. Given the electoral incentives of Sri Lanka’s unitary political system, there was little reason for Sinhalese politicians to seriously accommodate Tamil concerns.34

There was some very low-level militant mobilization among young Tamils in the late 1960s (especially 1969)35 but the 1970-2 period was pivotal, when serious insurgency became more than an idle threat. Mrs. Bandaranaike’s imposition of the so-called “standardization” language policy further pushed Tamils to the edge of political influence by reducing the ability of Tamil young men to gain entry to university. In 1972, Velupillai Prabhakaran, a Karaiyar from Velvethithurai (VVT), founded the Tamil New Tigers (TNT) in the Jaffna peninsula, renamed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 1976. At roughly the same time, the embryonic beginnings of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) were being formed by Thangadurai and Kuttimani. The standardization policy became a trigger for mass mobilization by a wide variety of Tamil groupings over the course of the 1970s. In 1975, the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS) was founded in London.

The process through which organizations emerged and fractured was complex and remains rather unclear. Even as late as 1977, “proponents of militant Eelamist views were a tiny minority, fragmented into small groups with imposing titles, but limited resources. They seemed to devote as much time to squabbling with one another as to occasional high visibility robberies, attacks and assassinations that were headlined in Sinhalese newspapers.”36 Indeed, “in their

34 Donald Horowitz, Ethnic groups in conflict (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) offers an excellent discussion.
35 M. R. Narayan Swamy, Tigers of Lanka, from Boys to Guerrillas 7th ed. (Colombo: Vijitha Yapa Publications, 2006), p. 25 points to the Tamil Liberation Organization (TLO) as the first proto-militant group; others offer different acronyms. There was also a Tamil Youth League (TYL) that attracted young, discontent Tamils.
embryonic stage, there was a certain fluidity in the composition of the various groups and on occasions some cooperation between them.”

It would not be until 1983 that the insurgency became a direct threat to the integrity of the state. Before 1983, militants were “in a hopeless minority” among the Tamil population.

Alongside militant mobilization was large-scale non-violent political activity under the auspices of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). The most notable feature of the non-violent Tamil agitation was the Vaddukkoddai Resolution of 1976, which proclaimed the TULF’s interest in an independent Tamil state. The overall political environment was one of tumult and escalation throughout this period, with youth militancy only one of the major types of mobilization. On the Sinhalese side, in 1977 JR Jayawardene’s UNP decisively defeated Mrs. Bandaranaike’s SLFP, and JR would continue to hold power for the crucial next 12 years. While JR made some changes to government education policy, he also pushed through a centralizing new constitution and imposed repressive emergency laws in the north.

This section focuses on identifying the social origins of the nascent Tamil militant organizations waging a small but escalating war against the Sri Lankan state. McDowell notes that “the multiplicity of rebel organisations enabled Eelamist groups to tap different social bases, include caste, through different appeals rooted in immediate contexts, and through different networks of recruitment.”

There were quite a few such militant organizations, but “of the thirty-seven Tamil militant groups, only five were of significance” (Wilson 126). The rest

38 Swamy, Tigers of Lanka, p. 174.
39 This would become a major issue for other reasons – Tamil parliamentarians would not sit in Parliament because the government made it so that anyone who was not committed to the unity of the state could not take the oath of office. This removed a political avenue for Tamil mobilization.
40 McDowell, A Tamil Asylum Diaspora, p. 89.
41 Whitaker conveys Tamil journalist/analyst Sivaram’s wry line about this plethora of groups: “Sivaram remembered that at one point after July 1983 there were so many separatist groups forming that ‘one smart fellow
appear to have integrated themselves in one form or another into the so-called “Tamil Five.”

The primary purpose of this section is to lay the groundwork for the following section, which studies the crucial, and turbulent, 1983-90 period. I will argue that the early underpinnings of these organizations played a crucial role in their response to the surge of mass mobilization and Indian material support that occurred in 1983.

The TELO and LTTE were the first-movers in the insurgency, joined soon thereafter by the London-based Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS). Splinter groups emerged in the form of the People’s Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOT) from the LTTE and the Eelam People’s Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) from the EROS. The PLOT’s history is only touched on briefly since it began its existence by 1983. I do not focus on the EPRLF in this section, however, since its activities only appear to have begun in earnest in 1982-3; this organization is dealt with in the following section of the chapter.

We can identify, at least tentatively, some systematic differences in the social networks upon which these militant groups constructed themselves in their formative years. There are two key dimensions along which the social bases of Tamil militants varied. First, there was the issue of caste, as “at least initially, each of the more significant groups had its own caste orientation.”

Second, there were some differences in the nature of the student and regional networks that the organizations could tap into. The LTTE had the clearest bonding network social base, combining

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43 Clarance, *Ethnic Warfare in Sri Lanka*, p. 44. “the caste system in some ways indirectly favoured the emergence of militant groups One was that as an essentially non-caste movement, youth militancy attracted young Tamils of both sexes who wished to escape the rigidities of caste disciplines – a factor which in particular helped recruitment by the LTTE, which despite its core leadership coming from the karaiyars (coastal peoples), had always had the widest mix of castes and religions in any groups. At least initially, each of the more significant groups had its own caste orientation: one example was PLOTE, which although originally claiming to be Marxist-Leninist in outlook and advocating a socialist revolution of workers and peasants, drew its members mostly from the highest-caste vellalars (farmers). Another was the LTTE; whose mostly karaiyar leaders were next down the hierarchy of dominance... were more enterprising [than Vellalars] in commerce and as seafarers.” Clarance, *Ethnic Warfare in Sri Lanka*, p. 44.
a Karaiyar caste core with regional (often student) networks in the north. PLOT and TELO (despite its original leaders, who were quickly thrown in jail) had more diffuse upper-caste Vellala bases that lacked the clear boundaries and dense social relationships of the Karaiyar LTTE elite. EROS was the most clearly coalition network-based organization, built as it was around a loose set of students in London, India, and Sri Lanka.

However, there was also an extremely important element of agency here: the leaders of TELO and PLOT lacked the discipline and vision of Prabhakaran, while the TELO founding leadership was locked up by the Sri Lankan state in ways that undermined the organization. In addition, the empirics are very uncertain. Thus I will need to be caveated in making any claims about the effects of social structure on insurgent organization. Nevertheless, it is possible to draw tentative conclusions and assess whether there is evidence for the theory offered in this dissertation. During this period there was minimal external support: essentially just some low-level sanctuary in Tamil Nadu. That variable thus remains constant across the groups; in 1983 there would a massive change as the Indian state and, increasingly, the Tamil diaspora became involved in the war.

**LTTE and PLOT**

*Building the Tigers.* The conventional wisdom on the LTTE is that it was built around a combination of mass political grievance and individual leadership. There is significant truth to this assessment – without the policies of the Sri Lankan state Tamil militancy would not have arisen, and its leader Prabhakaran is widely viewed as an unusually ruthless and single-minded commander. Richardson notes that “Prabhakaran himself deserves much credit for providing the leadership skills and building the organisation that achieved this transformation”\(^\text{44}\) and “strongest of all was his belief that a successful outcome to the Eelam struggle would require discipline,

\(^{44}\) Richardson, *Paradise Poisoned*, p. 479.
unwavering commitment, loyalty and a long-term violent struggle,”\(^{45}\) while Pratap takes a rather more melodramatic tack, saying of the LTTE leader that “It can only be an extraordinary being who can wield such power.”\(^{46}\)

However, the specialist literature on the LTTE, while limited, points to a wider array of relevant variables. As Richardson correctly argues, it is insufficient to point simply to individual leadership: “Prabhakaran’s self-discipline and organizational skills set him apart from other militant leaders, but in 1977 it was by no means certain that he would emerge as the LTTE’s number one. Attracting able lieutenants who were loyal and personally courageous helped him to survive both challenges from rivals and counter-terror operations mounted by Sri Lanka’s security forces.”\(^{47}\) One of the key ways in which this group of loyal commanders was built was mobilization through Karaiyar caste networks. The Tigers drew heavily, though certainly not exclusively, on Karaiyar fishing caste at the command level. As Roberts argues, “one can reasonably surmise that these [caste] networks were of critical importance in the survival and growth of the LTTE during the initial decades.”\(^{48}\) Fuglerud argues that “the differences between [militant] groups may be understood as a direct continuation of inter-caste and intra-caste conflict, that is, as conflicts of factionalism and segmentation.”\(^{49}\) When the People’s Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOT), led by Uma Maheswaran, broke away in 1980-1, the line

\(^{45}\) Richardson, *Paradise Poisoned*, p. 480.
\(^{47}\) Richardson, *Paradise Poisoned*, p. 480.
\(^{48}\) Michael Roberts, *Blunders in Tigerland*. Heidelberg Papers in South Asian and Comparative Politics (South Asia Institute and Department of Political Science: University of Heidelberg, November 2007), p. 21. See also Michael Roberts, “Ideological and Caste Threads in the Early LTTE,” p. 9. I thank Michael Roberts for his permission to cite this unpublished work. Note the caveated nature of this claim: “‘The LTTE’s ‘openness’ to modernized pathways should not blind one to the operation of caste networks within the LTTE... On a priori grounds rather than any access to inside information I surmise that the selection of new recruits for training would have been informed by trust, which in turn depended on friendship and kin networks. Camaraderie [sic] usually grows at school or in neighbourhood, or a combination thereof. But to say “neighbourhood” in the Jaffna Peninsula is to point to village ward or village made up of one’s caste mates.”
\(^{49}\) Fuglerud, *Life on the Outside*, p. 35.
of cleavage roughly followed caste lines, with higher-caste Vellalars going more with PLOT and the Karaiyars largely sticking with Prabhakaran and his LTTE.  

It is important not to push this variable too far, as other dynamics were clearly hugely influential, but it helps us make much better sense of the rise of the Tigers in comparison to their contemporaries. The broad political-military context was held largely constant across groups and their relative highs and low did not correspond in any systematic way to broad macro-political trends. We know from the sections above that the Karaiyar had been able to reproduce their autonomy and social structure over centuries, creating a self-conscious social grouping embedded at the village level but with strong social ties both between the east and north coasts and with India. As Pfaffenberger notes, “with origins in the Karaiyar community of Jaffna’s northern coast, where significant smuggling had long occurred, the LTTE drew on this community’s long-standing familiarity with firearms, fast boats, and a disdain for laws regarded to be cynically pro-Sinhalese; they found many comrades from other respectable castes as well.”

We can identify the importance of this social base by looking carefully at some of the key early members of the LTTE. O’Duffy argues that “The nucleus of the LTTE leadership, including Prabhakaran, emerged from a subset of the Karaiyars, the higher status Kadalodiekal, who are traditionally prominent seafaring traders (and smugglers)” (O Duffy 2007 268). This

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50 “that there is a certain degree of correlation between caste origin and militant groups seems clear, e.g. PLOT in the early 1980s had a relatively large following of Vellala members, LTTE’s leadership came from the Karaiyar caste... it is also clear, however, that this correlation is not complete, either on a caste, region or village level.” Fuglerud, Life on the Outside, p. 35.


52 “under conditions of economic competition and absence of constitutional redress, caste conflict was exacerbated as mainly English-educated, higher caste Tamils (Vellala), who were dominant in the Federal Party, faced outflanking pressures by lower or competing castes. Of particular relevance is the competition between the dominant Vellala caste (up to 50 per cent of Tamils) and the Karaiyars (10 percent). The nucleus of the LTTE leadership, including Prabhakaran, emerged from a subset of the Karaiyars, the higher status Kadalodiekal, who are traditionally
perhaps should not be surprising, as “nearly any organization in South Asia begins with family and clan.”

Wilson argues that “frustrated on all sides, the leadership of the Kadalodiekal [part of the Karaiyar] turned to the armed struggle. The current LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran, his one-time deputy Mathaya, and Mathaya’s mother’s stepbrother Thuraiyretnam, the former FP/TULF member of Parliament for Point Pedro, were all members of the Kadalodiekal elite.”

Yogaratnam Yogi (from Kondavil in Jaffna), later a Jaffna commander, and Lawrence Thilakar (from Jaffna), later an international spokesman, were also Karaiyar caste members. According to Roberts, this caste base expanded beyond these individuals, though there is some disagreement about the caste identity of some. If Roberts’ coding is generally right, this Karaiyar group within the LTTE included some of the dominant military leaders of the next three

prominent seafaring traders (and smugglers). Their strategically important role in seafaring trade links, as well as domestic links to Karaiyar landlords in the Batticaloa region of the East, have been vital assets to the LTTE.”


Wilson, Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism, p. 20. Also, “given the continuing struggle waged by the Karaiyar leadership in the LTTE, this caste group, which accounts for around 10 per cent of the Sri Lankan Tamil population, is likely in time to obtain a higher and more respected status. The Karaiyar, as a seafaring community, already had a separate existence from the high-caste Tamil Vellalar in that they perceived themselves as independent and not part of the Vellala-dominated social structure.” Wilson, Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism, p. 24.

“Apart from Pirapāharan, the Karaiyār leaders in the late 1970s and/or early 1980s included Baby Subramanium, Seelan, Mahattayā, Kittu, Victor, Kumārappā, David, and Lawrence Thilikar, a cluster that was soon boosted by such individuals as Soosai (Thillaiyampalam Sivaneēan) and Castro (Veeraṅkah Manivanna), both from Polgandy in Vadamaratchchi. As significantly, a relative of Pirāparan’s, Kumāran Pathmanāthan, namely, Shanmugam Kumāran Dharmalingham of Myliyddy, was elevated to a key position at some point in the 1980s, managing the LTTE’s international financial, arms procurement and drug smuggling operations. Such an emphasis must be qualified by attention to the presence of very capable Vellālar personnel in the LTTE’s commander ranks in the years 1982–87: namely, Ragavan, Thilipan, Ponnamman, Yogi, Radhā, Rahim and Curdlies; while Shankar [the first Tiger to die] was a “non-Vellālar who [had] become Vellālar” (information from K. Sivathamby). But five of these seven Vellālar men died within that very period, while Ragavan disengaged himself from the movement in 1984. Whatever Pirapāharan’s leanings towards the discounting of caste, the contingencies of struggle and a network of Karaiyār within the core leadership seems to have had the effect of reducing the weight of the Vellālar community in LTTE politics, and thus in Tamil politics.” Note that Hellman-Rajanayagam identifies Kittu as a Vellalar, but from VVT, a Karaiyar bastion; she also identifies Yogi as a Karaiyar not a Vellalar. Further interviewing will also me to deal with these discrepancies.
decades (for instance, Soosai became the leader of the Sea Tigers; Mahattaya the deputy
commander of the LTTE; KP and Castro leaders at different times of the crucial international
operations department). Even where caste codings differ there is often a clear geographic origin
around VVT, as in the case of Kittu, a future Jaffna overall commander.

Clarance agrees with this measurement of the LTTE command’s social base: “many
LTTE leaders came either from the karaiyar caste and/or from VVT and the Vaddamarachchi
(most notably, Velupillai Prabhakaran and several other leading LTTE members from VVT
come from the kadalodiekal elite.” Hellman-Rajanayagam argues that “the LTTE is a group not
only with mixed caste membership, but, what is much more unusual and more important, with
low-caste leadership.” Horowitz similarly notes that “the Tigers were representative of a range
of Tamil castes but were led by a member of the Karaiyu (fisher) caste distrusted by the land-
owning Vellala who dominated Tamil civilian politics; he was probably distrustful of Vellala in
turn.”

Since the Karaiyar only formed 10% of (non-Indian) Tamils in Sri Lanka (which only
form about 12% of the Sri Lankan population), this was clearly extremely disproportionate
representation of the caste within the LTTE – despite its claim to represent all of Sri Lanka’s
Tamil community. Given the Karaiyars’ geographic distribution throughout the north and along

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57 Sometimes his name is spelled “Mathaya.” See also: http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/DI07Df01.html
58 Kittu was also a childhood friend of Prabhakaran. Swamy, Tigers of Lanka, p. 52. Balraj, who became commander
of the elite Charles Anthony Regiment, was from Mullaittivu in the northeast; his family was from Jaffna and
community background is described as “both seasonal fishing and agriculture.” Balraj, however, first joined PLOT
before becoming a Tiger in 1983 or 1984.
59 Clarance, Ethnic Warfare in Sri Lanka, p. 44.
60 Hellmann-Rajanayagam, “From Difference to Ethnic Solidarity,” p. 109. Similarly, Valvettiturai is “an area where
the Karaiyars were particularly well able to hold their own against the high-caste Vellalars. . . the LTTE is not only
one of the few militant groups with a mixed-caste (Karaiyar-dominated) rank-and-file base, but also the only one
where Karaiyars are the leaders of the movement. This is truly unusual.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, The Tamil Tigers,
p. 36.
62 Other indications that I am coding this properly are included here.
parts of the eastern coast, its well-established autonomy as a social grouping, and its economic
niche that encouraged mobility and social interaction, it seems reasonable to argue that the LTTE
were thus built around a bonding network social base. Moreover, this social core would endure
over time: “the inner leadership of the LTTE continued to be dominated by Karaiyar caste
members.”

LTTE key mobilizers were also heavily northerners, including upper-caste Vellalas
Kittu (from VVT, and a classmate of Mahattiya) and Uma Maheswaran and the lower-caste
Tamilselvan. Some had also been childhood friends (like Shankar and Prabhakaran). The VVT
area (and of course Jaffna more broadly) “played a key role in providing a large number of
volunteers when Tamil politics began getting sucked into the web of violence and counter-
violece.” The LTTE apparently included some students from Jaffna linked to the Tamil

“militant youth are predominantly lower caste in contrast to the more traditional Tamil politicians who are mostly Vellala.” Richardson, *Paradise Poisoned*, p. 28.
“the Karaiyars, a fishing and pearl-fishing caste, were unusual: they were not considered as high-caste as the Vellalar, but they were definitely not a low caste on a level with, say the Akampatiyars or the Nalavars and Pallars. . . they have a reputation of toughness and a spirit of enterprise. They thus always stood somewhat apart from the caste system of Jaffna, not aspiring to compete with the Vellalar, but not accepting their claim to domination either.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers*, p. 29. “the Karaiyar stepped in where out of ignorance or indolence the Vellalar (and the TULF) feared to tread. The changes introduced by the militants and the Karaiyar are however, not always as radical as they seem, they continue a development that started at the beginning of the twentieth century: the horizontal and vertical extension of the concept of the ‘Tamil’ and the awakening of ethnic consciousness.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, “From Difference to Ethnic Solidarity,” p. 110.
“What Jaffna is to the rest of the Northeastern province of Sri Lanka (in terms of its pro-LTTE leanings, support and toughness to tackle), Vadamarachchi area of the Peninsula is to Jaffna. In turn Velvethithurai bears the same upscale relationship to Vadamarachchi. Most of the top LTTE leaders hailed from Jaffna; Vadamarachchi within Jaffna; and Velvethithurai (VVT for short) within Vadamarachchi.” Dixit, *Assignment Jaffna*, p. 67.
65 Of VVT, “regarded as the cradle of the LTTE. . . among its special attractions was its cohesive community, held together by ties of kinship and caste. There were links between its smugglers, fisher folk, and ordinary tradesman” (Peiris quoted by ORF Maritime Infrastructure 2006).
65 “even among the Tamils of the East, the LTTE lacked solid social support as a result of caste hierarchy and traditional linkages.” S. D. Muni, *Pangs of Proximity: India and Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis* (Oslo, Norway: PRIO, 1993), p. 140. This cleavage would remain salient even decades later.
Students’ Federation and other student associations. The LTTE’s caste focus overlapped with other networks of social mobilization that could be tapped into as the group went to war. Nevertheless, the organization’s core social base did not represent majority social or political groupings within Sri Lankan Tamil society; instead, it leveraged preexisting networks of mobilization and collective action to build and hold together a militant apparatus even prior to the wave of Tamil mass mobilization in 1983. Smith argues that the Karaiyar caste base “may explain its relative cohesion and functionality over the years.”

Without getting into details of operations, the LTTE’s small core of militants engaged in sporadic but escalating violence against the Sri Lankan state from 1974-5 on. Though sometimes espousing a leftist rhetoric under the influence of ideologue Anton Balasingham, there is no evidence that Prabhakaran had any significant commitment to Marxism. He aimed to build a Leninist organizational weapon – without the Leninism. The group, which had grown to only a few dozen members even as late as 1983, targeted local government officials and law enforcement personnel. This was a classic strategy of militancy, using low-level attacks to challenge the state’s claims to a monopoly on violence.

The Sri Lankan state lacked good intelligence in the northern Tamil areas and the security response was often indiscriminate and ineffective. Nevertheless, money and weapons were scarce, since the LTTE had not tapped into significant external revenue sources and bank

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68 See Wilson, *Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism*, pp. 124-5 on Tamil Students’ Federation evolution into LTTE.
69 Catholic networks played some role as well, “the leadership and some of the membership of the LTTE are Karaiyar, and they contain a high percentage of Catholics.” Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam, “Religious Ideology Among the Tamils,” in S. H. Hasbullah and Barrie M. Morrison, eds., *Sri Lankan society in an era of globalization* (New Delhi: SAGE, 2004), p. 81; Roberts also notes the importance of the tiny Civiyar caste.
70 Even as of the late 1990s, “this Karaiyar leadership presently enjoys the confidence of the majority of people in Jaffna, including the majority Vellalas, but a mediatory intervention by a foreign government would probably have checked their rising influence, not only in Jaffna but also in all other Tamil areas. A free election could result in a victory for the Vellalas.” Wilson, *Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism*, p. 20.
72 Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, has a blow-by-blow account of the militant actions of the Tigers during this period.
73 On rhetoric, see “Towards Liberation” 1983.
robberies were too infrequent and unpredictable to be a reliable source of resources. This was a group held together by friendship and social solidarity, which were crucially important in keeping attacks coming. In addition, at least by 1982-3 a standard screening and selection process had been set up for prospective recruits.\footnote{Swamy, Tigers of Lanka, p. 174.} They would approach local suspected Tigers to indicate their interest, but before being accepted for even training they would be monitored on the local level to assess their reliability. Though details are scarce on the specifics, it is likely that this policy required significant local intelligence and social presence to enable monitoring. Local embeddedness thus was a plausibly important factor in LTTE recruitment.

Organizational Fluidity and the PLOT Split. The argument I have advanced is that the LTTE had a discernible bonding network social base in the form of its caste-based command elite. This provided a ready-made set of social networks that could provide mechanisms of recruitment, trust, and monitoring. However, without significant external support we should expect to see a consensus-contingent group, and thus some degree of internal fluidity. According to my theory, consensus-contingent groups will rupture more than cohesive groups, splits and feuds will occur over high politics, unrest will be relatively intense and protracted, and unit/faction autonomy should be high. How did the LTTE fare on these dimensions?

During the 1972-83 period, we observe one split from the Tigers, by Uma Maheswaran, that created the People’s Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOT). This split was indeed messy and protracted, involving a running series of gun battles and confrontations. The split that occurred included a dispute over high politics (whether or not to adopt a leftist/cross-ethnic strategy), but this was mixed with personality conflict as well. The group was too small to have much unit-level autonomy since there were only a couple of dozen members, and I lack the information to really assess my prediction about autonomy. So the theory tentatively holds up in
terms of frequency and intensity, offers mixed help in understanding the causes of ruptures, and lacks sufficient detail to be confident about autonomy. Given the sparse information it would be foolhardy to offer any more definitive conclusions.

Here I will discuss in more detail the structure of the organization, to the extent it can be determined, and the PLOT split which was the first split in the LTTE and the only one until 2004. The nature of the tiny LTTE in the late 1970s was one of simultaneous radicalization and internal fluidity. There was a small, "secretive and regimented" (Swamy 2003, 44), core around Prabhakaran acting under his orders but without the kind of bureaucratization and military punch that would later characterize the group. At this point there was also little grassroots mobilization: "the LTTE, basically a well disciplined military group, did not develop a mass organization of its own until recently."75 Any arguments about insurgent organizations growing out of local politicization and mass mobilization must contend with the utter lack of such behavior among the LTTE, which looked far more Leninist than Maoist.

However, in 1979 and 1980 discontent emerged targeted at Prabhakaran’s leadership that showed the limits of social solidarity and of internal control. There was unrest over Prabhakaran’s iron discipline that was linked to his expulsion of Uma Maheswaran for alleged breach of sexual discipline. Uma, an upper-caste land surveyor and former TULF activist, had joined the LTTE in 1977.76 He had a more clearly left-wing worldview and tried to push the LTTE towards a left/socialist vision. His deep level of ideological commitment is unclear, but this did lead to some tension over the political direction of the insurgency. This also threatened Prabhakaran’s desire to maintain dominance within the organization.

76 Hellmann-Rajanayagam, The Tamil Tigers, p. 38.
This tension exploded when Maheswaran was accused of having sex with a woman, which at that point was against LTTE rules. Prabhakaran expelled him, though apparently reluctantly, but Uma fought back, claiming to be the true chairman of the LTTE and advanced a more left-wing agenda.\footnote{Expulsion was for “disciplinary reasons in 1982.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, \textit{The Tamil Tigers}, p. 38. Uma accused of sleeping with Urmila, which if true would be a breach of discipline. M. R. Narayan Swamy, \textit{Inside an Elusive Mind, Prabhakaran: The First Profile of the World’s Most Ruthless Guerrilla Leader} (Delhi: Konark Publishers, 2003), p. 51. Prabhakaran expelled Uma in 1979, but Uma continued to claim to be chairman of the LTTE. Swamy, \textit{Inside an Elusive Mind}, p. 54.} The unease some Tigers had felt regarding Prabhakaran’s disciplinary methods came to the surface at the same time. The split involved both high politics (leftist vs. nationalist politics) as well as more mundane personal issues. Prabhakaran and his core of loyalists temporarily abandoned the LTTE in the face of this discontent and instead contacted Thangadurai and Kuttimani, the TELO founders who were also from VVT. As far as I can tell, the LTTE essentially stopped functioning as a formal organization in 1980 as Prabhakaran operated under a “working alliance” with TELO. Nevertheless, his group of followers obeyed his commands and not those of the TELO high command (such as it was).\footnote{Swamy, \textit{Tigers of Lanka}, p. 41 on Prabhakaran working with TELO.}

Some former LTTE members abandoned Prabhakaran in favor of Uma Maheswaran’s new splinter group, the People’s Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOT) which was formed in 1980 and 1981. The clash between Uma and Prabharan “led to entrenched factional fights between Uma’s PLOT and LTTE which even spilled over into India.”\footnote{Hellmann-Rajanayagam, \textit{The Tamil Tigers}, p. 38.} PLOT became “essentially a high-caste Vellalar-oriented organisation”\footnote{Wilson, \textit{Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism}, p. 127. “socio-economic and political tensions are revealed in the number of militant groups that have developed independently. Uma Maheswaran’s PLOT is largely Vellalar, whereas V. Prabhakaran’s LTTE is Karaiyar.” Bruce Matthews, “Radical Conflict and the Rationalization of Violence in Sri Lanka.” \textit{Pacific Affairs} 59, no. 1 (Spring 1986), p. 34. “its member mainly come from the highest caste, the Vellalar.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, \textit{The Tamil Tigers}, p. 43.} that espoused a left-wing political worldview aiming at cross-ethnic cooperation with the Sinhalese left as part of a revolutionary
strategy. As discussed in the next section, the PLOT would become a potent force in some ways – indeed, “Sri Lanka’s National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudalai acknowledged [PLOT] was at one time the most powerful of all the ‘guerrilla’ organizations.”

However, PLOT did not have the same kind of embedded social base as the LTTE: it competed with TELO for the more socially diffuse upper Vellala caste and embraced a much looser recruitment process. This fundamental social problem would combine with a lack of Indian support to create, euphemistically-put, “organizational infelicities.” The PLOT’s coalition network social base and lack of Indian aid were made even more problematic by Uma Maheswaran’s disastrous personal leadership style. PLOT was a fractured and internally chaotic organization throughout its existence and while we do not have much information on the 1980-83 period, there is nothing in the available historical record that would suggest it was disciplined in the early 1980s.

As we would expect from a consensus-contingent LTTE lacking strong centralized control over significant military strength, the PLOT split “became a bitter and protracted affair” rather than a quick and clean split. Prabhakaran and Maheswaran targeted one another and their followers in an escalating series of attempted and successful assassinations both in Sri Lanka and south India. Neither group had significant size or weaponry at this point, and so these were potshot affairs. These fratricidal clashes set the stage for the much more brutal inter-organizational battles of the mid-1980s. In the early ‘80s, however, they were mainly

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81 Whitaker refers to “PLOTE’s central (but less public) project of establishing an alliance with the Sinhalese left. This ambition underlay the ideological difference between the PLOTE and the LTTE, and was the basic intellectual reason why Sivaram [a prominent Tamil journalist/analyst] ultimately threw in his lot with the former group rather than the latter.” Whitaker, Learning Politics from Sivaram, p. 87.
82 Matthews, “Radical Conflict,” p. 35.
83 “Maheswaran, himself a Vellalar landowner, appealed to other Vellalars and the antagonism they felt towards artisan and laboring castes in the towns. On leaving the LTTE, Maheswaran took with him the sympathies of many rural Vellalar.” McDowell, A Tamil Asylum Diaspora, p. 88.
84 Whitaker, Learning Politics from Sivaram, p. 87.
85 Swamy, Inside an Elusive Mind, p. 52.
problematic because they undermined support for the militants in south India, where some of the shootouts took place. Though there would be some movement of PLOT militants to the LTTE (like Balraj), as violence escalated the divisions between these two groups, both born of the pre-1979 LTTE, grew increasingly rigid. Both PLOT and LTTE would drift into the early 1980s as small militant groups with charismatic and willful leaders who harbored clear aspirations to dominating Tamil militancy.

**TELO.** I have already mentioned the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO) as another early militant organization. The historical record on TELO is frankly extremely sparse; there is even disagreement about its real date of founding, since it hails back in some ways to the small milieu of Tamil separatists that emerged in the late 1960s. Its leaders, Thangadurai and Kuttimani, were veteran Tamil political activists from VVT. Roberts codes them as Karaiyar though I have not found firm confirmation elsewhere. At some point, TELO had a dedicated military wing, the Tamil Eelam Liberation Army (TELA). After Thangadurai and Kuttimani were arrested in 1981, Sri Sabaratnam took over leadership. At least after the arrest of the original leaders, the caste composition of TELO “was distinctly Vellala-oriented and was acknowledged by all, including Tamil expatriates, as being ‘high-caste.’” Like PLOT, this meant that TELO was tapping into a more socially diffuse network at its core. Unlike PLOT, TELO lost its key leaders, which hurt it badly.

There is nothing definitive we can say about TELO’s social base except that it does not appear to have tapped into any significant preexisting structures of collective action other than mini-groupings left over from Tamil mobilization in the late 1960s. It is fairly clear that during this period the organization was very weak and lacked significant organizational structure — its

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86 Hellmann-Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers*, p. 44.
87 Roberts, “Ideological and Caste Threads.”
88 Wilson, *Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism*, p. 127.
granting of power over military training to Prabhakaran in 1980-1 is a signal of its lack of institutionalization. The group engaged in very few attacks, and its leaders were jailed in 1981, further reducing the amount of militancy it could successfully pursue.

Though TELO, like LTTE and PLOT, had sanctuary and contacts in Tamil Nadu, there was fairly minimal external support that could be used to build a military organization. TELO would later develop strong ties with M. Karunanidhi, the influential leader of the DMK political party in Tamil Nadu, but the relationship was fairly low-key until July 1983, when anti-Tamil pogroms triggered large-scale Indian support. Like the other Tamil militant groups, we would then observe a step-change in the ability of TELO to generate and sustain violence.

**EROS.** The group most clearly built around a coalition network social base was the Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS). It was formed in London in 1975 by expatriate Tamil students and had student wing, the General Union of Eelam Students (GUES). As Swamy notes, “although it failed to take roots in Sri Lankan Tamil areas for a long time, it played a key role in shaping the growth of militancy.”

Though influential in pushing a more left-political line, “[EROS] was largely seen as a group of intellectuals based in London.”

It would face huge problems due to the fact that “EROS is the only group among the militants that was started overseas” (Hellman-Rajanayagam 94 81). It lacked local embeddedness on the group in Sri Lanka and India, with large disconnects between the central command and individual cadres outside of London.

Led by Eliyathamby Ratnasabapathy, Shankar Rajee, Velupillai Balakumar, and A.R. Arudpragasam (alias Arular), EROS established some links with left-nationalist Palestinian

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89 Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, p. 30 on EROS.
91 “EROS is the only group among the militants that was started overseas.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers*, p. 81.
armed groups in the Middle East. A bit of training and arms procurement occurred through these connections but EROS was not engaged in significant militancy during the 1972-83 period. Apparently they did not engage in the same level of bank robberies as the LTTE, TELO, and PLOT, leaving EROS and its future splinter “plodding behind in the race for militant leadership.” Weakly-embedded in the crucial Tamil areas of the north and, to a lesser extent, the east, EROS was in no position to consistently engage in coordinated violence, though it did have training and some arms procurement activities.

Wilson suggests that there was some strength in the east, around Amparai and Batticaloa, but the leadership was based in London, around Tamil students. As a loosely-assembled collection of individuals and sub-factions it would face serious disarray in the early 1980s that would lead to the emergence of the more-important EPRLF. I discuss the emergence of the EPRLF in the section below, and of another EROS split in the late 1980s between Balakumar and Shankar Rajee. But during this period we have very little evidence about operations and behavior upon which to draw any conclusions. The crucial point instead is to focus on the rickety social underpinnings of the group.

Even more so than the other Tamil groups, EROS lacked significant external support. Though based overseas, it does not appear to have tapped into the Tamil diaspora in any significant way. It would, however, later develop a strong relationship with the Indian intelligence agencies that fueled its urban bombing activities until the 1987 Indo-Lanka Accord, when it largely abandoned militancy.

Theory and Reality in Tamil Militancy, 1972-83. There is too little information to arrive at any firm conclusions about the value of my argument during this period. The groups were only

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92 Swamy, Tigers of Lanka, p. 104.
93 Gunaratna, Indian intervention in Sri Lanka, p. 137.
94 Wilson, Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism, p. 129.
sporadically active and their internal organization was both opaque and extremely fluid. Thus there are no clear inferences we can draw given the sparseness of data. Nevertheless, there are aspects of this initial mobilization that support the theoretical perspective I offer in this dissertation. First, there was clearly mobilization through preexisting caste, friendship, and student networks that shaped who became a member of these organizations. There was distinctly not a single upswell of Tamil militancy driven by a unified nationalist agenda; instead, the groups appear to have had quite distinct social and ideological profiles. Smith correctly argues that “political organizations were constructed along class and caste lines, which hindered virtually any possibility of a common front.”

Second, there is at least suggestive evidence to indicate that the LTTE’s caste base represented a more defined and internally-aware social grouping than the diffuse Vellala and student association bases that characterized other groups. The historical evolution of these caste groupings differed quite substantially and may have created differential capacities for well-defined collective action. Crucially, this historical evolution had nothing to do with future expectations of militancy or linguistic conflict; it instead reflected socio-economic and religious dynamics within northern Tamil society in response to the shocks and opportunities presented by colonial rule. The predominance of Karaiyars both at the founding and over long periods of time within the Tigers, which we can at least loosely measure, may have had something to do with the organization’s ability to attract and retain recruits.

Finally, the military weakness of these organizations during this period is extremely clear. Though able to tap into smuggling networks, bank robberies, and voluntary donations, the Tamil militants were unable to launch significant and sustained attacks on the Sri Lankan security apparatus. The difference between the pre- and post-1983 periods in this regard is

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striking, as outlined below. The lack of clear, centralized resource flows appears to have contributed to the organizational fluidity of these groups, as leaderships lacked clear material incentives to offer their fighters. This led to personnel shifting across organizations, and contributed to the lack of serious military operations. Tamil militancy during this period was very much a shoestring affair and that was reflected in the organization of the contending groups.


Black July and Escalation. The conflict in Sri Lanka escalated dramatically during the summer of 1983. An LTTE ambush of an army convoy in Jaffna, killing thirteen soldiers, triggered anti-Tamil pogroms in Colombo that raised international awareness of the war and further radicalized Tamil opinion. In reaction to the “Black July” pogroms, a wave of Tamil emigration occurred that would provide a fertile ground for pro-militant diaspora mobilization. 96 Moreover, the surge of militant mobilization in the north fundamentally changed the scale of the war - “the July 1983 riots opened a floodgate of young Tamils to various Tamil militant groups” 97 and there was a “mass recruitment spree.” 98 The previously small and marginal militant groups were now front and center. As a result, “by the end of 1984, Jaffna had become a war zone... at night, life came to a halt and the militants were in control.” 99

Perhaps as important, the pogroms drew India much more closely into the conflict. While Tamil Nadu had provided a sanctuary for militant groups, now the central government in Delhi decided to apply pressure on Sri Lanka by supporting the Tamil insurgents. Indian support was essential - “while riots provided the recruits needed to transform Sri Lanka’s militant groups,

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97 Swamy, Tigers of Lanka, p. 96.
98 Swamy, Tigers of Lanka, p. 175.
99 Richardson, Paradise Poisoned, p. 530.
India provided the resources.”100 This training “was on a mass scale, involving all the major
groups (LTTE, TELO, PLOT, EROS, and EPRLF and later the ENDLF).”101 Though there was materiel support for a wide variety of groups, I will show that it varied both across time and
across groups – TELO and LTTE were the clear favorites between 1983 and 1987, while EPRLF became the main beneficiary of Indian support from 1987 to 1990 once the TELO was destroyed
and LTTE became hostile. This influx of training and materiel had dramatic effects: “training
had changed all equations in Jaffna. Groups which had been virtually dormant or shown no special caliber for military operations were getting bloated.”102 Ideological debates became second-order concerns compared to producing violence.103

Indian support was driven in part by humanitarian and domestic-political concerns (Tamil opinion in India was outraged by the pogroms), but also very clearly by the fear that JR
Jayewardene’s government was getting too close to the West. In Delhi, JR’s diplomatic outreach,
weapons purchases, and induction of Western advisers and trainers did not endear him to a foreign policy establishment deeply wary of US, British, and Israeli influence in the region.104
Supporting Tamil militancy was thus a way to solve domestic political problems while also addressing perceived regional security challenges. India’s apparent aim was to place pressure on the Jayewardene regime sufficiently to create a federalist or power-sharing deal; it did not support full-scale Tamil secession. The aim was calibrated violence: “it was a purposeful bid to persuade, if not compel, the Sri Lankan government to pay more heed to India’s perception of

100 Richardson, Paradise Poisoned, p. 527.
101 Swamy, Tigers of Lanka, p. 102.
104 J. N. Dixit, Assignment Colombo (Delhi: Konark Publishers, 1998) offers a rationalization for this approach. Concerns about a Voice of America station and the control of Trincomalee’s excellent deep-water harbor were prominent. In retrospect these seem to be highly implausible fears, but they were taken very seriously in a Delhi that was very protective of its autonomy in the region.
her own security interests.\textsuperscript{105} As so often in these circumstances, however, militancy would eventually escape from the state sponsor's control.

In this section, I study the effects of this Indian support and competitive militant mobilization on the Tamil insurgency. The period between 1983 and 1987 was foundational in understanding the overall trajectory of the war. Among militant groups, "mutual differences arose from their particular ideological orientations, personality factors and sources of support. They also differed in the specific aspects of their approach towards India."\textsuperscript{106} During this period, there was no clear, \textit{ex ante} leader in terms of cadre strength or arms ("numerically, the PLOT, TELO, and LTTE had the maximum number of members, although the last two were better armed"\textsuperscript{107}). I argue that the influx of Indian material aid spurred the development of both cohesive and state-reliant organizations, as resources flowed into different types of social bases with varying implications for internal cohesion. These groups would be able to make "their emphatic presence felt."\textsuperscript{108} There is also much more historical information available in this period, even if its reliability is sometimes questionable, and this makes it much easier to code the independent and dependent variables in a convincing fashion.

The LTTE and to a much lesser extent the EPRLF made effective use of this external support to forge strong internal discipline and unity. During this period the LTTE also reached out into the diaspora and began to receive increasingly large flows of money from hawkish Tamils overseas. EPRLF was not as cohesive as the LTTE, but did have in place a fairly committed base built around left-wing students and lower castes in the Eastern Province. This

\textsuperscript{105} De Silva, \textit{Regional Powers and Small State Security}, p. 113. He also provides some fascinating evidence of the rather bizarrely lurid conspiracies about an American presence in Sri Lanka that fueled interest in an Indian role (p. 109).
\textsuperscript{106} Muni, \textit{Pangs of Proximity}, p. 66.
\textsuperscript{107} Swamy, \textit{Tigers of Lanka}, p. 142.
\textsuperscript{108} Swamy, \textit{Tigers of Lanka}, p. 126.
allowed it to survive the first wave of LTTE fratricide in 1986-7, and to later become the influential local arm of the Indian Peacekeeping Force from 1987 to 1990.

The organizations built around coalition networks that received Indian support were unable to prevent internal disputes over the distribution of these resources and internal organizational turf. EROS and TELO fit the state-reliant pattern fairly clearly. They had military capacity to engage in dramatic ambushes and terrorist attacks, but were not socially integrated. This left these groups vulnerable to the LTTE – TELO would be annihilated by the Tigers in the midst of an internal feud, while most of EROS was essentially merged into the Tigers.

PLOT was the only major group that did not receive sustained external aid, largely due to the personal quarrels its leader, Uma Maheswaran, managed to become embroiled in with both the Indian security apparatus and Tamil Nadu politicians. It remained deeply internally factionalized, and largely consumed itself in feuds in 1985-‘86 before the LTTE took advantage of this unrest to essentially wipe it out in 1986. The LTTE would systematically target its internally-fragmented rivals, wiping out PLOT and TELO while laying the institutional basis for the extraordinary system of socialization and internal discipline that underpinned its proto-state activities in the 1990s. The outcomes of the LTTE’s fratricide were determined by the organizational cohesion of the targets – PLOT and TELO folded like a house of cards, while EPRLF held on to fight for several more years. The LTTE was able to launch lightning offensives with high levels of secrecy and surprise due to the organization’s social integration and discipline. The results of militant competition were thus determined by the balance of cohesion and military power between the groups.
Table 6.1: Predictions: Tamil Insurgency, 1983-1986

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>1983-87</th>
<th>Prediction</th>
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<tr>
<td>LTTE</td>
<td>SB: Bonding, ES: Substantial</td>
<td>Cohesive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TELO</td>
<td>SB: Coalition, ES: Substantial</td>
<td>State Reliant</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPRLF</td>
<td>SB: Bonding/Coalition, ES: Substantial</td>
<td>State Reliant/Cohesive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLOT</td>
<td>SB: Coalition, ES: Minimal</td>
<td>Factionalized</td>
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<tr>
<td>EROS</td>
<td>SB: Coalition, ES: Substantial</td>
<td>State Reliant</td>
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SB = Social Base; ES = External Support; Prediction = pattern on DV predicted by my theory

The Tamil militant groups truly built, or tried to build, themselves as institutions between the pogroms of 1983 and the LTTE's fratricidal onslaught in 1986. Until 1983, "even the leading militant groups were small hit-and-run operations lacking secure bases, reliable arms supplies and solid funding."\(^{109}\) It was between 1983 and 1986 that large-scale external support and mass mobilization shaped and tested the nascent institutions of insurrection. Some of these organizations were unable to maintain their internal functioning while escalating their war; "problems became endemic in groups which lacked firm leadership and a military agenda."\(^{110}\)

Here I will discuss three categories of groups as they tried to deal with this new situation – first, the LTTE, second, the India-backed EPRLF, TELO, and EROS, and, third, the PLOT.

*Building the Tigers after Black July.* The LTTE had launched the ambush that triggered the 1983 pogroms, and it would benefit enormously from the mobilization that ensued. The evolution went "from a group of 30 poorly armed dissidents in 1983 into one of the world's foremost paramilitary groups by 1991."\(^{111}\) The benefits of the post-pogrom period for the LTTE had two components. First, it led to a significant increase in Indian support, which the Tigers

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\(^{109}\) Richardson, *Paradise Poisoned*, p. 527


\(^{111}\) O'Duffy, "LTTE," p. 257.
would take full advantage of to establish military strength. Second, it drove many more recruits into militant ranks. Interestingly, the existing evidence suggests that while the Tigers grew, they were not the most rapid or dramatic expanders (TELO and PLOT appear to have grown more quickly).

Instead, the LTTE’s preexisting structures of internal control allowed it to screen recruits very selectively and to then socialize its new members, turning them into more disciplined and effective fighters. The tightly-linked leadership cadres underpinned a controlled expansion that gave the LTTE fighting punch without degrading discipline. As far as I can tell, it was the core command elites around Prabhakaran who provided much of the social presence that allowed the organization to homogenize and socialize new fighters, even those from disparate social backgrounds. There would be remarkable continuity over time in the overall social composition of the command core of the Tigers. 112

We will begin with how Indian and, increasingly, diaspora support improved LTTE military strength. This is the independent variable in my theory that changed most dramatically in 1983, with the core elements of the social base already largely in place. Indian aid clearly helped the LTTE acquire weapons and training. It is still an open question whether the LTTE was the most favored of the Tamil militant groups, but there is no doubt that this aid helped the LTTE. 113 The support took two forms – sanctuary and funding in Tamil Nadu facilitated by local political elites, and direct training and arming by the central government in Delhi and its intelligence and security services. India became deeply involved in the conflict, and militant groups became intertwined with Indian policy.

113 On the one hand, Little argues that “The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were the major beneficiaries of Indian intervention.” David Little, Sri Lanka: The Invention of Enmity (Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1994), p. 7. However, Swamy asserts that TELO was the most-favored-militant group. Swamy, Tigers of Lanka, p. 109.
First, the LTTE took advantage of linkages to Tamil Nadu politicians who provided sanctuary and cash in the southern Indian state. These relationships predated 1983, but until Black July they were fairly low-level and tacit. But “from the July/August riots of 1983 until the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in 1991, the LTTE’s main external refuge and support base had been in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.” The LTTE was particularly close to then-chief minister M.G. Ramachandran (MGR), who facilitated their activities by making sure the state police did not pay too much attention to Tamil militancy. Mass political mobilization by the Dravidian parties of Tamil Nadu against Sri Lankan military operations provided both legitimacy and some degree of material support to the Tigers, as well as other militants: “the support given from Tamil Nadu was essential in sustaining the Tamil separatist activities.”

Camps popped up throughout Tamil Nadu where thousands of Tamil militants lived and trained. LTTE members moved by boat across the narrow Palk Strait to enter combat, and would return to Tamil Nadu for rest, medical care, and training. Tamil Nadu was essentially the rear base for the LTTE. Through 1986 this generally continued, though spillover from Tamil militants (brawls, feuds, etc) began to irritate the Tamil Nadu state government in an increasingly serious way. MGR was generally loyal to Prabhakaran, however, and remained in power in TN until his death in 1987. The LTTE’s fishing caste cadres were an asset: “skills, contacts, and networks developed by fishing and trading castes were to prove extremely valuable as the civil war developed and the need for weapons and materiel increased.”

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115 “The Tigers were known to be on very good terms with the ruling AIADMK.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, The Tamil Tigers, p. 106. TELO was closer to the DMK of Karunanidhi. MGR kept the Tamil Nadu CID, known as “Q Branch,” away from the LTTE, though in 1986-7 he began to direct Q Branch towards Tamil militancy more than before.
Second, the central government in Delhi directly provided weapons and training. The lead agency on Sri Lanka was the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), India’s external intelligence agency (roughly the equivalent of the CIA). The Intelligence Bureau (IB) may have had some role as well. Run under Indira Gandhi’s tight control, RAW began bringing Tamil militants to Dehra Dun and other locations in India for varying amounts of training. Serving and retired military and intelligence officials did the training, which was intended to put the militant organizations in a better position to impose damage on the Sri Lankan state. Between 1984 and 1987, India also provided weapons shipments of various sorts – from simple pistols to RPGs – to the militant organizations.

The LTTE may not have been the favored organization, but it very clearly benefited. As Tiger leader Prabhakaran said in an interview with an Indian journalist, “‘Right now I am small. I need India’s help to grow.’” Hellman-Rajanayagam noted that “the Indian connection is extremely important. . . both government (at that [time?] still that of M.G. Ramachandran) and private money and donations found their way to LTTE apart from their own business concerns there. . . . Apart from the Indian connection, the expatriates in London, Malaysia, Singapore and Europe have created a network of communication and finance which is difficult to surpass. Money and weapons flow from there via the grey market to the movement.” Diaspora support from overseas began to supplement (and then over time, replace) Indian material support. Much of this aid came from Tamils who had been driven from Sri Lanka in the wake of Black July and

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118 Rohan Gunaratna, *Indian intervention in Sri Lanka: the role of India's intelligence agencies* (Colombo: South Asian Network on Conflict Research, 1993) offers an extremely detailed discussion of these operations. However, Gunaratna’s reliance on anonymous sources and the fact that I have not been able to verify some of his claims with other written sources makes me reluctant to rely too heavily on the details he provides. The overall pattern is clear enough.


120 Pratap, *Island of Blood*, p. 68.

121 Hellmann-Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers*, p. 52
was linked to Prabhakaran’s attempts to diversity supply away from a pure reliance on India.\footnote{122} The LTTE diaspora infrastructure would become crucial in the 1990s and is discussed more below, but its origins appear to lie in the mid-1980s.

These flows of weaponry and cash from India and increasingly the diaspora allowed the Tigers to continuously replenish their fighting stocks, and the training created military skill that was applied against the Sri Lankan security forces (and civilians). The Tigers quickly developed a reputation for being the most militarily effective armed group in the conflict. As Swamy notes, “recruits rushed to Tiger ranks, attracted by its awesome military operations, its army-like discipline, and the aura of Prabhakaran.”\footnote{123} The LTTE successfully killed a senior northern army commander and became proficient in ambush tactics and the use of IEDs to restrict army mobility.

Military power was clearly attracting and retaining new fighters as we would expect from an externally-backed organization. External support was flowing into a socially-robust command structure, since “the LTTE was small in the summer of 1983, but its members were loyal, disciplined and effective.”\footnote{124} Built around the core northern and caste networks, as well as the personality of its leader, the LTTE was able to make efficient use of Indian guns, money, and training.\footnote{125} By contrast to some of the groups discussed below, the LTTE could combine disciplined manpower with military strength. It therefore earned a reputation “as a formidably led and organized military force.”\footnote{126}

\footnote{122} K. Pathmanabhan (KP) would became head of the international procurement wing. Swamy, Inside an Elusive Mind, p. 108.
\footnote{123} Swamy, Inside an Elusive Mind, p. 143.
\footnote{124} Richardson, Paradise Poisoned, p. 482.
\footnote{126} Hopgood, “Tamil Tigers, 1987-2002,” p. 73.
The other major effect of the 1983-4 surge in militant mobilization was a broader recruiting base for the LTTE. Far more young Tamils were willing to fight and they actively sought out opportunities to join an organization. But accepting a surge of new recruits into the organization could be a recipe for disaster, and it badly hurt other Tamil militant groups. LTTE military punch would only be effective if the manpower base remained disciplined. Prabhakaran made the clear decision to limit the influx. Swamy quotes him as saying “with just 50 good people I can do a good job, instead of having a bloated but useless 500.” This was not structurally determined and shows that leaders’ decisions make an important difference that cannot be explained by my theoretical approach; we could imagine Prabhakaran taking a different course with a different result.

Nevertheless, the open question then becomes how the LTTE was able to balance expansion versus fragmentation once the strategic decision had been taken to maintain high standards and selective recruiting. The tight internal control and high levels of loyalty within the organization allowed for a highly disciplined recruiting system – recruits were screened and observed before being allowed into the group, and once they entered the organization there was heavy formal and informal socialization in training camps. The Tigers took on a structure that emulated a more conventional military. Even as this expansion was occurring, however, the command ranks expanded but retained their core of leaders; “the Karaiyar leadership was seen as a war-time measure, not meant to be carried over into more settled times” but it nevertheless

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127 Swamy, *Inside an Elusive Mind*, p. 94.
128 Swamy, *Inside an Elusive Mind*, p. 95. Though interviews in Colombo tended to offer more information about the post-1990 period, there was little disagreement about the earlier selectiveness of recruiting.
129 Hellmann-Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers*, p. 139. “this support might earlier have had something to do with the fact that the Tigers did not demand a too active participation of the population. The Vellalars of Jaffna do not think it their task to fight, they have professional groups who do their dirty work.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers*, p. 138, though later LTTE did start to demand more support
endured as long as the war did. As a result, “the LTTE was the most disciplined of the lot.”

There are reports of intra-LTTE disagreements, especially between Kittu and Mahattaya (a rivalry which would re-surface in the early 1990s), but there were no splits or open feuds.

Interestingly, this was evidently not a process of mass mobilization or grassroots state-building. As Hellman-Rajanayagam noted, “it is the most tightly structured, tightly disciplined and autocratically led group of the movement... apart from its demands for moral - and financial - support LTTE sees comparatively little scope for the population at large in the armed fight. Active fight is not something to be taken up by everybody; on the contrary, the ritual of acceptance into the movement is quite tough and elaborate.” The Tigers were not a people’s army - “its soldiers have to be committed, and they do not trust in the run-of-the-mill Jaffna man to be that” - but instead a ruthless vanguard driven by a belief in the primacy of violence.

While Hellman-Rajanayagam argues that “the ultraconservative people of Jaffna support the LTTE because they are the most nationalist of the militant groups,” it is also clear that coercion played a crucial role in the Tigers’ ability to impose their will on Sri Lankan Tamil areas, ranging from targeted political assassinations to the beating and killing of criminals.

The gun led the way.

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131 "The public had up to now thought of the L.T.T.E. as a monolith. But in the second half of 1986 differences, rivalries and personal ambitions within the L.T.T.E. which had a politics of its own began to surface and were talked about. Sources with good connections talked of differences between the Jaffna leader, Kittu and the then Vavuniya leader Mahattaya. The latter is said to have felt that those in Jaffna were being spoilt by glamour and a relatively easy life. Following the events of May 1986 several senior L.T.T.E. men left the group. One of them was Kandeepan who was in charge of the Islands. After leaving the organisation he simply stayed in his home at Ariyalai without wanting to see any of his former colleagues.” This is from University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna), *The Broken Palmyra*. http://www.uthr.org/BP/volume1/Chapter5.htm. UTHR(J) is a human rights organization that originated among professors in Jaffna.
133 Hellmann-Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers*, p. 66.
134 Hellman TamMil before, p. 612.
135 These are detailed in UTHR(J), *The Broken Palmyrah*. As Richardson also notes, “Not all Jaffna citizens supported the LTTE... of those who did speak out, few survived.” Richardson, *Paradise Poisoned*, p. 533.
As India’s controversial High Commissioner to Colombo, J.N. Dixit, would later write, “it would be difficult to come by a more motivated, educated, dedicated and politicized insurgent or militant group than the LTTE.” This opinion was widely shared – Pratap observed that “Compared to other Tamil groups, the LTTE cadres were clearly superior” and “of the five major groups, the LTTE, is the most powerful, disciplined and well organized.” The Tigers were the hardest-hitting and most disciplined of the Tamil armed groups waging war against the Sri Lankan state.

**Competitive Mobilization and Indian Support: TELO, EROS, and EPRLF.** However, the LTTE had serious competitors within the Tamil militant milieu. TELO, EROS, and the splinter EPRLF (from EROS) all attracted large-scale Indian support. TELO cultivated ties with Tamil politician Karunanidhi, EPRLF and EROS linked themselves to leftist Indian parties, and all three had strong connections to the Indian security agencies. TELO especially would become a militarily-capable but socially divided armed organization that combined lethal punch with internal unrest and fragmentation; it was therefore a clearly state-reliant group. EROS shifted into this state-reliant trajectory as far as I can tell, though there is even less information about the group during this period than during the early 1980s. EPRLF is the most ambiguous organization among the Tamil militants in terms of social base – it seems to have combined elements of both bonding and coalition networks. It also became a recipient of Indian largesse, and in the period between 1987 and 1990 (discussed in the next section of this chapter) was particularly important as the Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) did ruthless battle with the Tigers.

We begin with TELO, which “alone could match the LTTE’s cadres and firepower, mainly due to the head start it had enjoyed with New Delhi’s initial generosity” (Swamy 2003,}

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137 Pratap, *Island of Blood*, p. 70.
138 Sivarajah, *Politics of Tamil Nationalism*, p. 130.
TELO seems to have received large-scale support in part because its political agenda was in line with India’s – nationalist but not as hard-line as the Tigers. This agenda was perfect for India’s goal of putting pressure on the Sri Lankan state without actually achieving a true secession that could have spillover effects in India proper. The security agencies therefore looked favorably upon Sri Sabaratnam and his followers. Moreover, Karunanidhi of the Tamil party DMK favored TELO, in part because of LTTE’s proximity to his bitter rival MGR of the AIADMK. Karunanidhi and his party members provided TELO with significant financial resources. TELO’s easy access to Indian largesse meant that “would-be militants began making their way to TELO in maximum numbers because it was the first group to have its cadres trained [by India].” Indeed, “bereft of any ideology, [TELO] benefited the most from the mad rush and enrolled hundreds.” The organization grew quickly and was soon able to field a significant force of militants, particularly in Jaffna.

Wilson refers to TELO as a “powerful group” and its military commanders Sri Sabaratnam, Bobby, and Das, among others, all had significant power. There is no doubt that TELO possessed military strength and this attracted and retained recruits despite the apparently widespread view that TELO was largely in hock to the Indian agencies. Thus, “amongst the non-LTTE organizations, it was TELO, with a record of sensational attacks against the security

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139 TELO link to Karunanidhi is discussed in Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, p. 129. Karunanidhi “acknowledged the particularly close links with TELO.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers*, p. 129.
141 Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, p. 104. Swamy discusses TELO: “a natural favorite because, even by its own admission, it was the only group that did not even have the pretence of an ideology.” Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, p. 184.
142 Wilson, *Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism*, p. 127
143 “The members of TELO have been called ‘India’s little soldiers’ because India not only openly funded, trained, and supplied TELO with weapons, but also because TELO seemed to bow to the Indian view of the problem and to push the Indian option in negotiation” (Hell, “TamMil before” 607)
forces, that came anywhere close to matching LTTE’s prowess in the battlefield.” Richardson agrees, suggesting that “TELO had gained notoriety and recruits with a series of spectacular bombings and raids.”

Yet at the same time as TELO was showing military punch it also suffered from organizational flaws linked to its social origins. The key factional leaders and ground-level recruits appear to have been hastily incorporated in the mad scramble for recruits, leading to internal divisions that were exacerbated by the killing of TELO’s founding leaders, Thangadurai and Kuttimani, in a 1983 anti-Tamil prison riot. Bobby, Das, and Sabaratnam do not appear to have cooperated well with one another or to have shared trust and common purpose. As Richardson notes, the TELO’s ground-level cadres were known for lacking discipline and they often appear to have used this power in opportunistic, self-serving, and undisciplined ways. This is not a problem ever mentioned in reference to the LTTE’s cadres, who were ruthless but regimented. Swamy argues that “the TELO came to be accused of thuggery on a large scale” and “in 1984-5, as the TELO’s military machine began to match the LTTE’s, Sri was too sure of himself and even overconfident and careless.” TELO closely resembled a state-reliant organization during this period, fueled by Indian guns and money while mobilizing through loose, poorly integrated social networks that appear to have drawn indiscriminately on the large and diffuse Vellala caste. The material patronage attracted fighters but these fighters were not bound by other strong social or political relationships.

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144 Ketheshwaran Loganathan, Sri Lanka: Lost opportunities, past attempts at resolving ethnic conflict (Colombo: Centre for Policy Research and Analysis (CEPRA), Faculty of Law, University of Colombo, 1996), p. 119.
145 Richardson, Paradise Poisoned, p. 531.
146 “its members lacked discipline, exploited civilians and were given to ostentatious displays.” Richardson, Paradise Poisoned, p. 531.
147 Swamy, Tigers of Lanka, p. 186.
148 Swamy, Tigers of Lanka, p. 184.
The tensions within TELO exploded into open factional warfare in 1986. Das, TELO's commander and strongman in Vadamarachchi, clashed with another commander, Bobby; Das was killed in a surprise attack.\(^{149}\) This "created a serious crisis within the TELO,"\(^{150}\) one that would trigger a devastating LTTE onslaught to exploit the bitter divisions within TELO. We will turn to the fratricidal intra-Tamil wars of 1986-90 later in this chapter.

The Eelam-ist left wing was represented by EROS, its splinter EPRLF, and PLOT. However, only the first two were close to India; for personality reasons, PLOT's leader Uma Maheswaran seemed unable to maintain strong links with the Indian agencies. I discuss PLOT in a separate section and here focus on EROS and EPRLF. As far as I can tell, EPRLF emerged from a split by the GUES student wing of EROS. This split seemed to involve discontent with the then-London-based leadership's lack of involvement in the actual struggle in Tamil areas of Sri Lanka.\(^{151}\) EPRLF emerged in the period between 1981 and 1984 (the actual date of first serious operation seems unclear).\(^{152}\) Gunaratna refers to another split at some point in the mid-1980s (before the Balakumar vs. Shankar split in the late 1980s) but I have not found clear confirmation of this.\(^{153}\)

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149 "It had been rumoured for some time that the "Das faction" of the T.E.L.O. in Vadamaratchi had some differences with the leader Sri Sabaratnam. Das was an able military man -- and this faction was said to form the military backbone of the T.E.L.O. The L.T.T.E.'s opportunity came when in April 1986 the Bobby faction of the T.E.L.O. treacherously shot dead Das and 4 of his colleagues. They were shot dead while visiting a colleague in the Jaffna Hospital. This resulted in the Das faction leaving the T.E.L.O. and going into exile, considerably weakening the T.E.L.O" UTHR (J), Broken Palmyra, http://www.uthr.org/BP/volumel/Chapter5.htm.

150 Swamy, Tigers of Lanka, p. 190.

151 This was confirmed by interviews with EPRLF members in Colombo, spring 2008. Gunaratna argues that "differences over the absence of the leadership in London and organizational problems such as democratic centralism arose among EROS leaders in Sri Lanka." Gunaratna, Indian intervention in Sri Lanka, p. 143.

152 Gunaratne identifies the split as 1981; Wilson simply says "the EPRLF was founded during 1981-84." Wilson, Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism, p. 128.

153 Gunaratne 1993, 138
Despite the rupture caused by the EPRLF split, EROS, led by Velupillai Balakumar and Shankar Rajeevan, was able to forge “close relations with the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi as well as with RAW.” Both EROS and EPRLF were sympathetic to India’s pro-Soviet foreign policy tilt. Ideology was a clear cause of external support, rather than preexisting cohesion or organization. Despite this support, EROS “kept an extremely low profile” though it was clearly an innovator in the use of urban bombing in Colombo. EROS may have been able to draw on a more educated stratum of recruits with technical skills for using explosives, but as an on-the-ground insurgent group it was not prominent. It was also the smallest group in cadre size. Our level of knowledge about the internal working of EROS is extremely sparse, and so the EPRLF split and a later intra-EROS split (Balakumar vs. Shankar, discussed below) are all we can go on with any degree of certainty. The lack of large-scale military activity makes the task difficult since the theoretical argument I offer focuses on the particular challenges and demands of insurgent activity, rather than insurgent inactivity. Given the EPRLF split and the lack of military action it seems plausible, though very far from certain, that EROS was not a very disciplined or cohesive organization.

EPRLF is a somewhat easier case to study because it rose to much greater size and prominence. Led by K. Padmanabha, Suresh Premachandran, Varatharajah Perumal, and Douglas Devananda, among others, the EPRLF advanced a clear left-wing agenda with a classical Marxist-Leninist approach to cadre-building and mass mobilization. As Hellman-Rajanayagam argues, “the EPRLF was thus the only group which clearly distinguished between

154 This leadership endured until the late 1980s but a mixture of killings, exile, and disillusionment would tear EROS apart.
156 Swamy, Tigers of Lanka, p. 143.
157 Hellmann-Rajanayagam, The Tamil Tigers, p. 81.
158 “it preferred a undercover and individual attacks to an all-out fight due its operations in the East and the South, until a full-fledged people’s war would be possible.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, The Tamil Tigers, p. 83.
159 Swamy, Tigers of Lanka, p. 186.
its political and military wing, which is quite unique and in distinct contrast to the LTTE.”

Socially, “their [EPRLF’s] main support base was in Batticaloa in contrast to the LTTE’s stronghold in Jaffna” and “EPRLF had a groundswell of strength and support in the East which other groups could never match.” Unfortunately, detailed evidence on social backgrounds within EPRLF during this period is hard to come by; most of the comments about EPRLF’s lower-caste and eastern base are not very specific (though we do know that Padmanabha was lower caste).

It does seem plausible that in terms of resources, “undoubtedly, the EPRLF was the poorest Tamil group in July 1983.” Nevertheless, and though the Indians continued at this point between 1983 and 1986 to largely favor TELO and the LTTE, “gradually, the EPRLF militarily grew, and became a formidable group.” The Indian agencies provided some materiel and training to the EPRLF, though the group appears to have kept its distance from the Dravidian parties of Tamil Nadu that TELO and LTTE were linked to in favor of Indian Communists.

EPRLF combined this external support with some degree of a bonding network base among eastern lower-castes, and also with a leftist ideology: “Of all the militant groups extant and defunct, EPRLF was probably the most radical and militant one where ideology is concerned. . .

. . .the EPRLF was somewhat of a latecomer among the militant groups because it only made itself

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161 Wilson, *Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism*, p. 129.
164 “the EPRLF, who later became an east-coast based group, became known (not entirely in jest) as “Eelatti Pallar” or the “Eelam Pallar Revolutionary Liberation Front” reflecting a genuine support base in the urban Pallar caste communities.” McDowell, *A Tamil Asylum Diaspora*, p. 90.
167 “EPRLF very explicitly did not want to be drawn into the vortex of Tamilnadu’s internal politics and showed a thinly veiled contempt for Tamil parties. In contrast, they openly admitted their connections and cooperation with the CPI.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers*, p. 108.
known to the public in 1983 with its first congress.\textsuperscript{167} Rather than the LTTE's ruthless vanguard strategy, EPRLF "desired to go beyond its membership of students and intellectuals to include workers, peasant, and fishers in a more broadbased movement."\textsuperscript{168} Like EROS, the EPRLF looked to the revolutionary Third World for its inspiration and tried to adopt the Marxist-Leninist organizational blueprint.

The EPRLF seems to have been reasonably disciplined, as there are not the same reports of thuggery and pervasive in-fighting as in TELO and PLOT during 1983-86. There would be a split in 1987, discussed below, but the EPRLF overall appears to fit somewhere between the ruthlessly disciplined LTTE and the deeply divided TELO and PLOT. Indian support, though at this point not massive, was clearly important in building EPRLF's organizational capacity and its centralization, and there are clear indications that some degree of social embeddedness was involved in holding the organization together. However, the social base of the EPRLF does not seem to have had the same overlap of local and extra-local ties as the LTTE's caste base among the Karaiyar. We will see the EPRLF take on a far more central role as an Indian proxy force during the 1987-1990 IPKF interlude.

\textit{PLOT: Democratic Centralism and Organizational Cannibalism.} We now return to PLOT, which had broken from Prabharakan's LTTE in 1980 in a feud over disciplinary policy and political direction. Like EROS and EPRLF, PLOT explicitly drew on left-wing thought and framed its struggle as aiming at a cross-ethnic revolution that would fundamentally change the nature of Sri Lankan society. To this end, it developed some links to the Sinhalese Left, though these ended up not being particularly substantial or important. The group also expanded rapidly, riding the surge of Tamil mobilization accompanying the 1983 pogroms; Swamy even writes that

\textsuperscript{167} Hellmann-Rajanayagam, \textit{The Tamil Tigers}, p. 75.
\textsuperscript{168} Hellmann-Rajanayagam, \textit{The Tamil Tigers}, p. 77.
“at one point of time, the PLOT had the maximum cadres.” PLOT suddenly became a central player in the brutal drama engulfing northern Sri Lanka; according to one former member who became a major Tamil journalist at its height it had 6,000 fighters (though this seems high). Like TELO it drew heavily on the upper-caste Vellala. Nevertheless, it would end up being consumed by “infighting and murders” that left PLOT open to fratricidal attacks that shattered the organization.

Sources are contradictory about how well-funded PLOT was, with some accounts pointing to bank robbery as a source of major funding. What is clear, however, is that regardless of bank robbery funding, PLOT was alienated from the major sponsors of insurgency on the Indian side of the Palk Strait. PLOT had a strong presence in Tamil Nadu that should have provided it with robust external support. Ideologically, the Indian state and Tamil politicians had supported leftist militant groups. Despite these links, PLOT never became a major recipient of similar aid. This was not because of any preexisting organizational attributes, but instead, it seems, because of the (highly contingent!) personality of PLOT leader Uma Maheswaran: “the PLOT’s biggest problem was its leader Uma himself. He could not strike a rapport with Indian officials in charge of the clandestine policy of arming and training Sri Lankan Tamil guerrillas.”

Uma was unable, or unwilling, to build the relationships with Indian power-brokers (both politicians and state officials) that would fuel PLOT militancy. This one reason why it “rarely

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171 “the P.L.O.T.E. in Jaffna had a strong base amongst the high caste, middle-class Tamils in Valigamam North and Central. They also had a political programme which emphasised work amongst the masses.” UTHR(J), *Broken Palmyra*.
173 Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, p. 104 - “The richest was PLOT” due to bank hits by 1983.
174 “the PLOT trained the largest number of people in Tamil Nadu.” Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, p. 112.
175 Swamy, *Inside an Elusive Mind*, p. 91.
staged any significant military operations in Sri Lanka."\(^{176}\) The Indian security authorities cracked down on PLOT’s procurement activities in Tamil Nadu after PLOT’s undisciplined cadres caused embarrassing problems through their behavior in the state.\(^{177}\)

To some extent, PLOT attributed its lack of military action to a strategic decision to build a people’s army and await the right revolutionary moment. It harshly criticized the LTTE for its guerrilla tactics, continuing the rivalry that stretched back to the PLOT’s origins in a split from the Tigers.\(^{178}\) PLOTE “became inactive or militarily non-productive due to its strategy, it lost ground to other militant groups.”\(^{179}\) Moreover, its high caste members allegedly used their guns to settle caste disputes unrelated to the broader Tamil militant struggle.\(^{180}\) A major split within PLOT exacerbated this resource situation and triggered further fragmentation. For several years, active unrest had been bubbling within the organization about both the lack of military action and the mysterious disappearances of many PLOT members. Coup plots had surfaced within the organization as well.\(^{181}\) It soon became clear that Uma and some of his loyalists had been engaged in “a Stalin-type purge in the PLOT,”\(^{182}\) killing dozens of members and torturing many others. 1985 was the high point of this suppression of internal dissent; the angry departure of one prominent PLOT member “led to a great purge in the group, resulting in scores of cold-blooded and brutal murders.”\(^{183}\)

Active defiance of Uma’s leadership was both a cause and a consequence of this violent internal unrest, and contributed to the formation of the Eelam National Democratic Liberation

\(^{179}\) Sivarajah, *Politics of Tamil Nationalism*, p. 135.
\(^{180}\) “P.L.O.T.E. members have been used by the high castes, on several occasions in disputes with the lower castes.” UTHR(J), *Broken Palmyra*.
\(^{183}\) Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, p. 179.
Front (ENDLF) by Paranthan Rajan.\textsuperscript{184} The splitters castigated PLOT for the “high-handed and anarchic style of one-man leadership and the subsequent infighting and murders and argued for a more democratic style of leadership through a central committee.”\textsuperscript{185} This was a nasty and violent split that was also protracted and fluid; it left Uma’s PLOT with “only a rump of the movement.”\textsuperscript{186} India began pumping money into the ENDLF, further isolating PLOT from external support. Despite a large group of cadres, the organization “had no money to arm or move them.”\textsuperscript{187} As PLOT members Sivaram and Sidhartan allegedly told Uma after the ENDLF split, “the organization ‘was going to fall apart without an infusion of weapons – and since we had screwed up all avenues for doing this on our own,’ they had better turn directly to India for help.”\textsuperscript{188} But while India provided some limited aid, it was not very forthcoming in its support and PLOT’s alienation from both MGR and Karunanidhi in Tamil Nadu state politics left it without any strong patrons.\textsuperscript{189} PLOT was “starved of weapons”\textsuperscript{190} and so “by mid-1986 the organisation had suffered from neglect from the leadership in India and was poorly armed.”\textsuperscript{191}

PLOT had come apart at the seams as 1986 rolled on, lacking weapons, torn by splits and internal feuds, and lacking either local embeddedness or strong preexisting ties between its leaders. As far as can be discerned, PLOT was not based on any particular social network or institution, other than the broad and diffuse category of the (majority) upper castes. Though the evidence is too sparse to make any firm assessments, it does appear that the PLOT had a coalition network base, unlinked to significant prior structures of collective action despite the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{184} Swamy, \textit{Tigers of Lanka}, p. 182; and Whitaker, \textit{Learning Politics from Sivaram}, p. 94.
\item \textsuperscript{185} Hellmann-Rajanayagam, \textit{The Tamil Tigers}, pp. 42-3.
\item \textsuperscript{186} Hellmann-Rajanayagam, \textit{The Tamil Tigers}, p. 42.
\item \textsuperscript{187} Whitaker, \textit{Learning Politics from Sivaram}, p. 95.
\item \textsuperscript{188} Whitaker, \textit{Learning Politics from Sivaram}, p. 95.
\item \textsuperscript{189} “it was only the PLOTE (Peoples Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam) first and the LTTE later who fell out completely with India.” Muni, \textit{Pangs of Proximity}, p. 67. He also claims PLOTE cut a deal with Colombo in 1985 but I have never heard similar claims elsewhere.
\item \textsuperscript{190} Swamy, \textit{Inside an Elusive Mind}, p. 132.
\item \textsuperscript{191} \textit{Broken Palmyra}, http://www.uthr.org/BP/volume1/Chapter5.htm.
\end{itemize}
group’s size and ideology. The surge of Tamil mobilization accompanying the 1983 pogroms had delivered recruits, but not discipline, trust, or institutionalization.

Theory and Reality in Tamil Militancy, 1983-86. While the available information improves compared to the pre-1983 period, it would be intellectually dishonest to suggest that historical record is sufficient to really assess this period. This is a particular problem when trying to understand process and mechanisms; this was abundant and reliable in N. Ireland and available for some groups in the Kashmir, but quite lacking in Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, it is possible to make some reasonable, if tentative, conclusions about the trajectories of Tamil armed groups in the crucial period of expansion and escalation that turned northern and eastern Sri Lanka into a full-fledged war zone.

As we would predict given its mobilization around strong caste and regional networks and its large-scale access to support from the Indian state and AIADMK party, the LTTE appears to have been highly cohesive during this period. There were no splits, no open feuds, and compliance appears to have been high. The TELO, EROS, and EPRLF all appear to represent more or less state-reliant organizations. The big ambiguity here is the EPRLF’s true social base – there are tantalizing hints of particular caste and regional mobilization but without the assessment of social backgrounds that I have found in the case of the LTTE. Since most of the EPRLF leadership was killed in 1990, much of this history has unfortunately been lost. All three of these groups suffered at least some internal unrest, and a split each in the cases of TELO and EROS (and a split in EPRLF in 1987, which the next section discusses), but also were able to use external support to attract and equip fighters. They were able to construct loose but identifiable organizations held together by access to Indian support. PLOT was clearly the least disciplined
and cohesive organization, combining a coalition network base (perhaps loosely tied to the
diffuse Vellala caste) with little access to external support.

Interestingly, and importantly for my argument, in all of these cases external support was
not endogenous to organizational power or cohesion. The overall balance of power and cohesion
in the mid-1980s was quite ambiguous and fluid; “in early 1985, the P.L.O.T.E., L.T.T.E. and T.E.L.O. were considered fairly evenly balanced.”192 Rather than the winners receiving material
support, external aid was instead determined by personal relationships and ideological positions
that predated the “sorting out” of the militant organizations. The strategic visions of Indian
security elites and the electoral rivalries of the Tamil parties, as well as contingent personality
issues, were crucial as causes of which groups got support, how much they received, and when
they got it.193 The complexities (and at times ironies) of these structures of support show that
there was no simple endogeneity or reverse causality.194

Table 5.2. Trajectories of Tamil Militancy, 1983-86

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group and DV Prediction</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LTTE (Cohesive)</td>
<td>Theory: Low Actual: Low</td>
<td>Theory: Low Actual: N/A</td>
<td>Theory: Low Actual: Low</td>
<td>Theory: Political-Military Actual: N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPRLF</td>
<td>Theory: Intermediate</td>
<td>Theory: Low</td>
<td>Theory: High</td>
<td>Theory: Distribution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

192 “until 1986 three groups dominant in terms of membership and military strength were the PLOT, LTTE, and TELO, although not in that order.” Swamy, Tigers of Lanka, p. 183.
193 Also see Loganathan, Sri Lanka. He notes that access to Indian elites arranged by party and govt officials (for instance, EPRLF introduced to Indira by a CPI (M) politician, Ramamurthy) on p. 116, fn. 13.
194 “The Tigers were known to be on very good terms with the ruling AIADMK, whereas TELO was closely aligned with the opposition DMK under Karunanidhi (an intriguing fact, since on the central level, it was TELO that was armed and trained by the government which strongly supported the AIADMK and M.G. Ramachandran against the DMK). TELO’s alignment with the DMK in Tamilnadu obviously goes back a long time, in fact til 1967 when the links between the DMK who had just won the state elections and the then FP, were particularly warm.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, The Tamil Tigers, p. 106. Emphasis added. Swamy argues that policy was being made with “no two top policy makers knowing fully what the other is doing.” Swamy, Tigers of Lanka, p. 157.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Cohesive/State-Reliant)</th>
<th>Actual: Intermediate</th>
<th>Actual: N/A</th>
<th>Actual: ?</th>
<th>Actual: N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLOT (Factionalized)</td>
<td>Theory: High</td>
<td>Theory: High</td>
<td>Theory: High</td>
<td>Theory: Multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual: High</td>
<td>Actual: High</td>
<td>Actual: High</td>
<td>Actual: Multiple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[SB = \text{Social Base}; \ ES = \text{External Support}; \ \text{Prediction} = \text{trajectory predicted by my theory}; \ \text{Bolded Cell} = \text{significant misprediction}\]

As we can see, there is a lot of missing information. The predictions on my dependent variable are too fine-grained for the actual data we have, and as a result the assessment of organizational cohesion is hazy and impressionistic. It would be foolish to mount any strong claims based on this evidence alone. At the least, however, it is possible to establish a reasonable spectrum of cohesion on the dependent variable that seems consistent with the available historical and interview evidence. This means that there is not great uncertainty about the overall outcomes, though there is insufficient detail on the specifics.

The theory I offer at least seems plausible – there are reasonable assessments of social bases that match up with outcomes in roughly the way we would expect, and have resemblances to the processes of mobilization and insurgency found in the other chapters of the dissertation.

There is also no clearly disconfirming evidence against my theory that comes through in the record of this period. If PLOT or TELO had emerged as highly cohesive and disciplined organizations despite their coalition network social bases and ramshackle mobilization, then the argument would be clearly in trouble.

V. Fratricide and Intervention: Lethal Rivalry and Indian Counterinsurgency, 1986-1990

Our menagerie of Tamil groups narrows dramatically from 1986 onwards. The major focus of the 1986-1990 period is on the LTTE and EPRLF, which became locked in a brutal war. The catalyst for this was the Tigers’ decision to knock its rivals out of the field. It did so by taking advantages of feuds and fractures within the other Tamil militant groups; successful fratricide essentially annihilated TELO, severely damaged PLOT, and pushed the EPRLF back.
its eastern redoubts. The Tigers would then use their dominance to take on a massive Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) sent to impose a peace deal that the LTTE was skeptical of. EPRLF would become the Indians’ indigenous militia tasked as Tiger-hunters. Once the IPKF left, the EPRLF would be literally annihilated, in the process suffering mass desertions at the lower ranks but surprising cohesion at the command level (before almost all of its commanders were killed).

The theoretical questions of interest now focus on understanding how the LTTE maintained its internal cohesion when faced with a new, enormous Indian counterinsurgent force, and on how shifts in Indian support affected the EPRLF. There is extremely little detailed process evidence on the LTTE at war during this period, but there are deep (though far from total) social continuities at the leadership level throughout this period and flows of external resources continued from the Tamil diaspora overseas. The EPRLF funneled large quantities of Indian support into its organizational structure, in the process attracting more recruits through its demonstration of military power and political influence. However, for strategic reasons (the forthcoming Indian withdrawal) in 1989-90 the EPRLF adopted a coercive mass mobilization approach in order to try to fend off the Tigers. This influx of new recruits (many involuntary) shattered the tenuous social integration within the organization at the level of foot soldiers, and encouraged defections and desertion. Interestingly, forced conscription (including of children) did not lead to cohesion in the EPRLF, even as some have pointed to abduction as a mechanism of cohesion in the LTTE. This suggests that the effects of forced conscription depend hugely on the structure and history of the organization doing the abducting.

*Tigers Attack.* But before tracing out the clash of organizational weapons that delivered control of northeastern Sri Lanka to the LTTE we need to take a step back. Richardson argues that “by 1986, militant forces included about 15,000 men who had undergone training in India.
While rivalries and internecine battles prevented the several militant groups from forming a united front, their combined strength was comparable to Sri Lanka’s army” (Rich 528). It’s unclear that the numbers were really this high, but the militants were definitely running parallel administrations while the SLA and security services were hunkered down in their bases. This state of affairs nevertheless disturbed LTTE leader Prabhakaran, who “had apprehensions that India’s involvement would elevate the other Tamil groups to the same level as the LTTE, both tactically as well as strategically.” He was right, since “RAW’s strategy was to maintain control by preventing any one group from becoming dominant.”

The LTTE began making ominous threats against co-ethnic Tamil “traitors” and became increasingly unhappy with Indian efforts to broker ceasefires and a peace settlement short of an independent Eelam. The LTTE “remained deeply suspicious of New Delhi and its long-term motives vis-à-vis Sri Lanka.” Peace negotiations at Thimphu failed despite intense Indian pressure. This did not deflect the Indians from their goal of pressuring Sri Lanka via Tamil militancy, without actually supporting a secession leading to Eelam. As the security agencies increasingly began to crack down on groups (like PLOT) that did not toe their line, it was becoming clear to the Tamil militants that “India would henceforth not hesitate to squeeze the Tamils.” The combination of Prabhakaran’s resistance to Indian influence and his fear of Indian-backed militants surpassing the LTTE led to a fratricidal offensive: “LTTE rose to power by isolating and eliminating most of its rivals ruthlessly.”

195 Swamy, Inside an Elusive Mind, p. 91.
196 Richardson, Paradise Poisoned, p. 528.
197 Swamy, Inside an Elusive Mind, p. 131.
198 Swamy, Tigers of Lanka, p. 185.
199 Swamy, Tigers of Lanka, p. 158.
200 Hellmann-Rajanayagam. The Tamil Tigers, p. 42.
The Tigers wanted to push aside Indian favorites like TELO and EPRLF and to shatter its long-time foe PLOT. They timed their attacks to closely follow fragmentation in other organizations: “it is important to note that the LTTE always struck at the other organizations when they were weakened and preoccupied with internal rivalries.” The outcomes of fratricidal contests were thus endogenous to the relative balance of cohesion between the LTTE and its targets. Rather than mass popularity or grassroots mobilization, the Tigers’ success was driven by their ability to rapidly coordinate highly secretive and lethal violence against Tamil co-ethnics. Once rival organizations were broken, the civilian population faced fewer outside options and the Tigers were able to consolidate their hegemonic hold.

The LTTE had clashed with TELO on a low level in the previous years, since they were the two best-armed groups in Jaffna, and TELO senior commander Das was a prominent and feared presence in the LTTE’s erstwhile stronghold of Vadamarachchi. After another clash, and amidst the Bobby-vs.-Das factional battle occupying TELO, the LTTE launched a simultaneous assault on over a dozen TELO camps, wiping out much of the organization in the space of hours. The secrecy and ruthlessness with which this operation was carried out are unmistakable signs of the Tigers’ discipline and cohesion: “the LTTE was clearly aiming to annihilate the TELO, its strongest rival, with a vengeance that Jaffna would not soon forget.” Wilson identifies another possible motivation: “One of the motives behind its elimination by the LTTE was jealousy and suspicion that most of the expatriates’ funding reached TELO hands. The LTTE felt that despite its great performances in the battle-field, it was not receiving its due recognition.”

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strong TELO supporter, was taken aback by how quickly the onslaught occurred and was forced to accept the fait accompli.

TELO was essentially broken, its key leaders killed (including top commander Sri Sabaratnam), driven into exile, or forced out of militancy. At least dozens were killed, perhaps hundreds. Jaffna commander Kittu led the onslaught with a deep contempt for TELO. Some TELO cadres would end up joining the LTTE, though from what I can tell they were never allowed into the leadership’s inner circle. TELO attempted to regroup in 1987, but Bobby appears to have both survived and split from TELO (into obscurity, apparently in India). TELO was a shattered force, having left itself vulnerable to attack during its internal feuding. TELO would straggle on as a political party with occasional bouts of paramilitarism, eventually becoming an LTTE-controlled political front in the 2000s but lacking any independent constituency or credibility.

PLOT was next. One of its commanders, a Uma Maheswaran loyalist named Mendis, was tortured and killed and PLOT banned on Jaffna. The organization was deeply vulnerable in the wake of the splits and feuds surrounding Uma Maheswaran and his ENDLF rivals. Pushing for the kill, LTTE assassinated more PLOT members and forced others to give up their guns. PLOT was very simply and very totally outclassed by the Tigers’ military effectiveness. It tried to wage a propaganda war in response to the LTTE onslaught, without success: “PLOT’s military weakness and its inferiority in fighting power to the LTTE, however, come out clearly in its own statements.”

Ultimately, “while sticking to its revolutionary repertoire, PLOT was clearly out of its depth without money and without real support from any side.” The organization essentially

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204 Hellmann-Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers*, p. 44.
205 Hellmann-Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers*, p. 44.
came apart, with a few survivors maintaining a loyalty to Uma Maheswaran. As a significant player in Sri Lanka’s war, PLOT was finished. During the IPKF experience, PLOT remnants became involved as mercenaries in a coup plot in Mauritius, and after the IPKF the PLOT would become a pro-state Tamil paramilitary working with Sri Lankan security forces around Vavuniya.

Finally, the LTTE put its gunsight on the EPRLF, which was the only major organization remaining other than EROS. As noted above, EPRLF was a somewhat more robust organization in terms of social base, with aspects of specific eastern and lower-caste support that differentiated it from EROS, PLOT, or TELO. This would serve it in good stead when the Tigers made their bid for total hegemony in 1986 and 1987. However, the group did suffer a split in 1986 between the military commander, Douglas Devananda, and the political leader Pathmanabha. This was a significant rupture, and the LTTE’s consequent attack clearly echoed the sequence in which TELO split between Bobby and Ds followed by a Tiger attack. The EPRLF was pushed out of Jaffna amidst internal confusion and violence. Nevertheless, EPRLF “retained strength in the east and some support to [?] India.”

As these co-ethnic groups were targeted “LTTE leaders began issuing public statements arrogating to their organisation sole authority to represent the Tamil people.” The Tigers were clearly asserting their right to be the “sole representative” of the Tamils at the barrel of a gun. EPRLF retreated to the east and Jaffna became dominated by the Tigers. EROS had maintained an uneasy peace with the LTTE, despite being contumaciously dismissed as “clowns” by the

206 “A similar circumstance minus the assassinations was to precede the L.T.T.E.’s taking on the E.P.R.L.F., 7 months later – namely, the split arising from differences between Padmanabha, the E.P.R.L.F.’s political leader and Douglas Devananda, the leader of its military wing.” UTHR(J), Broken Palmyra, http://www.uthr.org/BP/volume1/Chapter5.htm.
207 Richardson, Paradise Poisoned, p. 531.
208 Richardson, Paradise Poisoned, p. 531.
LTTE.\textsuperscript{209} EROS' lack of large-scale activity or presence made its survival more acceptable to the LTTE since it could pose no real challenge. While there is no doubting that the Tigers could draw on significant public support in their war, it is deeply problematic to backward-infer that because they emerged as the dominant group they must have been the most popular or most representative. As Fair notes, "the LTTE secured dominance among these groups through massive violence and coercion."\textsuperscript{210}

This process of sustained fratricide was directly against Indian interests: "If the RAW's objective was to see that no single group should become dominant, then the emergence of the LTTE was a major failure."\textsuperscript{211} India and its agencies had decisively lost control of Tamil militancy. India would pay a terrible price for its involvement in the war, though not as terrible a price as paid by Sri Lankans.

\textit{The IPKF Goes to War.} As the LTTE knocked off its rivals, the SLA and Sri Lankan police forces (especially the Special Task Force, or STF) were re-grouping to take the war back into the northeast. The fratricide had occurred as the security forces watched, but with fewer militants in the field the SLA was ready to move once again. Though it is hard to tell, the Tiger fratricide may have weakened the overall Tamil strength. As Sri Lankan forces moved forward, LTTE positions in Jaffna began to fall to the offensive, named Operation Liberation. As political mobilization in Tamil Nadu in protest of the Sri Lankan operation mounted, India grew increasingly concerned: while it had no interest in an independent Eelam, it wanted to force a devolutionary compromise of some sort that would satisfy Tamil grievances within Sri Lanka. A decisive Sri Lankan victory would kill that possibility.

\textsuperscript{209} "Kittu called them clowns." Hellmann-Rajanayagam, \textit{The Tamil Tigers}, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{210} Fair, "Diaspora Involvement in Insurgencies," p. 138.
\textsuperscript{211} Muni, \textit{Pangs of Proximity}, p. 72.
India thus began making increasingly vocal threats to militarily intervene, including Indian Air Force overflights of Sri Lankan airspace. It put pressure on both the Sri Lankan government of JR Jayewardene and on its remaining Tamil militant allies, especially the LTTE. In 1987, Rajiv Gandhi’s government in Delhi was able to force Jayewardene to agree to the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord (ISLA). The Accord would involve a degree of power devolution and introduce an Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) into Tamil areas to assist in disarming the militant groups while protecting Tamils from the Sri Lankan security forces. The Accord was presented as something of a fait accompli to the Tamil armed groups, who had widely divergent reactions to the deal. The LTTE at first signaled that it could abide by the agreement, but clearly felt itself under duress and that India had sold it out. The EPRLF embraced the Accord and IPKF both as a reasonable political solution and a hedge against the LTTE. As Tamils struggled to assess the Accord, the induction of Indian combat forces on Sri Lankan soil triggered an increasingly violent backlash against the Sri Lankan government among radical Sinhalese nationalists; the second JVP rebellion would viciously rage from 1987 until 1990.

India’s attempts to manage the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict descended into the standard miscalculations that occur when South Asian states try to manipulate militancy. India “consistently and systematically underrated the Tigers, not only where their fighting power was concerned, but also with regard to their determination and, perhaps, their fanaticism.”

At first the IPKF and LTTE coexisted on the Jaffna peninsula, with Indian officers assuming that the deal would be easy to implement. The Sri Lankan government, or at least major parts of it, had

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213 Books by former IPKFers that discuss lack of good information and pervasive misperceptions about the mission.
also bought into this view of the situation. As the Indians pushed the Tigers to disarm, however, the LTTE began mobilizing against the IPKF in 1987, particularly after a set of senior Tiger cadres held by the IPKF committed suicide rather than being handed over to the Sri Lankan security forces. As the Tigers went to war with the Indian forces that had previously been their patron, the pivotal, but never-clearly-answered question, was “what was to be done to the LTTE – to decimate it as a military force, or only to put military pressure on it, to force it to come to the negotiating table.” The Indian political elite and security apparatus never quite figured out what to do about the LTTE, and consequently Indian policy oscillated quite wildly between 1987 and 1990, from naïve coexistence to brutal counterinsurgency to rapid withdrawal. India’s regional assertiveness during the 1980s, pushed by Army Chief of Staff General Krishnaswamy Sundarji, reached its peak as tens of thousands of Indian infantry, armor, and artillery poured into Sri Lanka.

After the honeymoon with the Tigers ended, the IPKF launched a bloody and ill-prepared assault on Jaffna city, driving the LTTE out of its urban stronghold but taking significant losses in the process and making it clear that India was willing to kill Tamils in order to save them. Though completely unprepared for sustained counterinsurgency, the IPKF began digging in to eradicate the LTTE. Tensions between RAW and the regular Army were constant, and the military complained of receiving poor guidance from the civilian leadership of Rajiv Gandhi’s

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214 “the fundamental assumption under which President Jayewardene and the Sri Lankan cabinet consented to the accord was that the separatist groups were clients of India and would do what India told them to do.” De Silva, *Regional Powers and Small State Security*, p. 246.
216 Operation Pawan in 1987 was the full-scale Indian assault on Jaffna city and environs. After an initial paratrooper assault targeting the LTTE leadership ended in fiasco, the Indians moved in with armor and artillery.
217 Depinder Singh, *The IPKF in Sri Lanka* (Noida: Trishul Publications, 1991); and Harkirat Singh, *Intervention in Sri Lanka: The IPKF Experience Retold* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2007) are accounts from former commanding officers of the IPKF that emphasize the poor preparation of the force and the mediocre intelligence it received. Though both blame RAW and the civilian political leadership, it is also clear that the Indian Army was under-equipped and under-trained for this type of COIN operation.
government, which was increasingly distracted by its own Byzantine political battles.218

Nevertheless, as in counterinsurgency operations in India, the sheer coercive power of the Indian state was quite overwhelming. The size of the force surged to approximately 100,000 by late 1988, and Indian forces blanketed the north and east of the island, as the JVP rebellion raged in the south. This commitment of troops “was larger than the British element in the Indian army had been in India during the heyday of the raj.”219 The IPKF had an “aura of toughness and discipline”220 unmatched at that point by the Sri Lankan Army and Special Task Force, and drove the Tigers completely into guerrilla warfare in Wanni jungles. In 1987, 1988, and 1989, “the situation was of an unceasing low-intensity conflict, albeit one that was more or less contained and confined to certain areas.”221

In order to facilitate Indian COIN, non-LTTE groups “continued to be supported and trained by the Indians (more by the intelligence agency, RAW, than by the IPKF).”222 The EPRLF was the main beneficiary of the IPKF presence, and became viewed by many as “India’s puppet government in the area.”223 The organization “could only survive with India’s help” (Hell 94 121) due to its reliance on India for its firepower, money, and logistics. TELO and ENDLF received some very low-level assistance, as probably also did EPRLF splitter Douglas Devananda’s Eelam People’s Democratic Party (EPDP). This array of Tamil pro-Indian paramilitaries were “reportedly used as ‘neutral’ informers to sniff out and exterminate the Tigers.”224

218 “the performance of RAW became a subject of deep resentment and criticism in the IPKF and in the media as well.” Muni, Pangs of Proximity, p. 144.
219 De Silva, Regional Powers and Small State Security, p. 278.
220 Richardson, Paradise Poisoned, p. 547.
223 Wilson, Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism, p. 128.
Nevertheless, EPRLF was the front-line Indian proxy, simultaneously used as a Tiger-hunting organization and as the political face of the Northeastern Provincial Council (NEPC) that was supposed to represent the devolution of power.\textsuperscript{225} Its strength in the east and among certain caste blocs allowed the EPRLF to take Indian weapons/money and use them at least somewhat competently, if often also brutally and with an eye on revenge.\textsuperscript{226} The EPRLF backed the Indian presence to the hilt but tried to carve out some political space for itself through its operation of the NEPC in Trincomalee.\textsuperscript{227} However, the Sri Lankan government, especially once it transferred into the hands of Ranasinghe Premadasa, Jayewardene’s successor in 1989,

It is hard to assess the level of popular support for the LTTE during this period (or really any other). Anecdotes and analyses vary dramatically. Hellman-Rajanayagam, who spent significant time in northern Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu, writes that:

“LTTE’s political hold on the population has always been precarious. Few Jaffna Tamils relished the thought of Prabhakaran and his merry boys in political control. They saw, and still see, LTTE as a necessary evil. They grudgingly admitted and admired their protective function, but happily sent them about their business once the Indians came.”\textsuperscript{228}

Muni, by contrast, attributes LTTE staying power against the IPKF and its Tamil paramilitary allies to a deep reservoir of public support.\textsuperscript{229} Indian forces committed human rights abuses and often acted in an arbitrary way (allegations of rape and extralegal killing are common

\textsuperscript{225} 13\textsuperscript{th} Amendment, provincial councils as part of political package in ISLA.
\textsuperscript{226} Former senior EPRLF spokesman Kethesh Loganathan (later assassinated by the LTTE while working for the Sri Lankan government):
“the Eelam Peoples’ Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), which had lost more than 700 cadres and sympathizers at the hands of the LTTE, since the beginning of internecine conflicts in mid-1986, was a willing candidate. Furthermore, EPRLF’s base in the Eastern Province in the Tamil areas of Batticaloa and Amparai had been revived through a series of mass contact campaigns that it conducted, immediately following the Indo-Lanka Accord.” Loganathan, \textit{Sri Lanka}, p. 139.
“The EPRLF knew its strength in the Eastern Province. The expulsion of the LTTE from Jaffna also gave EPRLF an opportunity to reactivate its traditional support base in parts of Jaffna Peninsula, and amongst the depressed castes and underprivileged sections of Jaffna society.” Loganathan, \textit{Sri Lanka}, p. 140.
\textsuperscript{227} “EPRLF took the line that the IPKF was there to protect the Tamils (which increasingly seemed to mean the EPRLF government). Any excesses by the army had nothing to do with the EPRLF who stood alone.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, \textit{The Tamil Tigers}, p. 120.
\textsuperscript{228} Hellmann-Rajanayagam, \textit{The Tamil Tigers}, p. 140.
\textsuperscript{229} Muni, \textit{Pangs of Proximity}, pp. 144-5.
in pro-LTTE sources); they faced particular problems in dealing with a foreign population whose language most of the Indians forces didn't speak. Dubious elections in 1988 were won by the Indian-backed EPRLF, but EROS candidates did well advocating an LTTE-sympathetic political line. This suggests clear discontent with the Indian presence. As of 1987, however, a contemporary observer wondered “whether the LTTE can overshadow the EPRLF in this [Eastern] province is not certain.” This suggests that there was no determinative, obvious balance of popular support, at least in the east.

What we do know is that, despite heavy attrition, the command core of the LTTE remained largely the same during this period. However, the Tigers’ base of military operations moved from urban and semi-urban Jaffna to the dense north-central jungles of the Wanni. There may have been some recruiting shift towards Tamils from the Mullaitivu area in the northeast and possibly an expansion into the east, but conclusions are difficult to draw at the foot soldier, as opposed to command, level. At the level of commanders, “the contemporary militant movement then furnished a further chance for the Karaiyar to maintain their position against the Vellalar, this time on their very own turf: warfare and on their own conditions.”

We also know that the Tigers were able to expand their diaspora funding quite dramatically, especially in Europe, Canada, and Southeast Asia. This allowed the LTTE to

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231 Muni, despite his argument that the LTTE had high levels of support, notes the east as an exception: “even among the Tamils of the East, the LTTE lacked solid social support as a result of caste hierarchy and social support.” Muni, *Pangs of Proximity*, p. 140.
232 Interestingly, for all the academic obsession with “rough terrain” (James Fearon and David Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,” *The American Political Science Review* 97, no. 1 (February 2003), pp. 75-90), the onset of Sri Lanka’s civil war was remarkably Jaffna-centric: an urbanized area that, even outside of urban areas, is flat and clear. The “classical rural insurgency” phase came years into the war. A similar pattern can be observed in Kashmir (Srinagar and Sopore were the hotbeds of the militancy until 1992 or so; the latter wasn’t fully cleared until 1993). On Theepan from the Wanni and Mahattaya role in promoting him and Balraj: http://dbsjeyaraj.com/dbsj/archives/318
continue pumping guns into the organization despite the loss of formal Indian support.\textsuperscript{234} This was hugely important: “the strength and diversity of internal and international sources of support enjoyed by the LTTE made all the difference to the IPKF experience in Sri Lanka.”\textsuperscript{235} The LTTE continued to receive aid from some in Tamil Nadu, where Tamil hard-liners viewed the IPKF with contempt.\textsuperscript{236} Its smuggling operation was able to evade the Indian Navy’s interdiction attempts.\textsuperscript{237} The LTTE proved a tough foe in its jungle redoubts, suffering no splits, or major publicly-known feuds, during the IPKF’s war. It ended up killing over 1,000 Indian soldiers during the IPKF’s time in Sri Lanka.

This continued insurgent resilience ran smack into the Indian project of propping up the EPRLF/NEPC and blunting the Tigers’ military project. The IPKF was able to control Jaffna and the east, but found the Wanni jungles a more difficult proposition. For our purposes, it is worth trying to get a clearer sense of how the EPRLF functioned as both an armed group and political organization during this period. The LTTE is a clear example of high cohesion, but the EPRLF is an interesting comparative case. The basic picture appears to be one of high levels of elite cooperation within the EPRLF, but of fairly loose levels of discipline lower down in the organization. There are multiple reports of civilian victimization and thuggery by EPRLF cadres on the ground taking advantage of their power and Indian cover. It is impossible to tell if this is systematic, but reports along these lines are starkly at odds with the complete lack of such allegations against the LTTE. The clear reliance on Indian military support for funding reduced

\textsuperscript{234} “the LTTE’s refusal to fully endorse India’s leverage was also partly due to the fact that it could rely on other channels and sources of support, both within and outside India, which were not quite conducive to the Indian role.” Muni, \emph{Pangs of Proximity}, p. 169. “LTTE’s real strength, however, lay in its accumulation of sophisticated weaponry from the international arms bazaar.” Loganathan, \emph{Sri Lanka}, p.120, argues it may have been drug money by mysterious sources but this needs far more confirmation given Loganathan’s politics.

\textsuperscript{235} Muni, \emph{Pangs of Proximity}, p. 177.

\textsuperscript{236} then after MGR’s death “a rapprochement occurred between LTTE and the DMK” (Hell 94 106). Political demonstrators accused the IPKF of being the “Indian Tamil Killing Force.”

\textsuperscript{237} De Silva, \emph{Regional Powers and Small State Security}, p. 264.
its political credibility, as did the refusal of Jayewardene and Premadasa to take the NEPC seriously rather than viewing it as an Indian stalking-horse.\textsuperscript{238}

Yet at the same time, there is no evidence of severe elite division within the EPRLF, whose leaders appear to have drawn heavily on the core set of founders who had built the organization. They largely evacuated together rather than joining the LTTE or SLA amidst bitter feuds or splits. The EPRLF thus continues to occupy an intermediate space in terms of the cross-organization variation in Sri Lanka: not prone to major leadership unrest, but without tight control of individual foot soldiers.

\textit{Breakdown and Three-Sided War: Premadasa, Prabhakaran, and the Collapse of the Indian Experiment}. The IPKF’s counterinsurgency war between 1987 and 1990 coincided with the ultra-left-nationalist JVP rebellion in southern Sri Lanka that more directly threatened the core of Sri Lankan state. The JVP violence was fueled in part by profound hatred of an Indian presence on Sri Lankan soil, another indication of the Sinhalese fear of assimilation and domination by its massive neighbor. As De Silva writes of the late 1980s, “among the people at large as well as among most sections of the intelligentsia an attitude to India ranged from atavistic fear to a helpless rage.”\textsuperscript{239} The Sinhalese fear was that India would never leave, using the LTTE as a pretext to maintain a military presence on the ground backstopping an EPRLF regional government. This meant that crushing the JVP required not only a brutal state response (between 30,000 and 60,000 were killed in the space of 3 years) but also a way of getting rid of India to reduce nationalist pressure on the regime.\textsuperscript{240}

\textsuperscript{238} “the close connection with India was not uniformly liked among the population... it was apparently unable to stand up to the Tigers on its own but had to rely extensively on Indian arms and know-how.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, \textit{The Tamil Tigers}, p. 78.

\textsuperscript{239} De Silva, \textit{Regional Powers and Small State Security}, p. 219.

\textsuperscript{240} Jayewardene had viewed the ISLA/IPKF as a necessary evil, but Premadasa thought he could cleverly escape what JR saw as unshakeable structural constraints. Premadasa paid with his life for this belief.
Once Ranasinghe Premadasa took over as the Sri Lankan president in 1989, he not only continued to try to starve the EPRLF, but also began reaching out to the LTTE.\(^{241}\) His strategy was to ask India to depart, to provide guns to the Tigers that would help them push out the Indians, and while doing so to cut a deal with the LTTE that would end the civil war. Negotiations were opened with senior LTTE leaders (their negotiating delegations are one window into the leadership of the group) and guns funneled into LTTE camps in the north and east. Premadasa began making both public and private demands that the IPKF withdraw, and further degraded cooperation with the NEPC/EPRLF. Rajiv Gandhi’s government was in favor of maintaining the IPKF, growing increasingly enraged at Premadasa and building up the EPRLF with huge stocks of weapons and money. A Civilian Volunteer Force (CVF) was stood up as the proto-state coercive wing of the EPRLF; it continued the EPRLF’s mix of elite cohesion and foot soldier opportunism.\(^{242}\)

However, a massive corruption scandal brought down the Congress regime in Delhi in the 1989 general elections, bringing VP Singh to power at the head of an unwieldy coalition. Singh opposed the IPKF as an unnecessary foreign adventure, and began to withdraw the IPKF forces in 1989 and 1990. This was an exogenous shift in Indian support: while the IPKF was mentioned in the election, the major cudgel of the opposition’s onslaught was the Bofors defense procurement scandal, as well as opportunistic coalition battles in north India. Interestingly, the AIADMK party swept the Lok Sabha elections in Tamil Nadu in alliance with Rajiv’s Congress: Tamil Nadu unmistakably did not vote on the IPKF issue at the national level. Though the DMK won the 1989 state assembly election, this results appears to have been because of factionalism


\(^{242}\) On the CVF/EPRLF, see Muni, *Pangs of Proximity*, p. 150. CVF “at that time, the recruitment was entirely voluntary and a source of employment and rehabilitation of ‘ex-militants.’ However, it also enabled the non-LTTE organizations to protect themselves from LTTE’s terror campaign. Self-defence, typically, also tended to take the form of counter-terror against sympathizers of the LTTE.” Loganathan, *Sri Lanka*, p. 138.
within the AIADMK (following MGR’s death) and the lack of an alliance with Congress. The withdrawal of Indian aid from the EPRLF and other pro-Indian Tamil paramilitaries was a highly contingent result of VP Singh unexpectedly winning out over Lal Devi and Chandra Shekhar in the coalitional scramble for the prime ministership. Endogeneity or reverse causality is thus not a major concern. Indeed, two years later when Rajiv Gandhi made another run at the Centre, many believe he wanted to bring the IPKF back.

After nearly three years in Sri Lanka, the Indians were coming home (where many of the troops would soon find themselves back to counterinsurgency in Assam, Punjab, or Kashmir). The slow but steady Indian withdrawal left the EPRLF vulnerable to the LTTE, which had been badly battered by the IPKF but had nevertheless managed to maintain its war-fighting structures and to increase its experience and skill. India responded to this new vulnerability by pumping even more resources into the EPRLF as a small bit of payback aimed at both the Tigers and Premadasa’s government in Colombo. The EPRLF then made the crucial strategic decision to engage in a mass recruitment drive, including abductions and conscription. The organization hoped to generate enough fighting power to hold the LTTE and SLA at bay, at least in the east and around Trincomalee.

The conversion of the CVF and EPRLF into a so-called “Tamil National Army” was a disaster: “whatever support there may have been vanished completely in the wake of the forcible conscription of young boys as soldiers in the dreaded TNA.” Loganathan blames this strategic choice on Indian intelligence agencies, but it is clear the EPRLF was terrified of the looking LTTE threat. Unlike the LTTE of the 1990s and 2000s, which both engaged in forcible

244 Response to LTTE-GoSL rapprochement “took the form of ‘conscription’ of youths into the ACVF, labeled by the media as the Tamil National Army (TNA).” Loganathan, Sri Lanka, p. 154.
conscription/abduction and was able to hold itself together as a fighting force, “the sophisticated weapons were wasted in the hands of child soldiers who were not committed to the EPRLF cause and would desert at the first opportunity.”245 Ironically, large quantities of Indian-provided weapons ended up in the hands of the LTTE.246

As the IPKF withdrew, amidst pervasive false optimism on the part of Sri Lanka’s political-military elite, the TNA was “rapidly routed by the LTTE in Amparai and Batticaloa after the IPKF pulled out of those eastern districts, and most of their cadres left Sri Lanka before the final Indian withdrawal.”247 A quasi-unilateral declaration of independence by the EPRLF/NEPC brought no political results as the LTTE and Sri Lankan security forces began encircling the EPRLF. The EPRLF had put its faith in India and India had failed it, which the EPRLF itself had failed to effectively stretch its organizational sinews into local communities in order to control new recruits.248 EPRLF recruits were massacred across the north east, and many abandoned the fight immediately. The hope of holding onto eastern redoubts proved false.

The EPRLF leadership fled to Madras in south India (some foot soldiers ended up rather unexpectedly in rural Orissa) without apparently suffering major leadership splits or internal battles despite their devastating defeat. However, in 1990 14 senior commanders of the group were assassinated by an LTTE hit squad at a meeting intended to plot the EPRLF’s future

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248 Hellmann-Rajanayagam, "Tamil Militants." “the only way, however, in which EPRLF could realize this aim was the disastrous attempt to forcibly recruit young men into the ill-fated TNA during 1989, which cost it the last remnants of support it might have had.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers*, p. 77. Moreover, “the group had proceeded on the trust in the Indian staying power and the IPKF guarantees to keep it in control.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers*, p. 79.
strategy. After this almost-total leadership led the group’s remaining commanders to give up the fight and transition into a small Tamil political party caught between the government and the LTTE. 249 The EPRLF collapse involved waves of foot soldier-level defections amidst relatively high levels of cooperation among the core leadership; it thus continued to occupy an intermediate and ambiguous position on our dependent variable.

Theory and Reality in Tamil Militancy, 1987-1990. There is not a huge amount to report: the LTTE continued to be highly cohesive while fueled by external support and an embedded social base, while the EPRLF combined elements of both cohesion and state-reliance as it mixed external support, a lower-caste/eastern command core, and increasingly indiscriminate cadre-level recruiting. There was a significant element of agency in the EPRLF’s decision to adopt a mass-conscription strategy in 1989-90, but it seems to have exacerbated preexisting organizational weaknesses rather than fundamentally changing the nature of the group. The rapid expansion made the EPRLF’s on-the-ground weaknesses more visible and important, while the old command core remained largely the same (many of them would die together in Madras). The importance of Indian support is unmistakable: without it, the EPRLF would have nothing to offer prospective or existing recruits.

By contrast, the Tigers emerged battered but not broken from the IPKF period. There were no splits, feuds, or known-of internal unrest at any serious level. The social core of the LTTE remained fairly constant within the Tigers, providing a social and organizational environment in which to incorporate and indoctrinate new members. The clear sense of the LTTE is one of stability and motivation at the leadership level, which we are able to observe

249 The EPRLF later split into two: one led by Suresh Premachandran, the other led by Srithiran. The Premachandran faction became linked to the LTTE-controlled Tamil National Alliance parliamentary grouping; the EPRLF (Srithiran) maintained an anti-LTTE position. As of spring 2008, both EPRLF party leaders lived in SLA-protected compounds in the Colombo area.
better than at the level of foot soldiers and new cadres. With the ability of the LTTE to continue smuggling in guns and money from the diaspora and even still from Tamil Nadu, the group could credibly target the Indian forces and offer itself as the only insurgent game in town. The discipline of the Tigers was in full display when the LTTE shattered the EPRLF in 1989-90.

VII. The LTTE Proto-State and Tamil Pro-State Paramilitarism, 1990-2002

Our story now narrows even further to the LTTE and its (often opaque) internal workings. With EPRLF and TELO annihilated as armed groups and PLOT and EPDP taking shelter in the arms of the Sri Lankan state, only EROS and the Tigers remained. But as briefly outlined below, most of EROS ended up being absorbed into the LTTE amidst another split. The LTTE then faced the possibility of major internal unrest, but this alleged challenge was rapidly crushed without a loss of organizational integrity. Alongside the maintenance of strict internal discipline the Tigers were constructing state-like structures and transforming themselves into a more rigidly bureaucratized, rational-legal institution. It was during the early and mid-1990s that the LTTE moved beyond stereotypical guerrilla warfare into a new level of military effectiveness. It became “a disciplined and militarized group with a leader of remarkable military and organizational skills”\textsuperscript{250} and used suicide bombing in a wide variety of tactical and strategic settings.\textsuperscript{251} Despite the IPKF’s COIN efforts, as of 1990 the LTTE’s “leadership was intact and safe; its troops battle hardened and ready for combat; its morale high.”\textsuperscript{252}

From 1990 through 2002, there were no splits or open feuds between factions. There was some internal unrest surrounding the purging of deputy commander Mahattaya, but this did not escalate into an actual challenge to the leadership. What explains this combination of durability

\textsuperscript{250} Wilson, \textit{Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism}, p. 24.

\textsuperscript{251} “the best explanation for the adoption of SMs at the collective level is as a tactic in a wider military strategy for victory in a war of uneven force.” Hopgood, “Tamil Tigers, 1987-2002,” p. 66.

\textsuperscript{252} De Silva, \textit{Regional Powers and Small State Security}, p. 322.
and discipline? The importance of the theoretical argument I have made diminishes during the 1990s, as the Tigers’ conventional forces and state structures allowed the group to escape the specific challenges of high-risk insurgency I have focused on. Conscription, taxation, and, for a time, legitimate international engagement all changed the organizational hurdles and operational difficulties facing the LTTE. It could act like a “normal” military-political organization and needed to rely less on preexisting social structures, which it now had the power to shape and control in its own interests.

Nevertheless, there are deep elements of continuity that persisted even as the LTTE moved beyond insurgency and into state-building. The command core of the Tigers remained heavily Jaffna- and Karaiyar-centric, a robust but narrow set of leadership elites with Prabhakaran at the center. Incorporation of other Tamil social blocs, including easterners, was widespread - but crucially not at the level of major commanders. They remained predominantly drawn from the same social stratum upon which the LTTE was founded in the 1970s. Rather than the Tigers becoming a holistic representation of Tamil nationalism across region and caste, the organization’s social infrastructure remained heavily reliant on a particular regional/caste slice of Sri Lankan Tamils: “it was in Jaffna that the major decisions were taken.” Materially, massive diaspora aid continued, helping to substitute the lost support from India, which diminished even further when the LTTE assassinated Rajiv Gandhi in 1991.

*EROS Joins the LTTE.* During the IPKF, EROS had not engaged in military actions. Instead, it acted as a kind of unofficial political front for the LTTE, both in running for elections and in making public statements. As the IPKF withdrew in 1989-90, EROS split in a major

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254 The strategic logic for killing Rajiv appears to have been fear that his return to office in the 1991 Lok Sabha elections might lead to a return of the IPKF or Indian support for the SLA in Eelam War II. Whatever the rationale, the LTTE committed a massive strategic blunder that removed Indian sympathy for the LTTE for the rest of its existence even while Indians tended to sympathize with the broader Tamil situation.

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fashion: the faction led by Velupillai Balakumar joined the LTTE, while that led by Shankar Raji and founder Ratnasabapathy tried to continue as a political organization.\textsuperscript{255} Balakumar appears to have led the larger chunk of EROS into the Tigers, where he would become the LTTE’s “house intellectual”\textsuperscript{256} along with Anton Balasingham. The remnants of EROS eventually appear to have gone into exile in India or stayed in London.\textsuperscript{257} The field of anti-government rebel groups had been completely cleared. EROS had never been a very cohesive organization, strung across multiple continents and without an embedded local presence, so this outcome is not a surprise.

\textit{Tides of War.} It is worth briefly outlining the political and military circumstances under which the Tigers operated in the 1990s and early 2000s to show how impressive the LTTE’s cohesion was. The rapprochement with Premadasa’s administration collapsed in 1990, and the Tigers and state went back to war with a bloody vengeance. From 1990 until 1994, Eelam War II raged in both the north and the east. Aerial bombardment, forced population displacement, and mass killings occurred during this period. The LTTE was able to stand up and maintain conventional fighting forces able to engage in coordinated attacks on held SLA positions, while also maintaining guerrilla capabilities. In 1994-5 Chandrika Kumaratunga’s administration engaged in a peace process with the LTTE, but this collapsed in 1995.

Eelam War III from 1995 to 2002 would then involved large-scale warfare amidst Tiger territorial control of much of northern and eastern Sri Lanka. However, the government was able to wrest control of Jaffna city and much of the peninsula from the LTTE. In response to the seizure of Jaffna, the LTTE forced and encouraged much of the population to move into the Wanni jungles, a massive exercise in population relocation that the Tigers would repeat in the

\textsuperscript{255} On EROS breaking apart (Balakumar vs. Raji/Ratnasabapathy), see Gunaratna, \textit{Indian intervention in Sri Lanka}, p. 361.
\textsuperscript{256} Quote from Sivaram in Whitaker, \textit{Learning Politics from Sivaram}, p. 142.
\textsuperscript{257} Original co-founder Ratnasabapathy died in London.
future. The LTTE proved adept at allowing government forces to rapidly grab large chunks of territory and then target over-extended supply lines and flanks, thus overcoming the numerical imbalance in favor of the security forces. In 2002, a new peace process would begin that I discuss later. So between 1990 and 2002, the Tigers fought two major wars and engaged in two peace processes with two different administrations (Premadasa’s UNP and Kumaratunga’s SLFP). The LTTE assassinated Rajiv Gandhi in 1991 to forestall a suspected return of the IPKF and also killed a variety of Sri Lankan political and military leaders (including Premadasa).

Building Eelam: State Formation Amidst Conflict. From 1990 onwards the LTTE thus combined state-building, war, and negotiations. The Tigers maintained a sometimes-curious relationship with the Sri Lankan government, which during various periods continued to provide social welfare funding to LTTE-controlled areas. Between 1990 and 2002, the LTTE constructed its own network of schools, police, internal economic infrastructure, and military extraction, with the extent of the quasi-state structure varying with the relative power of the Tigers and the state. The strategy appears to have been to create state-like facts on the ground that would compel the international community to eventually accept a Tamil Eelam. The LTTE’s proto-state had significant infrastructural power, able to monitor and control the population while extracting resources and manpower. The size of the LTTE military grew to somewhere very approximately in the area of 10,000, though estimates vary quite wildly. The Tigers also expanded their military forces to move beyond simple guerrilla warfare into conventional combat

258 See Pushpa Iyer, “Coming to the table: Decisions and decision-making in a non-state armed group, The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).” Ph.D dissertation (George Mason University, 2007); and Zachariah Mampilly, “Stationary bandits: Understanding rebel governance.” Ph.D dissertation (University of California, Los Angeles, 2007). Mampilly persuasively argues that the LTTE and the Sri Lankan state found themselves in a strange relationship – the LTTE needed GoSL resources to keep its people fed, but the GoSL needed to keep giving the Tigers money in order to legitimate its sovereignty claim.

and sophisticated suicide attacks on a variety of targets.\footnote{An excellent discussion of LTTE suicide mission targeting can be found in Hopgood, “Tamil Tigers, 1987-2002.” Hopgood emphasizes the utility of suicide attacks for two major types of missions: targeted assassinations and attacks on hardened military targets (interestingly, including a number of attacks at sea). He argues that Black Tiger military operations in particular appear to resemble elite special forces activities – extremely risky but with at least some chance of success. This is similar to Lashkar-e-Taiba fedayeen assaults – they are suicidal in the sense of having a very low likelihood of survival, but that likelihood does exist. The targeted assassinations using actual suicide bombers are distinct however, since mission success absolutely requires killing oneself. Hopgood, “Tamil Tigers, 1987-2002,” p. 75.} The LTTE forged “a strong internal culture of personal and professional discipline.”\footnote{Hopgood, “Tamil Tigers, 1987-2002,” p. 75.}

The extent of popular support among the Tamil population for the LTTE during this period is, as always, unclear. Clarance argues that in 1990-1, “the LTTE were by now much less popular than after the IPKF withdrawal.”\footnote{Clarance, \textit{Ethnic Warfare in Sri Lanka}, p. 97. Hellman-Rajanayagam: middle/upper classes try to get their children out. Hellmann-Rajanayagam, \textit{The Tamil Tigers}, p. 139. “LTTE’s political hold on the population has always been precarious. Few Jaffna Tamils relished the thought of Prabhakaran and his merry boys in political control. They saw, and still see, LTTE as a necessary evil. They grudgingly admitted and admired their protective function, but happily sent them about their business once the Indians came. Then, after the IPKF had left and the Sri Lankan army was bombing Jaffna again, the population was ruefully returning to the Tigers for protection.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, \textit{The Tamil Tigers}, p. 140.} O’Duffy suggests that “many Tamils who were not indoctrinated by the LTTE complained – mostly anonymously for fear of retribution – about the totalitarian nature of LTTE control over political, economic, and social life.”\footnote{O’Duffy, “LTTE,” p. 270.} On the other hand, “the LTTE’s victories on the battlefield, and steadfastness on the Eelam issue, had earned it the loyalty of many normal Tamil people outside Colombo.”\footnote{Whitaker, \textit{Learning Politics from Sivaram}, p. 126.} It is very clear that there was significant enthusiasm and support for the LTTE among the Tamil populace. The LTTE had even in the 1980s begun to engage in rituals as a form of legitimation: “funeral processions for fallen martyrs, cyanide sacrifices, and rousing public speeches contributed towards the mythologising of Prabhakaran and the Tigers’ senior commanders who advanced the invincibility of the LTTE.”\footnote{McDowell, \textit{A Tamil Asylum Diaspora}, p. 179.}
A fascinating dynamic suggested in much of the literature (though of course impressionistically, given the lack of reliable data) is that support for the Tigers fluctuated quite dramatically according to their success. This success was thus in turn not driven by mass support: support was instead, at least partially, *endogenous* to the ability of the LTTE to protect Tamil fighters and civilians and to inflict pain on the Sri Lankan state. This does not seem to be a phenomenon isolated to Sri Lanka and encourages us to think more clearly about civilians as strategic actors who are trying to figure out how to stay alive and advance their own interests amidst war.\(^{266}\) The LTTE’s ability to generate successful violence created a (in some bizarre ways) virtuous circle that then attracted support and compliance – but the violence preceded mass mobilization.

The LTTE used its dominance to construct its own police force, school system, and internal taxation administration. The LTTE political wing became somewhat more prominent than previously, though the military remained the key part of the LTTE. The functional differentiation and bureaucratization of the Tigers occurred most dramatically during the 1990s as the LTTE was able to use its territorial control to consistently extract manpower and taxes. The military side of the LTTE came to include the Sea Tigers naval wing, Black Tigers suicide bombing wing, and several conventional fighting formations (the first being the Charles Anthony Regiment). Suicide bombers were used to engage in battlefield/tactical attacks as well as for targeted assassinations of Sri Lankan politicians (including President Premadasa in 1993) and senior military officials.

\(^{266}\) Fair argues that “empirically, the connections between public opinion and militancy are weak. There has been no serious effort to demonstrate that public resentment towards the state or militants affects the ability of insurgent to operate – though it is a commonsense assumption. A corollary is the claim that, by investing in human capital, alleviating poverty, and building roads and infrastructure, COIN forces can win hearts and minds, another proposition for which there is no empirical support,” C. Christine Fair, “Lessons from India’s Experience in the Punjab, 1978-1993,” in Sumit Ganguly and David P Fidler, eds., *India and Counterinsurgency: Lessons Learned* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 122.
The Endurance of Sub-Ethnic Divisions. Part of the Tigers’ agenda was mitigating caste divisions, especially in Jaffna.\textsuperscript{267} It is important not to overstate the extent of these changes, since interviews with individuals who have spent significant time in LTTE territory report that while change was perceptible, it was not revolutionary or overwhelming. Nevertheless, “surmounting of caste barriers means for the LTTE a reform of society at large.”\textsuperscript{268} The LTTE remained heavily Karaiyar; “whilst the door to the LTTE was open, the control of power was closely guarded by a core of Karaiyar men who shared a common background and became, in effect, a specialist class of feudal knights.”\textsuperscript{269} Key LTTE leaders rose from lower-caste roots.\textsuperscript{270} Interestingly, though, the Tigers adopted some of the rhetorical tropes of the traditional upper-castes: “the LTTE initiated societal changes by demanding social justice with traditional categories of argumentation. That means their terms and models of identification were those of the Vellalar. The Karaiyar usurped the ideals and traditions of the Vellalar and thus they became the ‘true’ Tamils instead of the former.”\textsuperscript{271} Eelam-friendly intellectuals reframed Tamil history to emphasize the martiality of the fishing castes: as Fuglerud summarizes an argument by Sivaram, “against this background [of Vellala dominance under British patronage] must be understood the

\textsuperscript{267}“Historically, caste divisions were rigid among the Tamils, especially in Jaffna society, though years of political conflict have eroded them.” Richardson, \textit{Paradise Poisoned}, p. 28.

\textsuperscript{268}“Today, the LTTE is a group not only with mixed caste membership, but, what is much more unusual and more important, with low-caste leadership. This is one reason why the LTTE seems to be the only group that endeavours to change Jaffna society, sometimes through doubtful and gruesome means. For the LTTE, social change flows like political power and redistribute justice, from the barrel of a gun.” Hellmann-Rajanayagam, “From Difference to Ethnic Solidarity,” p. 109.

\textsuperscript{269}Fuglerud writes that “several informants argue that the LTTE’s national project is nothing but a clever strategy of caste-climbing.” Fuglerud, \textit{Life on the Outside}, p. 88. Fuglerud also notes the links between the Karaiyar and Ceviyars in Norway reflecting their relationship in Sri Lanka.

\textsuperscript{270}“Thamilsevan’s growth and evolution within the LTTE was meteoric. It was also an illustration of how persons from the underprivileged sections of the Tamil community could rise to positions of authority within the LTTE.” DBS Jeyaraj, “Brigadier Thamilsevan: ‘Smiling’ face of the LTTE,” The Nation, http://www.nation.lk/2007/11/04/newsfe6.htm

\textsuperscript{271}Hellmann-Rajanayagam, “From Difference to Ethnic Solidarity,” p. 110. Also: “the Karaiyar leadership was seen as a war-time measure, not meant to be carried over into more settled times,” p. 139.
historical role of the fishing castes of Jaffna, the Karaiyars in particular, in preserving and protecting the true essence of Tamil culture all through the colonial period."\textsuperscript{272}

Writing in the 1990s, McDowell argues that:

"Just how deep and significant this caste division was (and is) in the Tamil ‘liberation struggle’ is difficult to assess. It is clear though, that members of the Karaiyar caste originating from the Peninsula’s north-eastern coastal areas are the political power-players in Jaffna Tamil society. Through the Tiger organisation, this group of former sea-traders build on their reputation as being more bellicose and adventurous than Vellalar landowners, to take on the self-appointed role as protectors of ‘Tamilness’, and forgers of a more equitable society."\textsuperscript{273}

Even amidst a collective ethnic identity - “the deep, cultivated sense of Tamil identity has all the hallmarks of nationalism”\textsuperscript{274} – intra-ethnic divisions remained salient as caste groupings battled to create (or defend) their visions of what a Tamil society should be. The LTTE continued to pay attention to the dynamics of intra-Tamil power: “democratic niceties like submitting to the verdict of the voters etc. are not for them. This makes permanent control of the Eastern Province so urgent. LTTE need both the economic potential that this area promises, and its non-Vellalar population to offset Vellalar dominance in Jaffna."\textsuperscript{275} Within the east, intra-Tamil caste tensions also endured.\textsuperscript{276} The argument I have offered about the important (though certainly not determinate) role of caste mobilization is supported by the fact that the same caste cleavages remained politically salient even during a period when Tamils were supposedly molded into a unitary identity category.

Similarly, the northern-dominated LTTE looked to expand into the east for strategic, political, and military reasons. In doing so, its “publicity sought to appeal to members of all

\textsuperscript{272} Fuglerud, \textit{Life on the Outside}, p. 160.
\textsuperscript{273} McDowell, \textit{A Tamil Asylum Diaspora}, pp. 88-89.
\textsuperscript{274} O’Duffy, “LTTE,” p. 269.
\textsuperscript{275} Hellmann-Rajanayagam, \textit{The Tamil Tigers}, p. 141.
castes in order to rally support behind the Tigers and to dilute the ‘Jaffnaness’ of the organisation which had long been perceived in the east.”

Purging Internal Dissent. The major apparent challenge to LTTE cohesion following the IPKF interlude came from an alleged potential putsch by Mahattaya, the Karaiyar from VVT who had become Prabhakaran’s deputy commander. It should be made clear at the outset that the details, and even ultimate contours, of this incident are opaque to outsiders. Mahattaya had allegedly become involved in a personal rivalry with Kittu, the fellow VVT-er who was a senior military commander in the Tigers, and with intelligence chief Pottu Amman. When Kittu was captured by India in 1993 (and committed suicide), Mahattaya was accused of having links to Indian intelligence and was also seen by some as more dovish than the prevailing political line. He had been a leader of the People’s Front of Tamil Eelam (PFLT) during the short-lived détente with the Premadasa administration. The outcome of this ostensible internal feud was remarkably similar to the Ivor Bell quasi-coup in the Provisional IRA in 1985: a close personal friend from a shared social background within the leadership began to challenge the top command. As in the PIRA, the unrest was immediately identified and crushed without a major structural rift.

In the case of Mahattaya, he was put under house arrest, his bodyguards arrested, and Mahattaya eventually executed. Everyone within the high command appears to have fallen

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277 McDowell, A Tamil Asylum Diaspora, p. 110.
278 Swamy, Inside an Elusive Mind, p. 242.
279 The internet is rife with speculation. One take: http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/DI07Df01.html. An Indian analyst with a security background argues that this is wrong: http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/notes3/note215.html
280 Swamy, Inside an Elusive Mind, p. 243, writes that Prabhakaran viewed PFLT as packed with Mahattaya loyalists.
281 A dubious discussion of this incident is found in Adele Balasingham’s purely pro-LTTE account; Anita Pratap provides a small anecdote; Swamy also discusses the incident. Pratap, Island of Blood, pp. 95-6.
into line behind Prabhakaran as Mahattaya was purged.\textsuperscript{282} His followers were not killed, but it seems that some were dismissed from the organization and others were kept an eye on.

Mahattaya's alleged challenge did not cause a significant ripple within the organization. Like Ivor Bell in Belfast, Mahattaya was operating directly within the social milieu of the top command: if he could not engineer a cascade of defections to his side he would have no distinct social base of support upon which to rely.

The information and obedience within the LTTE appear to have rapidly identified and then blocked any potential challenge from the inner sanctum. The situation with Colonel Karuna in 2004, we will see below, was very distinct since Karuna's power base lay outside the regional/caste social core at the heart of the LTTE. The Mahattaya episode showed the "totalitarian grip of the leader."\textsuperscript{283} Yet the Tigers during this period relied on "a very thick middle stratum of leaders equally committed to Eelam [as Prabhakaran]."\textsuperscript{284} This suggests that the LTTE was not a one-man organization: the list of key LTTE commanders who supported Prabhakaran includes formidable and militarily powerful leaders who had proven their mettle on the battlefield. Alongside this high-profile purge was the apparent creation of a set of internal prisons to hold the LTTE's internal prisoners: "hundreds were imprisoned and tortured."\textsuperscript{285}

Internal security was handled by Tiger Organisation Security Intelligence Service (TOSIS). Sources reported that this prison and internal surveillance regime remained in place up until the final destruction of the LTTE.

\textsuperscript{282} "When the LTTE high command learnt that Mahattaya was responsible for the death of Kittu, they acted immediately. They urgently assembled a high-powered hit-squad, including all their leading commanders, namely Sornam, the leader of the elite Tiger commando group, Balraj the deputy commander of the LTTE, Soosai, the commander of the Sea Tigers, and others. Pottu Amman, the intelligence chief, led the hit-squad." Who knows how accurate this is, but it accords with interviews: \url{http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/DI07Df01.html}. Yogi Yogaratnam was accused of being too close to Mahattaya and demoted.

\textsuperscript{283} O'Duffy, "LTTE," p. 266.

\textsuperscript{284} O'Duffy, "LTTE," p. 266.

\textsuperscript{285} Swamy, \textit{Inside an Elusive Mind}, p. 234.
Funding the LTTE: Overseas Money. The LTTE received diaspora support in the 1980s that played an important role in fueling the organization’s violence and reinforcing its internal cohesion. It was in the 1990s that the diaspora became perhaps the single most important source of funding for the Tigers. The LTTE’s assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in 1991, with the aim of forestalling any possible return of the IPKF, “created widespread revulsion against Prabhakaran and the Tigers in Tamil Nadu.”

With the Indians decisively out of Sri Lanka in the wake of Rajiv Gandhi’s assassination and Tamil Nadu Tamils far less impressed with the LTTE, the Tigers turned their focus to Europe, North America, and Southeast Asia. These sites of a large Tamil diaspora population became hugely important to the LTTE’s war machine and its ability to hold itself together in the face of serious adversity. Despite Indian enmity, “procurement of arms and ammunition from around the world continued unabated.” It formed a kind of “globalised Ho Chi Minh trail.”

The amount of money that the LTTE received from overseas during the 1990s and 2000s is quite remarkable: “some 80% of the LTTE’s $82 million annual income comes from such [overseas] fundraising.” As Pfaffenberger notes, “the LTTE is kept in the field in large measure because Tamil expatriates throughout the Western countries supposedly continue to contribute financially to the LTTE’s operations.” Fair suggests that “the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora has been a fundamental component of the Tamil insurgency. It has been the backbone of the LTTE’s global operations and has been a financial lifeline of the militancy.”

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286 Swamy, Inside an Elusive Mind, p. 231.
287 Swamy, Inside an Elusive Mind, p. 236.
291 Fair, “Diaspora Involvement in Insurgencies,” p. 139.
total diasporic population of very approximately between 700,000 and 800,000 total,292 overseas Sri Lankan Tamils have been able to generate both funds and diplomatic pressure on behalf of the LTTE. The mechanics of LTTE fundraising remain rather enshrouded in mystery, but the outlines are clear: “the LTTE is one of the most sophisticated insurgent groups in the world, with international financial and shipping networks, extensive procurement routes, and links with other terror networks.”293 A network of LTTE “floating warehouses” moved materiel around the globe.

Why did the diaspora end up supporting the LTTE so strongly? This is a complex question. To begin with, there were hawkish preferences among many diaspora Tamils: they “have a strong distrust of Colombo”294 born of the pogroms and violence of Sri Lanka’s political history. So, like hard-line Irish republicans in the US, there were ideological reasons to favor the militaristic LTTE.295 But it is important to be up-front: there is a serious endogeneity problem in this case, since after a certain point (sometime during the IPKF, it seems) the LTTE moved into the diaspora with a coercive vengeance. Their organizational successes preceded the major expansion of the diaspora presence, with the Tigers’ discipline and cohesion allowing it to squeeze diaspora communities:

“LTTE managers in Western cities used emotion and veiled coercion to force the Tamils to part with money for the struggle back home. In every country where it had a presence, LTTE functioned like a well-oiled machine, keeping tabs on Tamils, their incomes, and names and addresses of their relatives back in Sri Lanka”296

292 Fair, “Diaspora Involvement in Insurgencies,” p. 139.
293 O’Duffy, “LTTE,” p. 272. The leader of this network, KP, was a northern Karaiyar.
294 Fair, “Diaspora Involvement in Insurgencies,” p. 139.
296 Swamy, Inside an Elusive Mind, p. 238. “donations are raised from the approximately 650,000-strong Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in 60 countries, operating through LTTE (where legal), and a series of front organizations that separately funnel humanitarian aid, sophisticated electronic equipment, and weapons.” O’Duffy, “LTTE,” p. 272.
There was significant voluntary contribution, but also quite a lot of involuntary giving.\textsuperscript{297} This means that external support during this period was in part a consequence of prior cohesion, and not an exogenous cause. When many Tamils arrived in the diaspora, the LTTE was already there waiting for them.\textsuperscript{298} Nevertheless, some fairly disciplined groups are unable to attract diaspora support, and others are unable to take full advantage of it. The LTTE was unusual in the scale and sophistication of its diasporic effort and this support had a clear impact on the ability of the organization to generate and sustain fighting power. The LTTE’s military strength gave it the ability to attract and retain recruits, both in terms of being an attractive organization and having the capacity to credibly discipline its members. The diaspora’s support had original roots in ideological dynamics exogenous to LTTE cohesion, but over time the organization was able to reach its tentacles back into the diaspora and came to control it.

\textit{Tamil Pro-State Paramilitarism.} As the LTTE created and maintained a state-like presence in the north and east, the SLA relied on the PLOT, Douglas Devananda’s EPDP (the splinter group he led out of EPRLF in 1987), and a few other Tamil groups (like the Razeek group in Batticaloa) as pro-state paramilitaries. None of these organizations was firmly grounded in a particular social constituency, though apparently the EPDP did have some roots in the Kayts Islands of Jaffna. These organizations were used as Tiger-hunters, intelligence operatives, and deniable agents of the state. Some of them became quite involved in war economies, especially around Vavuniya where the line of government and LTTE control overlapped in ambiguous ways. Details on these organizations are extremely sparse, but they appear to have been state-

\textsuperscript{297} Excellent details on the Tamil diaspora in Switzerland are provided in McDowell, \textit{A Tamil Asylum Diaspora}. Some post-1983 Tamil migrants to diaspora "could be described as members of the Tamil elite, and were noticeably mobile," p. 146. Showing LTTE organizational control, "the leadership of the Swiss branch was hand selected in Jaffna and sent to Zurich to perform specific tasks in line with the organisation’s requirements" An excellent map of diaspora structure can be found on p. 260. Interestingly, "the LTTE chief co-ordinator in Switzerland believed that the level of active support within the migrant population for the LTTE was between five and seven percent or about 1,000 people in 1992.” p. 261.

\textsuperscript{298} Fuglerud, \textit{Life on the Outside} makes this point about migration in Norway.
reliant: held together by access to government patronage and protection, rather than on a socially-embedded base of supporters. At least within PLOT, it appears that recruits joined and abandoned the group due to calculations about the extent to which PLOT was favored in the balance between state and LTTE; for instance, when the LTTE was doing well, PLOT appears to have been less popular. There was also a group of older PLOT recruits with nowhere else to go who continued to be involved in the organization; the Tigers’ fratricidal tendencies forced them to remain on the side of the government despite co-ethnic identity.

2002-2009: Peace, War, and Annihilation

By 2002, the LTTE and the Sri Lankan state had fought to a stalemate. The Tigers had shown they could hold onto territory and their terror strikes in and around Colombo had shattered confidence in the Sri Lankan economy. At the same time, the LTTE had been unable to retake Jaffna despite concerted efforts. Moreover, after 9-11, a crackdown on LTTE diaspora fund-raising “dramatically changed” the political and economic context around the Tigers. A peace process, brokered by the Norwegians and supported by a variety of other countries, took hold from 2002 to 2006. Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe (of the UNP, who unusually co-existed with President Kumaratunga from the SLFP) believed that creating an international “safety net” and drawing the LTTE into economic and political integration would slowly force the group to abandon its war aims. The Tigers, on the other hand, believed that they held “strategic parity” and bargained hard for autonomy or even independence. It seems that the LTTE’s overall strategy was to play for time in order to force the international community to recognize it and transform de facto sovereignty into de jure sovereignty.

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The \textit{Karuna Split}. The peace process was a rocky and ultimately failed initiative. Though the Tigers continued to prepare for war, the strains of peace took a surprising toll on the LTTE. I have repeatedly emphasized the northern domination of the LTTE, yet the organization had become increasingly reliant on foot soldiers from the eastern province during the wars of the 1990s (particularly with Jaffna under SLA control). The ethnically-divided east was a site of both conventional and insurgent combat, with a history of brutal communal violence among Sinhalese, Muslims, and Tamils. The most senior eastern commander was Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan, known as Colonel Karuna, from the Batticaloa area. Through his military skills, Karuna had risen to a high level within the LTTE. But he was the only prominent easterner within the command ranks. If we take “counting heads”\textsuperscript{301} as a way of identifying the social base of the organization, this paucity of easterners makes the northern-led command dominance of the LTTE clear.\textsuperscript{302}

Karuna ran his eastern command with significant autonomy from Prabhakaran, though always clearly under his command. Karuna was involved in guerrilla war against the IPKF and the SLA, and then played an important role in creating and maintaining the conventional forces of the Tigers during the clashes of Eelam War III (he created the eastern equivalent to the


\textsuperscript{302} Chandrasekharan, a former government security official, writes that “this split is symptomatic of historical rivalry and disenchantment of the eastern people with the northerners. The LTTE leadership has all along been Jaffna centric and rarely has an easterner made it to the inner circle. Perhaps Karuna was the only one who reached almost to the top though he is as senior as anyone else in the top LTTE leadership.” http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/notes3/note215.html. See also DBS Jayarat, “Tiger vs tiger in eastern Sri Lanka,” Hindu, March 15, 2004, http://www.hindu.com/2004/03/15/stories/2004031504233400.htm. “Karuna alleges that of the 30 LTTE departments none is headed by an Eastern Tamil. The 15-man Central Committee has only two Easterners who are there by virtue of being Trincomalee and Batticaloa-Amparai commanders. Karuna compares this to the military situation where the Eastern tigers have made proportionately higher sacrifices. A total of 4,543 Eastern Tigers have lost their lives so far. Of these, 2,302 died in Northern battles. Operations on Eastern soil took a lesser number, 2,241. Despite these sacrifices for the North, the Eastern tigers have not received a fair deal after peace, says Karuna.”
Charles Anthony division). He had a history of fairly clear brutality, including massacres of prisoners, the targeting of Muslims and Sinhalese, and the fratricidal annihilation of the EPRLF in 1989-90. There had been some leadership shuffles within the eastern political-administrative structure in the past, but Karuna was the special military commander and unaffected by these previous maneuvers. This autonomy reflected the fact that “historically, the authority of the LTTE central leadership had ever been weakest in the east, and consequently the primordial need to avoid a split has been one of its abiding concerns since early days.” As O’Duffy notes, “the LTTE’s command-led domination of the Northern Province is not as easily maintained in the East.”

Some reports suggest that intelligence chief Pottu Amman had long distrusted Karuna. We do know that in 2003 and early 2004, rumors circulated within the LTTE that Karuna had been embezzling money from LTTE funds and an investigation led by Pottu Amman was apparently begun. At the same time, many in the east felt that their lack of representation and disproportionately small share of Tiger resources were signals of disrespect and exclusion. Despite the effective mobilization of the broader ethnic category of Tamil, “significant divisions exist between Eastern and Northern (primarily Jaffna) Tamils.” The combination of alleged corruption and east-west tensions was combustible. As the case against Karuna grew, he became

303 “Karuna, then its senior regional commander, led a band of 3,600 fighters to the Northern front to bail out his leader and comrades. Karuna fought a series of defensive battles in “alien” terrain and proved his mettle. He was then made overall field commander for the LTTE’s “Unceasing Waves” (third phase) counter-offensive that succeeded in wresting back control of areas extending from Oddusuddan to Omanthai.” Jeyaraj, “Tiger vs. tiger.”

304 Karikalan, Visu and Thurai, three senior easterners, were essentially relieved of their duties in 2002. Jeyaraj attributes this to the easterners’ indiscipline over communal issues: they were targeting Muslims despite the LTTE’s attempt to build a political relationship with one of the major Muslim parties in the east. He notes that in the east Prabhakaran has previously “allowed functional autonomy to a great degree.” DBS Jeyaraj, http://www.hinduonnet.com/fline/fl1917/19170600.htm.

305 Clarance, Ethnic Warfare in Sri Lanka, p. 221.


307 Jeyaraj, “Tiger vs. tiger.”

more comfortable with the peace process and reportedly less interested in a return to war, even as the LTTE expected and prepared for renewed combat.\textsuperscript{309}

At some point in late 2003 or early 2004 it Karuna was called north to the LTTE’s de facto capital in Kilinochchi to answer questions about his behavior, or was asked to send more of his troops north.\textsuperscript{310} Though the specific sequence is somewhat vague, it is apparent that Karuna refused to obey the demands of the LTTE leadership. Fearing the same death sentence that Mahattaya had received, Karuna defied his orders and raised the flag of rebellion from Batticaloa in March-April 2004. A number of senior eastern commanders abandoned Karuna and fled north to the Wanni, but Karuna was nevertheless able to tap into his regional network to pull away a significant group of eastern cadres. The actual number of Karuna’s faction remains frustratingly unclear – interviews and press reports place it anywhere from a few hundred to 6,000. Northern cadres were allegedly killed or driven out in the run-up to and during the split as a way of purging Prabhakaran and Pottu Amman loyalists.

Karuna also launched a publicity drive around Batticaloa and other eastern districts. The intra-ethnic cleavages between north and east were explicitly appealed to by Karuna as a justification for his defection.\textsuperscript{311} Whitaker reports Sivaram’s view that this TMVP propaganda:

“had pushed all the right buttons for the Batticaloa district. It had pointed to long-standing tensions between largely urban Jaffna and largely rural Batticaloa over such matters as the condescending hauteur with which Jaffna Tamils occasionally treated even educated Batticaloa Tamils; the scarcity of Batticaloa Tamils in the inner circles of the

\textsuperscript{309} Interviews in Colombo suggested that Karuna’s exposure to the peace process had mellowed him and introduced him to the previously-unknown comforts of peace. A possibly-apocryphal story is that Sri Lankan intelligence became convinced that Karuna did not want a return to war when they found that he had built a swimming pool outside his home.


\textsuperscript{311} McGilvray notes the social-political background to the Karuna revolt: “throughout the conflict there has been a feeling among some Batticaloa Tamils that the Eelam secessionist cause has been monopolized by the LTTE’s Jaffna-based leadership, and that eastern-born sons and daughters have been disproportionately martyred to achieve the military objectives of the LTTE in the north.” McGilvray, Crucible of Conflict, p. 328.
LTTE; the heavier burden of recruiting—especially of children—and thus larger number of casualties borne by the east; the on-going clashes with the district’s Muslim population, particularly over land tenure disrupted by the war; and, finally, to the rumor that money earmarked for rebuilding war-torn communities was mostly flowing north to fund the opulent lives of northern LTTE commanders. All these grievances, Sivaram said, Karuna, as a “son of the soil,” claimed to understand better than the Jaffna-oriented LTTE.\(^{312}\)

There is not much evidence that the Sri Lankan or Indian governments actively precipitated the Karuna split, though it is clear that GoSL later tried to take advantage of it. 2004 was during the peace process, so the government was trying to stay out of LTTE business (though there was intra-government disagreement between the president and prime minister). Instead, the split was driven by a political and personal battle over the future of the LTTE, underpinned by enduring cleavages that reflected the disjuncture between the bonding network core of the LTTE and its more socially/politically peripheral (though militarily important) components.\(^{313}\) The discourse of caste and region that propelled the eastern revolt echoed loosely some of the intra-Jaffna battles over social control, but with the LTTE leadership now in the role of dominance. The argument of this dissertation is that the structure and cohesion of formal insurgent organizations tends to reflect pre-war social groupings and cleavages (even below the level of ethnic identity categories), and there is empirical support for this position even within the highly disciplined, nationalist LTTE decades after it began its war.

The LTTE mobilized its forces and marched south, pushing aside Karuna with the military discipline and firepower characteristic of its wars. He apparently disbanded most of his cadres and fled with a group of supporters to Colombo. The LTTE clearly “won” the split, taking back control of the east and reestablishing its administrative and military structures in the area from Trincomalee through Batticaloa. However, Karuna and his followers created the Tamil

\(^{312}\) Whitaker, *Learning Politics from Sivaram*, p. 198.

Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP) as a political party-cum-armed paramilitary under the protection of the Sri Lankan security forces. The TMVP could come back to haunt the LTTE, but in the meantime it appears to have become a state-reliant armed group: removed from its social groundings in the east, it was forced to fall back on the SLA and GoSL for protection and materiel support. Like the remnants of PLOT, EPDP, and parts of the EPRLF, the TMVP’s leaders were protected by Sri Lankan security forces, lived in highly fortified compounds in and around Colombo.

*Back to War.* By 2006, the peace process had frayed badly. Internal divisions within the Sinhalese-dominated southern political sphere combined with the LTTE’s clear lack of interest in a solution short of de facto independence to create a stalemate. Both sides accused the other of stalling and negotiating in bad faith. The election of a new SLFP president and prime minister in 2005 reduced the government’s interest in continuing the process. A kind of “shadow war” had been escalating since the Karuna split, of assassinations and abductions, especially out east. It exploded into full scale warfare in the summer of 2006. The first major front was the east, which was an easier battle ground for the SLA than the ethnically-homogenous jungles of the north. The SLA had been refitted, reformed, and increased during the ceasefire, and were assisted by the intelligence provided by Karuna’s TMVP about the LTTE’s eastern operations. The Karuna split was “thoroughly exploited for strategic ends by the Sri Lankan security forces.”

The eastern province fell to the government in 2007.

There is no need here for a blow-by-blow account of the three years of war between 2006 and 2009. Even in the face of growing losses of manpower and territory, the LTTE suffered no further splits or (publicly known) internal feuds. Massively outnumbered and increasingly outgunned, the Tigers were relentlessly driven back by the SLA, which relied on a mix of

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conventional land warfare, air attacks, and long-range penetration units. Unlike previous offensives, the SLA focused on killing Tigers and protecting flanks and supply lines, not rapidly seizing large tracts of land. The Tigers had entered the conflict with false optimism, underestimating the consequences of the SLA reform and the crackdown on the diaspora for LTTE fighting power. The war was not really one of counterinsurgency, though there were irregular aspects to it: rather, it was a clash of conventional forces in a contest for control of territory. The Tigers moved hundreds of thousands of Tamil civilians with them in order to preserve a manpower base from which to extract conscripts in order to deal with attrition.

After a period of stasis through much of 2008, late 2008 and 2009 saw a series of dramatic successes for the Sri Lankan military. Senior LTTE leaders were killed or died from natural causes during Eelam War IV, depriving the Tigers of their stable and experienced core of commanders. Reliable reporting from the war zone was extremely scarce but it is clear that this was a bloody war with little regard for human rights on either side. In a brutally violent final push, the SLA wiped out the vast majority of the LTTE leadership by late May 2009 and took a huge number of prisoners (it remains unclear who from the leadership was taken prisoner).

Given the truly massive attrition imposed on the organization and the interning of hundreds of thousands of Tamils in camps, the LTTE as of early 2010 appears to have been annihilated as an organization except for diaspora supporters. The Tigers did not collapse because of splits or feuds (although Karuna split helped the SLA) but instead because of their inability to field sufficient forces to hold the SLA at bay. Even in the face of increasingly sure defeat, the LTTE remained disciplined and cohesive; it went down fighting amidst bloody chaos. If reports are to be believed, a number of cadres even sacrificed their lives in a last-ditch (failed) scheme to extract Prabhakaran and other key leaders.

A visual representation of the course of the offensives can be found at http://www.defence.lk/orbat/Default.asp.
Conclusion

Tamil militancy presents severe research challenges and it would intellectually dishonest to offer any confident findings from this set of comparative cases. The Kashmir and Northern Ireland studies offer far richer data with which to adjudicate between theories. Notwithstanding these limitations, what can we take away from Sri Lanka’s conflict for explaining insurgent cohesion? First, neither ethno-nationalism nor Marxism-Leninism are sufficient bases for building strong organizations. Both nationalist (TELO) and leftist (PLOT, EROS) Tamil organizations suffered severe internal unrest. Ideologies and identities are obviously crucial tools for mobilization but are not sufficient “glue” to hold groups together in the midst of a fluid and extremely violent war. The self-aggrandizing narrative of LTTE sympathizers point to nationalist sentiment as the basis of organizational discipline, but comparative cases both within and beyond Sri Lanka suggest that this is a very incomplete argument. A similar dynamic affects arguments built around the interests of economic classes, which turn out not to be unitary social actors.

Second, the most cohesive group, the LTTE, drew most clearly on a specific preexisting social (caste) structure. This coding is fairly unambiguous, and at least offers tentative support for the argument of my dissertation. The fact that the high command of the Tigers had such a disproportionately high representation of this Karaiyar caste base, and that informed observers (like Wilson and Hellman-Rajanayagam) point to this as an important factor in LTTE organization-building, should make us confident that the theory I outlined in Chapter 3 provides at least some purchase on the question of Tiger cohesion. The historical autonomy and robust intra-caste ties of the Karaiyar appear to have given the LTTE an edge over its competitors in terms of both collective action and organization-building before and after the crucial events of 1983. A surprisingly high proportion of the Tigers’ command core was drawn a specific caste-
regional base that did not reflect the broader Sri Lankan Tamil ethnic category. This intra-ethnic imbalance endured over time, even across decades of war and political maneuvering. While much of civil war involves endogenous dynamics, it is still striking how pre-war patterns of social organization can be “sticky” over time and play an important role in structuring how organizations form and function.

I don’t want to push this variable too far, since our knowledge of the internal workings and overall social composition of the LTTE remains unclear. Nevertheless, this finding is a clear corrective to the sweeping assertions many authors make about either the unique importance of Prabhakaran or the potency of nationalism. These factors also mattered, but the more specific social glue of the organization provided mechanisms of recruitment, trust, and monitoring that could stabilize expansion and maintain internal cooperation in hard times amidst the turbulence of war. The value of structured comparison is clearly found in studying Tamil militancy – it allows us to consider counterfactuals and variation within a tightly shared context, rather than taking outcomes as an inevitable, unquestionable historical given.

Finally, external support was undeniably important in determining the trajectories of organizations. Unable to consistently raise large sums of money in the resource-poor Tamil areas of Sri Lanka (and also harried by recurrent government offensives), the Tamil militant groups looked to the Indian state and the Tamil diaspora for war-fighting sustenance. The Indian government placed a crucial role in building the military power of the armed groups through guns, money, and training, as well as sanctuary: the increase in Indian support in 1983 transformed the Tamil insurgency from an irritant into a threat to Sri Lanka’s territorial integrity. This provided resources to TELO, EPRLF, and LTTE in particular to attract new fighters and keep them in the fold, though the lure of patronage on its own could not TELO together.
Organizations that lacked significant support, particularly PLOT, had to scramble to find weapons and money and were thus less able to generate and sustain violence. The EPRLF could not have created a provincial administration in the northeast or maintained an active militia presence without the support of RAW and the Indian Army during the IPKF interlude. Indian support was not driven by prior patterns of cohesion: it instead reflected the strategic war aims and personal relationships of key political and bureaucratic elites in Delhi and Madras. Contrary to the expectations of “greed” theorists, inflows of massive external aid could in fact bolster internal discipline, rather than propelling opportunistic civilian abuse.

As this Indian support dramatically diminished in the late 1980s and early 1990s (again for strategic reasons, not endogenous responses to organizational cohesion), the international Tamil diaspora provided vast sums of money in a consistent fashion to the LTTE. This allowed the Tigers to create and fund institutionalized structures of internal security and administration that could engage in conscription and resource extraction. Initial support was provided for ideological reasons, as the hard-line vision of the LTTE appealed to a significant portion of a diaspora driven out of Sri Lanka by Sinhalese violence and discrimination.

However, the level of diaspora support became endogenous to the Tigers’ organizational power. Unlike in the Northern Ireland case, the diaspora was an object of coercion and intimidation, which means that over time its contribution reflected the Tigers’ interests and discipline. Despite this endogeneity, there were other factors that allowed the diaspora to be a support base, including lax international laws pre-9/11. Just being a cohesive armed group is not enough to attract external support: motivation and opportunity must exist abroad. Both of these antecedent conditions existed in Europe, North America, and Southeast Asia during the 1990s and even to some extent after 9/11. As crackdowns mounted around the globe, however, the
ability of the diaspora to funnel guns and money into the LTTE-held territory diminished, with an effect on the ability of the Tigers to sustain their defensive struggle.

**Assessing Alternative Theories.** Alternative theories do not fare well in this case. Arguments about the role of ethnic solidarity falter on the Tigers’ heavy reliance on intra-ethnic violence and fratricide, the caste and regional divisions within the Tamil community, and the inability of TELO’s simple nationalist ideology to gain traction. As noted above, nationalism was a crucial rallying cry and a spur to militant mobilization, but at a fine-grained level there was no clear correlation between ethno-nationalism (or for that matter, class mobilization) and specific organizational outcomes. Tiger cohesion led the way for ethno-nationalist symbolism and appeals, not the other way around. Like warlords building European states and the nations to accompany them, men with guns were able to advance particular narratives and shift the salience of identity categories in very important ways, but their ability to do so depended on being able to consistently deploy disciplined violence. Accounts that speak of organic nationalism, spontaneous mass support, and the links between the Tigers and ‘the people’ need to be viewed skeptically given the overwhelming evidence of intra-ethnic competition and coercion. Religion was similarly not a crucial factor, since many Tigers were Christians.

Material resources helped some groups transform into institutionalized, robust organizations rather than spurring greed and defection. There was significant variation within the category of significantly-supported, resource rich organizations, from the fractious TELO to the cohesive LTTE. Though external support generally seems desirable, its specific effects nevertheless are contingent on the social environment in which these external resources flow. The resource-poor PLOT did not successfully engage in social mobilization or grassroots activism; instead, it became ever more desperate for sources of revenue that led to criminality,
civilian victimization, military inactivity, and even (in 1988) a foray into being mercenaries. The Sri Lankan case yet again emphasizes that material resources are essential for fighting a serious, protracted guerrilla war against a militarily-capable, and that external sources of those resources are often absolutely essential. At the same time, it is clear that state sponsorship was not sufficient to provide leverage for India over the LTTE: they “prevailed over their Tamil rivals despite all the efforts of RAW to prevent their success.”

Ideological divisions did exist within groups and helped to trigger splits and feuds. However, they were overlain by social divisions in ways that are hard to causally disentangle (Uma Maheswaran, for instance, appealed both to leftist ideology and Vellala castes: many Vellalars jumped ship with him and it hard to imagine that these landowners were exclusively leftists). Moreover, some of the splits (like Karuna from the LTTE in 2004, Devananda from EPRLF in 1987, Bobby vs. Das in 1986 TELO) were not preceded by any clear, ex ante ideological differences over high politics. For arguments that focus on ideological disagreement to offer explanatory power, we need to be able to consistently observe these ideologies, which is frequently not the case: instead, they are fluid and suited to the needs of the situation. Ideological clashes often seem to arise in the process of organizational competition, not as a preceding cause.

Finally, counterinsurgent state policy played a limited role in these dynamics. The Sri Lankan state was generally absent or blinding blind when internal unrest was occurring and was not involved in Machiavellian processes of manipulation and infiltration. While there is no doubt the state’s highly repressive and indiscriminate policies encouraged Tamil militant mobilization at the macro-level, on their own they were insufficient to forge the likes or TELO or PLOT into

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cohesive organizations at the micro- or “meso”-levels. The EPRLF found the Indian state intervention in 1987-89 to its benefit, while the LTTE did not.

Thus, while propelled at the mass level by macro-dynamics of linguistic competition, the specific trajectories of Tamil militancy were crucially shaped by the structures of the social networks upon which armed groups built their struggle and by their access to material aid from abroad. The different organizational structures and military strengths of the armed groups fundamentally influenced the broader political nature of the struggle. For instance, if the LTTE had been unable to undermine the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord (ISLA) or had split in 1990 during negotiations with the Premadasa government, the last twenty years of Sri Lankan history would have looked very different. If the PLOT had attracted large-scale Indian aid, it might have been able to better counter the LTTE; if the EPRLF and TELO had had structural access to embedded bonding network social bases, they could have taken on the Tigers (and the Sri Lankan government) both before and after the introduction of the Indian peacekeepers.

Conclusion. The often very micro-level analysis of this chapter is intimately linked to the macro-level dynamics of the country’s politics. Sri Lanka’s ethnic conflict took the course it did in very significant part because of the relative balance of power (constituted by military strength and organizational discipline) between the Tamil groups, and between the LTTE and the state. The final annihilation of the LTTE does not change the human and economic cost of thirty years of war, driven by the consistent ability of the Tigers to avoid major splits and internal dissent while ruthlessly deploying military power. Only by explaining how Tamil militant groups were constructed and sustained (or shattered) can we understand the broader contours of Sri Lanka’s ethnic conflict.

317 Fotini Christia, “The closest of enemies: Alliance formation in the Afghan and Bosnian civil wars,” Ph.D dissertation (Harvard University, 2008) argues that organizational analysis falls at the “meso-level” between structural political trends and individual behavior.
What are the implications of my argument for the future of Sri Lanka? Given the massive relocation and attrition of every layer of LTTE organization and Tamil social structure, the social infrastructure necessary to rebuild the Tigers appears to be lacking. Grievances remain, and perhaps are more intense than ever before, but grievances are not enough. Social links have been sundered, often through large-scale killing. The grim truth is that it is possible to destroy insurgent organizations through sheer violence because insurgency is held together by social relationships rather than simply ideology. Shattering social relationships can achieve COIN goals even in the absence of major political or ideological changes: though unrest and dissent may very well remain they cannot be reliably and consistently acted upon in the absence of collective action capacity. Tamil social mobilization has been broken.

Nearly as important is the crackdown on diasporic Tamils and the lack of serious international support for the LTTE in the 2000s. Though the GoSL came under serious international criticism, at the end of the day it had the active or tacit support of India, Pakistan, and China, and no countries were actively supporting the LTTE. It is hard to imagine circumstances under which this changes in any meaningful way.\(^{318}\) Acquiring large quantities of guns and money will be hugely difficult for any aspiring Tamil militants. The prospects for renewed insurgency hinge on whether Sri Lankan COIN forces remain in massive presence in the northeast, whether social structures can be deployed for militancy, and whether external support can be generated. The odds that any of these variables will change in favor of militancy are very small. Sri Lanka is likely to remain a garrison-state.

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\(^{318}\) LTTE international procurement commander KP was arrested/renditioned in Malaysia and is now in Sri Lankan custody.
Chapter 7
External Validity: Comparative Insurgent Cohesion in Southeast Asia

Introduction

The previous empirical chapters have emphasized fine-grained comparisons across armed groups within the same wars. This approach has important virtues of detail, controlled context, and knowledge of the processes underlying insurgent mobilization. However, Kashmir, Northern Ireland, and Sri Lanka may be outliers from the broader universe of insurgent groups: perhaps social cleavages, state policies, or political economies are different than the average insurgency. External validity is therefore a crucial issue that needs to be dealt with in order to credibly evaluate the explanatory power of my theory.

In this chapter I address some of these concerns across more cases and more comparisons by studying insurgent organizations in Southeast Asia. The states of SE Asia experienced World War II as a massive exogenous shock that created a shared starting point across which to compare both governments and armed groups. States were formed (or revitalized) in the wake of World War II amidst both international security threats and internal unrest. Powerful militaries emerged in most of these states, often alongside unrestrained internal security apparatuses. At the same time, separatist ethnic mobilization, the tide of communist ideology, and the potency of religious appeals led to rebellions and revolutions that pitted committed insurgents against government specialists in violence.

Amidst this turmoil, I study whether my theory can help us explain the organizational trajectories of Communist armed groups in Vietnam, Malaya, and the Philippines, and ethno-religious and ethno-linguistic armed groups in Indonesia and the Philippines. This external validity probe allows a mix of levels of analysis, and provides variation in the ethnic-vs-leftist ideologies of organizations, the regime type of the counterinsurgent state, government policy
across space and over time, and in the nature of external support. There are three particular clusters of comparisons at different levels of analysis: *cross-national* studies of Communist groups in Malaya, Vietnam, and the Philippines (with some over-time analysis), a *sub-national* comparison of the separatist conflicts in Aceh and East Timor in Indonesia, and a *within-conflict* comparison of MNLF and MILF in the southern Philippines. These widely varying contexts push my theory out of the scope conditions in which I would expect it to perform best, which further tests its power.

As in the other cases studied in this dissertation, there is huge complexity in the onset and evolution of these wars. I do not pretend to offer a general theory of civil war nor can my argument explain many of the complexities and contingencies of these conflicts. Nevertheless, my theoretical focus on social mobilization networks and external material support helps us understand the organizational roots and trajectories of most of these armed groups. Where my expectations are simply not borne out, I make this explicit. Put simply, my argument tells us important things about ethnic and religious armed groups in Aceh and East Timor in Indonesia, and Communist and Muslim armed groups in the Philippines. The ability of insurgent entrepreneurs to tap into robust preexisting social networks was crucial for sustaining cohesion; social divisions and distance within insurgent coalitions, even amidst ethnic homogeneity or when driven by a Leninist organizational ideology, led to fragmentation and disarray.

My theory offers far less insight, though still some, into the organizational trajectories of Communist armed groups in Malaya and Vietnam. In these latter cases, communist ideology was a crucial force in building cohesion, and state policy directly contributed to both organizational discipline and disarray by providing or eliminating political space for mobilization. Most importantly, I am unable to explain how the communist parties at the core of these rebellions...
were able to regenerate themselves in the face of extraordinary attrition and political disruption. These studies, however, point the way to more encompassing explanations of insurgent trajectories by helping to trace out the ways that social networks, resources, ideologies, and state policy interact.

I. Outlining the Comparisons: Insurgency and State-Building in Post-War Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia has been the site of some of the most intense and protracted rebellions in the post-World War II world. Insurgency and counterinsurgency have touched almost every single country (and/or its colonial predecessor) in the region. Like in South Asia, democratic irregularities and authoritarian regimes, brutal human rights abuses, and large-scale zones of enduring contention have emerged amidst numerous militant groups, government security forces, and formal and informal political groupings. Yet, other aspects of these wars have varied quite a lot from the core cases studied in this dissertation, including in the strength and nature of states and the goals of insurgents.

With a few exceptions, the armed groups in these Southeast Asian insurgencies have not been studied though a broad comparative lens informed by theory. Here I study a set of Southeast Asian civil wars, a region about which I knew remarkably little about when I developed and tested my theory. Claims to be “testing” theories on new cases always need to be taken with numerous grains of salt, but it can be said with true honesty that I had no idea what I was getting into with this chapter.

I select four countries and seven armed groups as an external validity check on my theory. This allows a mixture of sub- and cross-national comparisons with somewhat detailed

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historical information. Studying multiple armed groups in Indonesia and the Philippines allows for sub-national comparisons within and across conflicts, while examining Malaya and Vietnam takes us into a completely different world of colonial counterinsurgency. The goal is to strike a balance between the virtues of studying numerous new cases and the vices of low-quality, overstretched dilettantism. Offering superficial thoughts and correlations on 70 armed groups about which I know basically nothing is not likely to be persuasive. Instead I rely on comparisons that control for possible confounding variables while allowing for variation in key alternative independent variables.

The countries, groups studied, their ideological orientation, outcomes of the wars, and the rough array of organizational variation can be found in the tables below outlining each set of comparisons:

Table 7.1 Armed groups in SE Asia.

**Communist Insurgent Groups, 1944-1960**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>← Most Cohesive</th>
<th>Least Cohesive →</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group</strong></td>
<td>Viet Minh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country</strong></td>
<td>Vietnam/French Indochina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideology</strong></td>
<td>Communist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>War Outcome</strong></td>
<td>Military Victory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Separatist Insurgent Groups in Indonesia, 1975-2005**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>← More Cohesive</th>
<th>Less Cohesive →</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group</strong></td>
<td>Garakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country</strong></td>
<td>Indonesia (Aceh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideology</strong></td>
<td>Ethnic</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>War Outcome</strong></td>
<td>Settled</td>
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</table>

**Muslim Insurgent Groups in the Southern Philippines, 1972-Present**

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<tr>
<th>← More Cohesive</th>
<th>Less Cohesive →</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group</strong></td>
<td>Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country</strong></td>
<td>Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideology</strong></td>
<td>Ethnic/Religious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>War Outcome</strong></td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Preview of Findings.** What do I find? My theory works reasonably well in both identity and communist rebellions in Indonesia and the Philippines, but has limited explanatory power in explaining the leftist armed groups in Malaya and Vietnam. The importance of social structures in shaping organizational form is clear in the Aceh and East Timor revolts in Indonesia and in both the Muslim separatist (MNLF, MILF) and 1940s-50s Hukbahalap rebellions in the Philippines. While I lack fine-grained information on network structures, the rough patterns of organization-building in these cases correspond to preexisting patterns of social interaction. Organizations were constructed around prior social networks and institutions, maintaining a core set of continuities that shaped institutional structure, for better and worse, even amidst the rapid evolution caused by conflict.

The communist insurgencies in Malaya (MCP/MNLA) and Vietnam (Viet Minh), however, offer far less support to my argument. The entire purpose of communist organization-building is sundering prior social relations in favor of a new (or previously-unrecognized) loyalty to party and class, so it would be a surprise to find a strong role for preexisting networks. There is a clear, and hugely important, role in these conflicts for the power of the Marxist-Leninist organizational blueprint, and also for the importance of state policy in structuring insurgent form. Nevertheless, even in the cases of the Viet Minh and MCP my approach can offer some valuable insights. Communist parties were forced to find recruits and expand their fighting cadres beyond the small core of party members, requiring the creation of social alliances and both mass and elite incorporation that undermined Leninist organizational weapons. Crucially, the lack of significant material aid badly undermined MCP fighting power, while support from China played an important role in bolstering ICP cohesion in Indochina. In Vietnam, the endogenous creation
of new social-organizational structures was a difficult and time-consuming process, and included two highly fragmented previous failed revolts.

These findings force us to qualify existing arguments that place heavy focus on state policy in explaining insurgent outcomes. As I suggest in the Philippines and Indonesia in particular, the outcomes of wars are not solely determined by government behavior: instead, outcomes have much to do with insurgent-side variables. States and insurgents were locked in a two-sided clash, rather than the state simply acting upon its passive subjects. Malaya is most clearly the case where state policy played a pivotal role in triggering fragmentation, but even here we need to pay far more attention to the armed group itself rather than portraying counterinsurgency policy as a deus ex machina: the MCP’s rebellion faced serious problems of social coalition-building that constrained its internal discipline even before the COIN response.

More broadly, then, this study of South East Asia offers caveat ed support for my argument, directs our attention to the important but nevertheless inconsistent role of ideology in institution-building, and offers direction for more sophisticated accounts of the outcomes of insurgent clashes in post-war Southeast Asia. States and their foes became intertwined in brutal conflicts that tested insurgent organization in profound ways. Both sides need to be studied if we are to understand what directions these wars took.

II. “Peasants and Commissars”:
Communist Insurgents in the Philippines, Malaya, and Vietnam

Marxist-Leninist armed groups place an intentional stress on building and maintaining discipline and internal control. There is a clear ideology of organization that undergirds the communist revolutionary blueprint and that spurred fears throughout the Cold War of the

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2 Goodwin, *No Other Way Out*.
Communist "organizational weapon."\(^4\) Yet as Scott notes, communist groups face profound problems in maintaining control and discipline because the local agendas of peasants can clash with the broader political goals of the party cadres.\(^5\) He finds that the weakest link in any revolution is that of the urban or centrally-controlled cadre trying to harness and discipline rural recruits towards a vision that may not in fact fully suit the interests of peasants. Despite the clear stress on discipline found in Marxism-Leninism, such groups must still deal with social and organizational challenges to group cohesion that resemble those facing other insurgent organizations.\(^6\) By examining groups of this type we can see whether my argument about preexisting social structure can offer insight into the dynamics of groups that are intentionally hoping to shatter and remodel the broader structure of society.

Malaya, Indochina, and the Philippines each experienced a major communist insurgency in the wake of World War II, and studying them in comparative perspective allows an assessment of the relative weight of Marxist-Leninist ideology, state policy, and social bases in organization-building. I find that this organizational ideology is hugely important and provides a powerful and undeniable limit to my arguments about social structure. The ideology led leaders to try to consciously construct enduring bureaucratic-rational institutions, and the inspiration provided by the Marxist-Leninist example found committed adherents even when not linked through strong social connections to the party. There was also an important role for state counterinsurgency policy.

At the same time, however, there was significant variation in the ability of insurgent entrepreneurs to construct robust insurgent organizations despite a shared blueprint. Simply

\(^5\) Scott, "Revolution in the Revolution."
\(^6\) "Party propaganda and Leninist aspirations to the contrary notwithstanding, the revolutionary party may, in a limited sense, 'make' the revolution, but not just as it pleases." Scott "Revolution in the Revolution," p. 128.
adhering to communist ideology was insufficient to construct and maintain a strong, disciplined group. In a rough ranking, the Viet Minh in French Indochina/Vietnam (led by the Indochinese Communist Party, ICP) from 1944-54 was the most cohesive, the Hukbalahaps in the Philippines the least cohesive, and the Malayan Communist Party (MCP)/Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA) in between. The Viet Minh avoided any significant splits or violent feuds, but faced significant and quite endemic problems of discipline and internal control as it tried to build and consolidate an insurgent-state from 1945 until 1954. I also extend the temporal focus back to 1930-31 and 1940 to study previous ICP-linked rebellions, and show that variation across these three revolts (significant fragmentation and total failure in the first two cases) teaches us important things about the challenges of endogenous organization-building.

The MCP and its armed MNLA wing represent a more complex picture. On the one hand, there were not major splits during the Emergency period between 1948 and 1960 in terms of factional feuds and breakaways, but there was a huge problem with surrenders, defections, and intelligence penetration. The organization was pushed out of Malaya into a small set of Thai bases where it weakly endured, and finally began to formally splinter, until a de facto surrender in 1989. This combination leaves the MCP in a middle position. Finally, the Huks were characterized by open factional feuding, leadership struggles, and low levels of discipline: “the lack of discipline and the organizational weaknesses of the Huks and PKP [the Philippine Communist Party] contributed to the movement’s decline.”

What my argument cannot persuasively explain is the ability of (admittedly small) core communist parties to regenerate themselves in the face of high levels of attrition. The ICP and MCP core party leaderships had some roots in particular educational and social networks, but it

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would be dishonest to push this far: the parties were able to regenerate committed followers from a wide variety of social arenas. Marxism-Leninism as an ideology (combined with nationalism) was a powerful motivation for individuals to join and obey communist parties, which provided much of the leadership of emerging left insurgencies. Based on preexisting social networks, I would assume high levels of fragmentation in the ICP, and some degree of factionalization in the MCP. While close to the mark in the case of the MCP, the theory clearly mispredicts the ICP’s ultimate organizational trajectory, though it correctly predicts the course of its first two revolts.

What my theory can help to explain are the successes and failures these parties had in maintaining and expanding their social coalitions. Communist insurgents faced the challenge of finding and deploying disciplined recruits, with fragmentation being frequently caused by weak social networks and internally divided social structures that could not take up the strain of rebellion. Moreover, the Marxist-Leninist organizational ideology was best implemented when it was combined with large-scale external support could provide the raw material with which to achieve the vision of group leaders. The variables and processes outlined in the rest of this dissertation retain their relevance for communist groups, though less powerfully.

There was also an explanatory role for the state and broader political context. In Chapter 3 I argue that broad political opportunities should allow for conscious, intentional organization-building. The vacuum of power in 1945-6 Indochina was thus absolutely crucial for the ICP to both bolster its own organization and to begin solidifying control over its various allies. By contrast, a comparatively rapid British return to Malaya denied the opportunity for a full-fledged seizure and consolidation of power while the later policy of population resettlement and food control was devastating to the MCP. However, in the Philippines state counterinsurgency cannot explain Huk fragmentation, since the COIN campaign was a fairly unimpressive affair in
Some other aspects of political context do not seem to greatly matter. The shared experience of guerrilla warfare against the Japanese means that this period of organization-building cannot explain later organizational divergences.

The bottom line then is that communist organizations do seem to be helped by organizational ideologies that significantly increase cohesion, but this effect is most dramatic when combined with external flows of guns and money and open political opportunity structures. We cannot understand the trajectories of these groups without looking at the social structures upon which they tried to construct their organizations and their access to external support, but we cannot explain these outcomes solely by looking at these variables. The Marxist-Leninist organizational blueprint is a powerful one that, along with anti-colonial nationalism, sometimes motivated a large number of committed followers and provided an ideological glue to hold them together; the response of the colonial state could then alter the trajectory of these revolts. My theory can only partially explain the Viet Minh and MCP cases, though it does well in the Huk case. I start with the two extreme cases in outcomes – the cohesive Viet Minh and factionalized HMB – and then discuss the more ambiguous intermediate case of the MCP.

A. Forging the Insurgent State: ICP/Viet Minh Mobilization and Resilience, 1945-54

The Viet Minh was an enduring insurgent group that forged its own state after years of war with the French. The VM was notable for its organizational cohesion, suffering no major elite splits that would undermine the armed struggle while dominated by a leadership core from the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP). As such, this is clearly a cohesion organization along the lines of the Tamil Tigers or Provisional IRA, though on a vastly larger scale that eventually involved hundreds of thousands of fighters. After sporadic conflict with French colonial authorities in the 1940s, from 1945 onward the Viet Minh created an increasingly robust
insurgent movement that controlled large swathes of territory. In 1954, after inflicting a crucial conventional defeat on the French, North Vietnam was founded. Yet in 1930-1 and 1940, major ICP-linked revolts resulted in fragmentation and decisive defeat by a repressive French colonial regime. Thus, while holding the group and country constant, we see quite dramatic variation in organizational (and war) outcomes over time. Can the theoretical approach of this dissertation explain this pattern of organizational outcomes? Yes and no.

On the “no” side, there was impressive network-building in anticipation of conflict by the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) that led all three revolts. Rather than drawing on prior social structures, the ICP constructed new bonds through training, time in Moscow, and shared ideological commitment. Ho Chi Minh’s sharp understanding and implementation of the Marxist-Leninist (with Maoist and nationalist edges) organizational ideology was crucial. Ideological and political motivations, rather than strong prior social ties, dominated the overall process of communist mobilization in Vietnam, while an unusual leader played a pivotal role. It would be deeply intellectually dishonest to ignore or try to cover over the motivating force of political commitments and organizational strategies that overcame attrition and social heterogeneity in order to forge by far the most powerful Communist movement in SE Asia.

Yet even in this case there are elements of my theory that work surprisingly well. First, the 1930-1 and 1940 revolts looked very much like what we would expect from a group built around a coalition network (in this case, a foco-ist one) lacking external support: fragmentation and collapse in the face of a determined French counterinsurgent state. While it was possible for Ho and the ICP to endogenously build new generations of loyal cadres, the process was enormously difficult and time-consuming. The steeled fighters who took on France in 1946 were the result of two decades of risky and often highly contingent mobilization. Second, and most
importantly, dramatic shifts in political contexts provided the ICP with opportunities for
endogenous cohesion and brokerage that were absent during periods of repression. My theory
argues that endogenous mechanisms will be most effective and important in the face of weak or
apathetic state apparatuses. When the French had a robust coercive apparatus, they were able to
consistently shatter the ICP (in both the early 1930s and early 1940s), but when the French and
then Japanese essentially left the ICP to its own devices in 1944-45 the organization was able to
grow by leaps and bounds. Unlike in Malaya or the Philippines, there were abundant
opportunities to construct new networks and organizations far from the reach of the state.

Third, external support was crucial to the Viet Minh’s organization-building project.
Flows of guns and heavy weaponry, money, and sanctuary in China both during and after World
War II (and most dramatically after Mao’s victory) were enormously helpful to the Viet Minh as
they built and sustained their war-fighting apparatus. Finally, the Viet Minh experienced
significant problems of local control during their insurgent state-building, as we would expect
from a group building its networks and organization on the fly. Local cadres, party factions, and
different parts of bureaucracy were all serious challenges to the ICP’s “wobbly leviathan.” The
lack of local cadres simultaneously loyal to local communities and the national leadership
created endemic organizational challenges that have only recently become appreciated (Vu 2004,
2010). Massive purges and the consolidation of power by the Marxist-Leninist core around Ho
Chi Minh were only possible in the early 1950s.

*Building the ICP: Communist Mobilization through the Nghe Tinh Revolt, 1925-31.*

French Indochina was ruled by a French administrative elite and a set of Vietnamese
collaborators. A complex array of nationalist and communist organizations and networks stood
in varying levels of opposition to the French presence in the mid-1920s. These groups were largely dominated by urban, educated young men who had in many cases emerged from the French educational system in Indochina. There were numerous, often rival factions with a variety of ideological positions. Social structure and political economy fundamentally mediated the effects of the growing nationalist sentiment: “though the revolutionary tide swept through all three regions of Vietnam at the same time, its effect on the local political landscape was very different.” Nationalism and Communism did not speak for themselves: instead they were interpreted and mobilized according to local contexts.

In 1925, Ho Chi Minh returned from time in France to take control of an anticolonial organization of Vietnamese in southern China (the Revolutionary Youth League in Canton). Ho Chi Minh was operating under Comintern guidance as he tried to “graft” (Khanh) Marxism-Leninism with Vietnamese nationalism. This was clear social appropriation of a prior but loose network, though one that had general (if very vague) political purposes in mind. Ho tried to appeal to the nationalism that made the League attractive while infusing it with Marxism-Leninism. He used the League as a first infrastructure through which to build “a nucleus of

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9 “the communist leaders in Annam and Tonkin frequently came from families of mandarins or literati, which means they had much of the same background as Pham Quynh, Tran Trong Kim, and the Ngo family. The elite of this class had all attended the same school in Hue. Ho Chi Minh had gone to that school, without graduating, while Pham Van Dong, his closest collaborator in the Revolution, had been a successful graduate.” Stein Tønnesson, *The Vietnamese Revolution of 1945: Roosevelt, Ho Chi Minh, and De Gaulle in a World at War* (Oslo: International Peace Research Institute, 1991), p. 100. “the inner core of the Indochinese Communist Party was created in the late 1920s, partly among students at the lycees in Indochina and Hanoi University, partly among exiles. In the beginning there were several small core groups; the one which became most influential was formed by Ho Chi Minh (Nguyen Ai Quoc) in China.” Tønnesson, *The Vietnamese Revolution*, p. 418; see also 99-103.


11 *The Viet Nam Thanh Nien Kach Menh Hoi; Khanh*, *Vietnamese Communism*, p. 63.
radical intellectuals to serve as a source of future Party leaders.”

This seemed promising, as “Leninism offered precisely what the Vietnamese liberation movement had heretofore lacked – organization, cohesion, external support, and a plan.” Ho also tried to mobilize affiliated and front organizations.

However, the League became locked in rivalries with other Vietnamese political organizations and was unable to ascend to a position of predominance, especially over the radical nationalist (but non-communist) VNQDD. More drastically, the 1927 escalation of violence between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Kuomintang forced Ho to leave Canton for Moscow. Ho’s departure, the urban-focused nature of the League (and its difficulties expanding into rural areas), and the schismatic ideological battles so common among other communist movements (particularly amidst disagreements over the Sixth Comintern congress in 1928) took a dramatic toll on the League by 1929. This growing fissure occurred despite the “rigorous” criteria for admission and consequent training; endogenous socialization was not enough. Feuds erupted in Ho’s absence and “as is so often the case, radicalism fed on itself. By the beginning of the new decade, there were three competing Communist parties in French Indochina” that emerged from the League and broader nationalist milieu. Khanh notes that

13 Duiker, The Communist Road to Power, p. 20.
14 This clearly followed an organizational blueprint: it was “an attempt to create a new revolutionary organization based on Marxist-Leninist principles and under the guidance of the Comintern.” William Duiker, Ho Chi Minh (New York: Hyperion, 2000), p. 121.
15 William Duiker, The Communist Road to Power, p. 29.
16 There was particular weakness in the Cochinchina south: “the weakest of the three regional branches” of the League. Tai, Radicalism, p. 214. Trotskyism was stronger in the south, apparently reflecting the more individualist culture of Cochinchina and the preference to go to Paris over Moscow on the part of southern leftists. Tai, Radicalism, p. 241. Like Trotskyites elsewhere, Vietnamese Trotskyites would become prone to vicious personal and ideological feuds. As Duiker notes about the League, “the league had been constructed with two competing agendas, with the potential contradictions finessed by its agile founder.” Duiker, Ho Chi Minh, p. 154.
17 See Tai, Radicalism, pp. 179-181 on joining the League and how it was structured.
18 Duiker, The Communist Road to Power, p. 31.
the heterogeneity of the League crucially undercut its organizational capacity, while repression by Chinese authorities exacerbated underlying social and ideological cleavages. The lack of clear applicability of orthodox Marxism exacerbated confusion and debate.

Ho Chi Minh came back in 1930 and was able to sort out a compromise between the various groups under the banner of the Vietnamese Communist Party, supported by the clear directive of the Comintern, thus restoring a "delicate unity." There is an important role here for individual leadership – before and after Ho, the communist (and broader nationalist) movement in Vietnam and among the diaspora was factionalized and conflictual. An abortive VNQDD uprising in February 1930 was smashed, undermining the non-communist nationalists who had launched it, who were targeted by the hammer blows of the colonial security apparatus. This seemed to clear the way for the Marxist-Leninist ICP. The ICP at this point appears to be a

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19 They apparently relied on the standard terminological tropes, especially "menshevik" accusations. Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power*, p. 32. There were also dismissals of rivals as having "behaved exactly like children." Khanh, *Vietnamese Communism*, p. 119. Tai notes that the dissidents declared that "they no longer wanted to obey orders from a 'bourgeois group' composed of 'false revolutionaries.'" Tai, *Radicalism*, p. 229.

20 Khanh, *Vietnamese Communism*, pp. 113-117.

21 Consequently it had to move from Canton to Hankow to Hong Kong. Tai, *Radicalism*, p. 182.

22 Debates about what kind of revolution was possible in Vietnam, and who should lead it, were endemic. The heavily rural Vietnamese population was not the urban proletariat who were supposed to spearhead a workers' rebellion. Yet mobilizing in favor of a bourgeois democratic revolution was not very appealing to radicals.


24 "almost without exception, Vietnamese recruited to join the organization and participate in its training programme in Canton commented on his extraordinary personality." Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power*, p. 27. Ho at this point had "emphasized the Leninist organizational blueprint rather than the Marxist theory of history." Tai, *Radicalism*, p. 225.

25 Khanh, *Vietnamese Communism*, pp. 94-95. Interestingly, the VNQDD had some significant communist influence on its organizational model, showing both the diffusion of the Marxist-Leninist organizational ideology and the extreme difficulties in actually implementing it. Tai, *Radicalism*, pp. 184-5. However, they focused more on flipping the loyalties of the Vietnamese in the colonial army with inspiration from an elite vanguard. So this was more Leninist than Maoist.

26 A splinter of the Youth League had called itself the ICP, then the multiple communist parties had been reunited under the Vietnamese Communist Party label, which was then changed to ICP in 1930. It was renamed during the summer of 1930 to be less focused on the ethnic Vietnamese within broader French Indochina.
foco-ist coalition network: with an urban intellectual core linked to left-nationalist organizations, but very weak local ties in rural areas.27

As the ICP/VCP was being slowly cobbled back together by Ho Chi Minh, a large peasant rebellion broke out in both southern and north-central parts of Vietnam in 1930-31. It was the culmination of surging contentious politics amidst an economic downturn.28 The revolt was simultaneously widespread in scope and highly localized in character. As local elites and French officials were pushed out of villages, Communist sympathizers and normal peasants formed the Nghe Tinh soviets, particularly in Nghe An and Ha Tinh29, as well as a shorter rebellion in Cochin China. ICP mobilization had tapped into both urban (among peasants drawn to factories) and rural (often over land scarcity) unrest, contributing to cascading violence.30 This was not the intentional strategy of the Hong Kong-based central leadership, but its policies had helped to set the revolt in motion and the ICP was forced to scramble to deal with the surge of strikes, protests, and takeovers.31 Local village soviets emerged in many parts of central Vietnam, accompanied by score-settling and transformations of local order. This revolt was the most serious in decades, rocking Vietnam in various manifestations for the better part of two

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27 Though somewhat distinct from ICP, the League was its precursor. As of the late 1920s, “The League had not yet created a movement with its roots imbedded deeply among the masses.” Duiker, The Rise of Nationalism in Vietnam, p. 205. Apparently the vast majority of its members were urban petty bourgeoisie. Duiker notes in his biography of Ho Chi Minh that “there was relatively little activity by league members in rural areas.” Duiker, Ho Chi Minh, p. 156. This is ex ante evidence of the social structure of the ICP (or more specifically, its previous acronym) prior to any of its revolts.
29 Duiker, The Communist Road to Power, pp. 36-7.
30 Some details of the time and place of agitation can be found in Khanh, Vietnamese Communism, p. 152, Duiker, Ho Chi Minh, p. 177: “Communist organizers had played a major part in provoking the unrest in central Vietnam.”
31 Scott, “Revolution in the Revolution,” p. 107 says the ICP “initiated” the revolt but as he notes later on the same page, it is not clear that there was an expectation of such an intense conflict. See Duiker, The Rise of Nationalism in Vietnam, pp. 218-222 on onset. Scott, The Moral Economy of the Peasant, p. 148, writes that, despite an ICP role in mobilization, “it seems abundantly clear that the insurrection had a momentum of its own and a spontaneity that was either heedless of the party or left it trailing far behind.”
years. The central ICP leadership was faced with a dilemma by October of 1930 of whether to actively support the rebellion or not. The party tried to pull back its regional and local branches from the escalating conflict, amidst a broader internal debate about the purpose and theory of the communist movement in Indochina.

Despite attempts to harness the rebellion, the ICP found itself in the worst of all worlds: lacking the strength and resolve to launch a full-scale revolt, unable to control its regional and local forces, and blamed by the French for the uprising. On the ground, “within a few weeks at most the movement and many of its ill-trained cadre had evaded the control of the party.” As Duiker writes, “bad planning, strategic errors, and a lack of weapons began to undermine the momentum of the revolutionary forces, and dissension arose in the ranks. At the end, the movement’s mass support began to drain away, in the inevitable pattern of peasant jacqueries from time immemorial.” The “disarray” of the ICP leadership left it unable to control the upsurge of violent mobilization.

The revolt, locally-based and under-armed, faltered and collapsed in 1931. The thorough-going French response involved airpower, legionnaires, and mass arrests as well as executions. Resembling the Huk rebellion in the Philippines far more than the 1946-54 Viet Minh, the Nghe Tinh revolt shows that intense grievance, mass peasant mobilization, and Marxist-Leninist ideology were insufficient to build a powerful, resilient insurgent group in the face of a

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33 Bolstering my point in Chapter 3 about the unpredictability of rebellions, it appears the case the ICP central leadership "was well aware than an uprising [at this time] would be premature." Duiker, *The Rise of Nationalism in Vietnam*, p. 231. However, once it happened the situation had to be dealt with. The social and organizational structure of the ICP is what it had to go to war with.
34 Khanh, *Vietnamese Communism*, pp. 126-128.
35 Scott, "Revolution in the Revolution," p. 108."the party’s organization at the local level was still woefully inadequate to deal with the crisis situation." Duiker, *The Rise of Nationalism in Vietnam*, pp. 221-2.
36 Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power*, p. 42.
37 Khanh, *Vietnamese Communism*, pp. 159.
38 Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power*, p. 42.
committed counterrevolutionary state. The “sporadic, localist”\textsuperscript{39} mobilization of pockets of collective action on the ground (“a series of distinct movements which correspond to local needs as much as to central direction”\textsuperscript{40}) overcame attempts by the ICP center to control and harness the rural revolt, revealing clear tensions between peasants and commissars.

\textit{Trying to Re-forge the Organizational Weapon, 1931-40.} The ICP was smashed: “the almost complete destruction of the ICP as soon as it was formed involved the execution or imprisonment of 90\% of its leaders”\textsuperscript{41} and “Ho Chi Minh’s painstaking efforts to build up the nucleus of a loyal and disciplined organization were swept away.”\textsuperscript{42} The Nghe Tinh soviets experience led to “years of persecution, isolation, and near-extinction of its organizational apparatus.”\textsuperscript{43} Hundreds of ICP members were deported, dozens killed (not including the numerous rebel peasants who were not ICP members), and over a thousand arrested, which was a devastating blow. State counterinsurgency capped the ability of the ICP to exploit popular grievance. The ICP had to almost entirely rebuild, since “the inner party leaders [were] nearly all dead or in prison.”\textsuperscript{44} Ho Chi Minh had been arrested by the British in Hong Kong, spent five years in the USSR, and only would return to serious leadership work with the ICP in 1940.\textsuperscript{45}

It is here that the Marxist-Leninist organizational ideology, combined with nationalist sentiment, played an important role in encouraging people to join the ICP despite French repression and the long, hard road of organization-building.\textsuperscript{46} The global appeal of communism

\textsuperscript{39} Scott, \textit{The Moral Economy of the Peasant}, p. 126.
\textsuperscript{40} Scott, “Revolution in the Revolution,” p. 112.
\textsuperscript{42} Duiker, \textit{The Communist Road to Power}, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{43} Duiker, \textit{The Rise of Nationalism in Vietnam}, p. 233.
\textsuperscript{44} Duiker, \textit{The Rise of Nationalism in Vietnam}, p. 235.
\textsuperscript{46} Khanh outlines the ICP organizational structure, at least as it was supposed to be on paper. Khanh, \textit{Vietnamese Communism}, pp. 134-137.
was bolstered by the specific fact that many of the new ICP members were trained in Moscow, enhancing their ideological commitment and social ties to one another.\textsuperscript{47} Prisons also provided a space for the conscious building of solidarity and ideological commitment, while the ICP tried to pull away the members of other organizations to its side.\textsuperscript{48} The party reconvened for a conference in 1935 for the first time since the Nghe Tinh revolt.\textsuperscript{49} Tensions continued to exist within the party between more and less internationalist-oriented factions, but the ICP was starting to re-coalesce.\textsuperscript{50}

A major breakthrough came with the creation of a Popular Front government in Paris, which significantly loosened the restrictions on the ICP. This was an important period in which to actively rebuild the party as part of the united front policies that Moscow was increasingly comfortable with.\textsuperscript{51} The shift in political opportunity structure was completely \textit{exogenous} to dynamics in Vietnam, driven by calculations of great power war in the metropole. The organizational genius of Marxism-Leninism was given the space to operate, and the ICP launched an energetic expansion campaign as a "semilegal"\textsuperscript{52} organization. This aboveground work continued even as a secret apparatus remained in case of a change in colonial policy.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{47} "the Comintern decided to send several students at the Stalin School back to Vietnam by circuitous routes to form the nucleus of a new leadership." Duiker, \textit{The Communist Road to Power}, p. 48. Moreover, "most new Party leaders were veterans of training in Moscow." Duiker, \textit{The Communist Road to Power}, p. 49.

\textsuperscript{48} "once a revolutionary core has been built, how can it be preserved? The best places to preserve revolutionary cores are probably in exile and in prison. . by the late 1930s, the original communist core had already grown into a force of several thousand members." Tonnesson, \textit{The Vietnamese Revolution}, p. 418.

\textsuperscript{49} Duiker, \textit{The Rise of Nationalism in Vietnam}, p. 238.

\textsuperscript{50} Khanh, \textit{Vietnamese Communism}, p. 178. There was also an external rivalry with Vietnamese Trotskyists.

\textsuperscript{51} Ho Chi Minh at this time wrote "the party must successfully form a wide national-democratic front which would unit not only the local population of Indochina, but progressive French forces, not only of the working class, but also representatives of the national bourgeoisie." Duiker, \textit{The Rise of Nationalism in Vietnam}, p. 242. "the Party also took advantage of the respite from government oppression to build its membership." Duiker, \textit{The Communist Road to Power}, p. 57.

\textsuperscript{52} Duiker, \textit{The Rise of Nationalism in Vietnam}, p. 242.

\textsuperscript{53} The ICP followed the so-called "Dimitrov Line" for the popular front, trying to forge an alliance under communist manipulation and control. In explaining the rise of this strategy, "other factors included spontaneous local initiatives to form cells and subsequently seek higher echelon approval, the return of more cadres from training in the Soviet Union, the gradual release or parole of most ICP members from jail, and the excitement generated by the May 1936 Popular Front victory in France." Marr, \textit{Vietnamese Tradition on Trial}, p. 389, fn. 50. “with Comintern advice and
Consequently, "national and local ICP networks had been restored and expanded to well beyond 1930 levels." Some work began to be done in rural areas, a crucial site of ICP weakness at this stage. Ideological and physical confrontations with the Vietnamese Trotsky-ites ensued, while within the ICP there was "ambivalence" about how to balance nationalism and Marxist-Leninist internationalism. Khanh argues that the Popular Front period opened a path for organization building, but that it was not sufficiently embraced or taken advantage of, in part because the shifting party line led to "confusion and dissension" within the ICP.

Just as suddenly (and exogenously) as the political opening arrived, it disappeared with the coming of World War II. The politics of Popular Front in Paris had hinged on a French alliance with the USSR against Germany, but the USSR's alignment with Germany ended the need to tolerate communist mobilization. The French were now "determined to root out the communist movement." In 1939, the French crackdown increasingly forced the party to the countryside, but it continued to face serious challenges from the security apparatus. The French were particularly effective at uprooting the urban networks which traditional Marxist-Leninist thought, imported from Europe, put such stock in.

assistance, the ICP patiently developed a clandestine apparatus extending from Moscow via France, South China, and Thailand to regional, provincial, and district committees inside Vietnam. Party cadres penetrated existing organizations or established new ones, identified the 'most advanced' individuals to form Party cells, and thus endeavored to control (or at least guide) a wide range of political, social, and cultural activities." Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial*, p. 390.

Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial*, p. 389.

Regarding local action committees, "this technique, though tacitly permitted by the authorities, was highly effective in entrenching the Party apparatus at the local level and in enhancing its appeal as a voice for popular discontent. Much of the Party's support in working class areas in Saigon and Cholon and in villages in the Mekong delta in later years can be traced to this early effort" during the popular front period. Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power*, p. 55.


Khanh, *Vietnamese Communism*, p. 223.

Khanh, *Vietnamese Communism*, p. 190.


Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power*, pp. 60-1.

Khanh, *Vietnamese Communism*, p. 250.
After the Japanese occupied French Indochina in 1940, the French continued to administer the territory. The ICP had encouraged a line of armed uprising in its Sixth Plenum at the end of 1939, and a series of revolts erupted against the Japanese and French during the fall of 1940. There was a Bac Son revolt in the north and another revolt, this more clearly led by ICP regional leaders, in Cochin China in the south. The central party leadership, watching the French wipe out the Bac Son revolt, tried to restrain the southern cadres, but were unable to successfully get the word to Cochin China, leading to an uprising that was quickly suppressed (in large part because of French infiltration). Not only had the party leadership been surprised by these revolts, but “they were unable to coordinate activities on a national scale.”

This left the party “somewhat confused and leaderless in the fall of 1940” and “in almost total disarray”: a far cry from arguments that attribute organizational genius to Marxist-Leninists. Endogenously constructing a social-organizational structure that could harness and control local mobilization had proven enormously difficult for the ICP so long as the French forces maintained vigilance. The centrality of state repression, as highlighted in Chapters 2 and 3, cannot be ignored in studying organization-building: “French repression from 1930 to 1935, and again from 1939, prevented the establishment of durable party centres inside Indochina.”

World War II, Political Opportunities, and the Seizure of Power, 1941-45. The ICP was not totally shattered by the revolts of 1940 (units in the north had been able to slip into the

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66 Duiker, Ho Chi Minh, p. 246.

mountains and south China\textsuperscript{68}, but it was badly hammered: “in 1941 the Indochinese Communist Party was in complete disarray. . . organizationally it appeared to possess less potential than any of the other groups.”\textsuperscript{69} However, the combination of a shift in political opportunities, external support, and contingent personal factors would provide the underpinnings of an increasingly powerful and organizationally coherent ICP that could form the social and administrative backbone of a national revolt. Ho Chi Minh revitalized his work for the ICP in south China, helping to broker a set of alliances between nationalist and communist Vietnamese groups under the patronage of Chinese leaders (in this case, from the KMT). The sanctuary and support in south China was enormously helpful for building cohesion and discipline far from the combat zone. Rather than organization-building under the eyes of the colonial regime, the communists would find and homogenize new recruits with the backing of an external set of powerbrokers who now had powerful incentives to support the ICP as a balance to the Japanese.

In 1941, the ICP established a new front organization, the Viet Minh.\textsuperscript{70} This was an alliance of various anti-Japanese/anti-French forces, to be guided by an ICP core that melded nationalism with communism both at the national and local levels.\textsuperscript{71} Alongside this organizational strategy was a diffusion of Maoist guerrilla thinking into the Vietnamese context, with a focus on rural base areas and mobilization.\textsuperscript{72} An extraordinary array of affiliate organizations was created to recruit and socialize new members under the eyes of the Viet Minh.

\textsuperscript{68} However, Marr, \textit{Vietnam 1945}, p. 164 notes that “for the next forty months, it proved impossible for this ‘army’ to operate at more than squad level.”
\textsuperscript{69} Marr, \textit{Vietnamese Tradition on Trial}, p. 415.
\textsuperscript{70} Duiker, \textit{The Rise of Nationalism in Vietnam}, p. 275. It was formally the Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh (Vietnam Independence League).
\textsuperscript{71} Marr notes that “no alternative leadership had any chance of emerging within the Viet Minh to rival the ICP. Members of Viet Minh district or provincial committees who did not belong to the Party quickly came to understand that ICP activists might view their forming a group to advance their own interests or policies as treasons.” Marr, \textit{Vietnam 1945}, p. 240.
\textsuperscript{72} “but to understand the real as opposed to the spiritual advantage which this expanded vision gave Vietnamese Marxists over their rivals in Vietnam, and also over Marxists with similar visions who never came to power in other European colonies such as Indonesia, India, and Malaya, it is necessary to remember Vietnam’s relationship with China” and diffusion from China of Marxist-Leninist but peasant-based models. Lockhart, \textit{Nation in Arms}, p. 64.
(and the ICP). The base areas established in the north along the Chinese border became the military and political focus of the movement as it tried to draw on both old and new social structures. However, the forging of a cohesive front organization was “more easily talked of than realized” due to the deep distrust many non-communists had for the ICP. Moreover, “it could hardly be said that before the anti-Japanese war the ICP had deep roots in the villages.”

The shift in strategy towards rural areas was a crucial move, but one that needed an investment in organizational infrastructure. For most of the war, the Viet Minh was, unlike the Huks in the Philippines, a fairly trivial obstacle to the Japanese. Chinese external support was helpful in organizing and homogenizing in the sanctuary areas, but at this stage it did not include significant arming or funding, leaving the ICP/Viet Minh militarily weak in the war zone.

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73 “until 1941, front groups had tended either to be passive auxiliaries of the Party or loose affiliates that owed far more to traditions of mutual aid and blood brotherhood than to Leninist organizational principles. Auxiliaries expanded only to the degree the Party maintained a high profile, whereas affiliates often reacted spontaneously to local issues and fell apart under enemy pressure. The Viet Minh concept was designed to overcome such weaknesses, offering a more flexible, sophisticated prescription for ICP initiative and control, while keeping the Party’s profile as low as possible. One the one hand, ICP members would occupy key Viet Minh leadership positions, coordinating their actions internally even as they worked together with representatives of other groups. On the other hand, ICP members would assume active roles within ‘national salvation organizations’ (doan the cuu quoc) affiliated with the Viet Minh. The united front would thus take shape both ‘from above’ and ‘from below’. . . the Viet Minh was to be structured horizontally but not vertically, presumably leaving the Party solely responsible for communication between upper and lower echelons.” Marr, *Vietnam 1945*, p. 170.

74 Marr, *Vietnam 1945*, p. 179 – specifically in Cao Bang, Bac Can, and Lang Son. “in the Viet Bac guerrilla zones there was only a very small core consisting of two main sorts of people: the well-schooled intellectuals around Ho Chi Minh . . . and the ethnic minority leaders who had survived the French onslaught after the Bac Son uprising of 1940.” Tønnesson, *The Vietnamese Revolution*, pp. 418-419. “the guerrilla zones were also important in other ways: they were centres for the dissemination of propaganda, development of doctrine, training of military and political cadres, and they were conduits to China.” Tønnesson, *The Vietnamese Revolution*, p. 410.


76 Duiker, *The Rise of Nationalism in Vietnam*, p. 284. Additionally, “the areas least affected by Viet Minh propaganda were those were the established authorities had a good grasp on the population through institutionalized religion.” Tønnesson, *The Vietnamese Revolution*, p. 344. The north-south cleavages were important in this regard.

77 In the early/mid 1930s, the ICP had focused on the urban areas, both because its membership core was massively urban and because its line from the Comintern focused on building alliances with the progressive bourgeoisie rather than politically less developed peasants.

78 In June 1944, despite all its efforts to proselytize, train, and organize people, the Viet Minh remained only a minor irritant to the French authorities and of no consequence whatsoever to the Japanese Army.” Marr, *Vietnam 1945*, p. 194.

79 Marr, *Vietnam 1945*, p. 182: “the full-time Viet Minh units in the upland forests had only a few score modern firearms and perhaps a couple hundred old muskets and hunting rifles.”
Regional rivalries and gaps in communication and controlled remained well throughout the war.  

In addition to its organizational ideology, the ICP was able to outmaneuver its rivals and to build deeper ties to the peasants because of two major shifts in political opportunity structures. The first was the increasing lack of interest in, and then capacity for, fighting the Viet Minh on the part of the French colonial regime by the end of World War II. The French colonial regime at first maintained a strong focus on order and control, and as late as May 1944 “the essential network... was a shambles” due to French countermeasures. But by late 1944 “French operations were not systematically aimed at the ICP at all...French military deployments were no longer dictated by the internal threat.” This was another exogenous shift in political context that allowed endogenous cohesion-building by the ICP.

As the French on the periphery tried to anticipate their future in a post-Nazi France, cooperation with the Japanese increasingly slackened, and space opened for the Viet Minh. Vo Nguyen Giap was put in charge of creating a more formal armed structure towards the end of 1944 that was the predecessor of the military of the First and Second Indochina Wars. In 1944-5 “the expansion of the Viet Minh was very much dependent upon changes in the international situation” (Lockhart 101): political opportunities opened that allowed for a conscious, endogenous creation of social-organizational infrastructure in the north, building on the alliances

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80 Though “such chaos was unacceptable from the point of view of Leninist organizing principles and dangerous in the opportunities it offered enemy security services,” (Marr, Vietnam 1945, p. 191), it persisted, particularly in Cochinchina in the south.
81 Marr, Vietnam 1945, p. 184.
82 Lockhart, Nation in Arms, p. 92.
83 See Marr, Vietnam 1945, pp. 314-319 on the increasing attempts by de Gaulle and the Free French to control French Indochina, and the policy confusion and divisions that resulted. “part of the reason was the relative lack of attention the French patrols gave to Viet Minh activities in the most northerly provinces along the Sino-Vietnamese border, and part of it was the positive application of guerrilla strategies and propaganda techniques.” Lockhart, Nation in Arms, p. 88.
84 Marr, Vietnam 1945, p. 198.
and strategizing possible in the sanctuary of south China. The ICP’s organizational vision could be put into action on the ground, creating new social and organizational ties rather than having to fall back on the weak, diffuse relationships that had so badly failed the ICP and its cadres in 1930 and 1940. 85 The lack of direct challenges to Japanese rule for most of this period bolstered the space for mobilization once the French began to abandon their commitment. 86 Thus, “the ICP was able to break into the society at a point where French power was weakened by World War II.” 87

**1945-6: Constructing the Insurgent-State.** The second shift in political opportunity that made endogenous cohesion-building easier came in 1945 when first the French and then the Japanese completely abandoned their attempts to maintain a monopoly over violence. The revolutionary moment for the ICP arrived when the Japanese launched a coup against the French colonial administration in March 1945. The French had largely patrolled the countryside, while the Japanese primarily focused on urban control. 88 Having dispensed with the French, the Japanese tried to prop up a puppet regime based around traditional figures, but the rural vacuum of power created an extraordinary opportunity for the Viet Minh. 89 From March 1945 through the seizure of power in August 1945, until eventually the outbreak of open war between France and the Viet Minh in late 1946, the Viet Minh and their ICP controllers faced relatively low

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85 “internal military discipline and political work was thus integrated into a vertical hierarchy of revolutionary political relationships on a world scale.” Lockhart, *Nation in Arms*, p. 124.
86 “the ICP was careful not to neglect its ‘rear area’ in southern China.” Marr, *Vietnam 1945*, p. 175. “it is likely that more minority people were won over to the revolutionary cause by the fact of rapid promotion of kin in Viet Minh ranks than by political rhetoric.” Marr, *Vietnam 1945*, p. 180. “very few Viet Minh groups attempted armed resistance.” Marr, *Vietnam 1945*, p. 184.
87 Lockhart, *Nation in Arms*, p. 75.
88 “Japanese forces as a rule occupied only the major urban centers and made little effort to establish their authority in the countryside.” Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power*, p. 86.
89 “only the ICP possessed the sense of timing and the understanding of the strategic nuances of the situation to rise to the occasion.” Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power*, p. 105.
barriers to collective action that allowed them to implement their organizational ideology.\textsuperscript{90} Viet Minh mobilization prepared the party to seize power, in coalition with other political forces, once the Japanese had surrendered in August 1945, and to set up a provisional government to rule Vietnam.\textsuperscript{91} The insurgent-state-party structure that coalesced in this period was the foundation of the Viet Minh that fought against the French from 1945 to 1954.\textsuperscript{92}

The institutionalization and rural embeddedness made possible by Chinese support, the vacuum of power, and the opportunities these presented for implementation of the ICP’s organizational ideology laid the basis for an unprecedented mass expansion that would eventually allow the Viet Minh to engage in direct conventional conflict with the French: “in the north the army thus enjoyed fifteen months of relative peace which enabled it to build on its already high level of political and military development.”\textsuperscript{93} As Tonnesson notes, in the wake of the Japanese coup, “the risks of joining the revolution were suddenly dramatically reduced.”\textsuperscript{94} This period would prove crucial because “the Party itself was small and still inexperienced.”\textsuperscript{95} Even before their surrender, “the Japanese never really tried to control the countryside.”\textsuperscript{96} This allowed the ICP to use violence to target potential rivals and dissidents, as well as to punish collaborators, without a countervailing armed force to blunt its onslaught.\textsuperscript{97} It was in this context that the endogenous organization-building efforts of the last two decades could be consolidated.

\textsuperscript{90} “the Japanese extinguished French power in the 9 March coup and gave the Viet Minh an unprecedented opportunity to expand its operations beyond the Viet Bac region.” Lockhart, \textit{Nation in Arms}, p. 104.
\textsuperscript{91} Unlike their Vietnamese rivals, the Viet Minh “was led by seasoned activists united by the iron discipline of a Leninist party and the shared experience of fifteen years of revolutionary struggle.” Tai, \textit{Radicalism}, p. 255.
\textsuperscript{92} “with the elimination of the French regime in March 1945, the Viet Minh leaped into a new stage. \textit{The risks of joining the revolution were suddenly dramatically reduced}. A substantial number of cadres were released or broke out of jail, and the top leaders could move their headquarters closer to the Delta... this provided the Viet Minh with the unique opportunity to set up the local framework for a new state and to create what Leon Trotsky called ‘double sovereignty.’” Tonnesson, \textit{The Vietnamese Revolution}, p. 419.
\textsuperscript{93} Lockhart, \textit{Nation in Arms}, p. 145.
\textsuperscript{94} Tonnesson, \textit{The Vietnamese Revolution}, p. 419.
\textsuperscript{95} Duiker, \textit{The Communist Road to Power}, p. 111.
\textsuperscript{96} Tonnesson, \textit{The Vietnamese Revolution}, p. 351.
\textsuperscript{97} “in practice, most Viet Minh groups probably spent as much time selecting Vietnamese ‘traitors’ and ‘reactionaries’ for elimination as trying to kill Japanese.” Marr, \textit{Vietnam 1945}, p. 234.
and reinforced in a favorable political context.\footnote{“it was the expansion of political opportunity in late 1945 that took these movements to a new, unprecedented stage.” Tuong Huu Vu, “Late Leviathans: State formation, nationalism and postcolonial transformation in Pacific Asia,” Ph.D dissertation (University of California, Berkeley, 2004), p. 170. Vu also refers to the Indonesian nationalists. See also Tuong Vu, Paths to Development in Asia: South Korea, Vietnam, China, and Indonesia (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).} The indigenous colonial bureaucracy was yoked to the political vision of the ICP to keep the country running in at least a loose way while rival organizations (which were strongest in the south) were “more localized”\footnote{Tønnesson, The Vietnamese Revolution, p. 414.} than the ICP.

Yet even the vacuum of power, Marxist-Leninist organizational ideology, and ICP core were not enough for total Viet Minh cohesion.\footnote{Vu argues that “due to French repression in the early 1940s, the main problem for the ICP was less how to organize than how to expand. As local governments in many remote areas collapsed but were not immediately replaced by the Japanese, Viet Minh local organizations seized power and established People’s Committees. In the aftermath of this takeover, central leaders became alarmed by two organizational issues. First, there was no separation between Viet Minh and the newly established People’s Committees. Viet Minh simply became the local government, a tendency the Party advised against. The second issue was the rise of ‘revolutionary mandarins’ or Viet Minh cadres who became the new local despots.” Vu, “Late Leviathans,” p. 178.} The Japanese coup led to a competitive scramble of mobilization among various contenders, and “a number of fortuitous circumstances contributed in no small measure to the Communist victory [in August 1945].”\footnote{Duiker, The Communist Road to Power, p. 104.} Even within the Viet Minh, there were tensions and clashes: “in most cases, local Viet Minh militias did not fight the Japanese. Instead, it was “old Viet Minh” fighting “new Viet Minh,” Viet Minh militias exchanging fire with DP ones, and People’s Committees challenging the authority of Viet Minh committees.”\footnote{Vu, “Late Leviathans,” p. 186.} The ICP now needed to overcome the organizational challenges created by the nature of the seizure of power, and “one source of the problem was clearly the way the Viet Minh government had been formed on the back of a popular but spontaneous movement.”\footnote{Vu, “Late Leviathans,” p. 140.}

There was “continuing lack of operational unity and a paucity of Party members”\footnote{Marr, Vietnam 1945, p. 238.} in 1945. The ICP had about 5,500 members in August 1945, a small revolutionary vanguard given
the size of the revolution it was trying to control. Even before the return of war, in 1945 and 1946 “the administration established by the Viet Minh in Hanoi became as much a prisoner of the thousands of revolutionary committees emerging around the country as the directing authority.” As Marr persuasively argues, “the August 1945 Revolution was in the first instance a giant, spontaneous outpouring of emotion, and secondarily a well-organized Leninist seizure of power.”

Thus “the mass base of the Vietminh front was broad – embracing peasants, workers, students, and some merchants and intellectuals in the major cities – but shallow, for the Communist coloration of the leadership was not as yet directly evident to the vast majority of supporters” and “the situation posed a serious challenge to the technique of the united front that the ICP had used.” As Vu notes, “the ICP was able to expand quickly but Party leaders at all levels seemed oblivious to the risks that rapid expansion might incur.” As a bid to try to make the united front seem more encompassing and pluralistic, the ICP technically disbanded itself and claimed to transform into a Marxist study group. However, the ICP continued to function with a different name but the same leadership and policies.

Joined to these problems of internal organization amidst a fairly chaotic and unplanned mass expansion was the return of European power in the south, particularly around Saigon. First British and then French forces were able to exert influence in the south, pushing the Viet Minh administration out of the region and leaving the ICP primarily to construct a state in the

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105 Marr, Vietnam 1945, p. 238.
107 Marr, Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, p. 408. “in many [areas] the ‘Viet Minh’ in late July was more an amorphous movement, possessing its own momentum and trajectory, than a functioning political organization.” Marr, Vietnam 1945, p. 239.
109 Duiker, The Communist Road to Power, p. 112.
111 Duiker, The Communist Road to Power, pp. 118-121.
north (the south was also the home of rival sects and nationalist organizations). Cochinchina became the focus of French efforts to reconstruct their rule in Indochina, and this effort prefigured the north-south clashes to come in the following decades. The Viet Minh and French engaged in a sporadic series of negotiations mixed with low-level clashes and disputes. The Viet Minh cracked down on its nationalist (ostensible) allies and rivals in the summer of 1946.

The Viet Minh and its Democratic Republic of Vietnam were forged between March 1945 and December 1946. The ICP was able to convert its organizational ideology into a tenuous but enduring reality due to the shift in political context occasioned by the geopolitics of 1945-6. The state structure that emerged would become the base of a real state during the First Indochina War, and not an insurgent group in the sense generally studied in the rest of this dissertation. The rise of the ICP as the social glue connecting previously disparate nodes of local mobilization was a long and difficult process, with the achievement of its ideological vision contingent on state policies both within and outside of French Indochina. Having laid the essential historical basis for the conflict, it is to the Viet Minh’s war with France that we now briefly turn.

*Mobilizing for War: Conflict with France, 1946-54.* The Viet Minh’s organizational trajectory during the First Indochina War looks similar to what we would expect of a group with significant (and increasing post-1949) external support and a fairly well-embedded social base in the form of the ICP. The ICP’s origins and evolution are what posed problems for my theoretical account, and having discussed those, the ICP at war was the social-organizational underpinning

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112 An overview is Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power*, pp. 124-5.
113 Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power*, p. 126.
114 “the generation of ICP members who had survived repression and jail in the 1930s, and who disseminated the Viet Minh message before August 1945, went on to govern the DRV and command its armed forces for the next forty years. The generation of youths who joined patriotic groups in the summer of 1945, practiced marching, demonstrated, took control of offices, and formed local revolutionary committees became the vital middle echelon of Party, state, and military hierarchies for those same four decades.” Marr, *Vietnam 1945*, p. 552.
of Viet Minh military power. The Viet Minh’s civilian administrative apparatus was not particularly cohesive, since it was reliant on non-ICP elements who had been co-opted and brought in from the colonial apparatus.\(^\text{115}\) The state that emerged was “bifurcated,”\(^\text{116}\) with the mix of holdover colonial bureaucrats, Viet Minh leaders, co-opted nationalists, and local pockets of mobilization meaning that “a central feature of Vietnam’s nationalist movement during the late 1940s was its organizational anarchy.”\(^\text{117}\)

Nevertheless, the military side of the movement was significantly more cohesive and institutionalized than the civilian side. Village level ICP members and representatives spearheaded recruitment and local monitoring, while the high command of the Viet Minh standing forces were dominated by ICP cadres. The skirmishes between the Viet Minh and the French flared into full-scale war in December 1946, leading the VM to largely retreat from the cities in order to wage a rural war. This was not, however, a guerrilla revolt in any classical sense: there were up to 50,000 VM fighters of various sorts even this early, though certainly not particularly well trained or armed; the massive scale moves us far beyond the other cases studied in this thesis. These forces took heavy losses trying to engage in fighting withdrawals.\(^\text{118}\) While trying to hold on to military strength, the ICP and its French foes both tried to build political alliances with other groups in Vietnamese society. Though there were the standard losses and strains associated with a fighting withdrawal by inexperienced forces, the Viet Minh fighting forces maintained decent organization and capability.\(^\text{119}\)

\(^\text{115}\) “the spontaneous and decentralized nationalist movement created in its image a bifurcated and fragmented state.” Vu, “Late Leviathans,” p. 174 and “the marriage of a revolutionary party and a colonial bureaucracy did not go smoothly.” Vu, “Late Leviathans,” p. 184. “like in Indonesia but unlike in China, the Vietnamese state had to incorporate these spontaneous movements into its local governments; local submission to central direction would take years to achieve.” Vu, “Late Leviathans,” p. 128.


\(^\text{118}\) Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power*, p. 138.

\(^\text{119}\) Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power*, p. 140.
lacked significant external support, but the shifting tide of the Chinese Civil War allowed a continued reliance on border areas for sanctuary. The limits on French manpower relative to the size of the territory under contestation opened space for the Viet Minh to embed their organizational model at the village level, continuing the process of endogenous network-building that had met with such success since the waning days of World War II.  

The victory of Mao in China led to a large escalation in the ability of the ICP and its Viet Minh fighters to deploy large-scale military power. From a reliance on a few border bases, the ICP now could funnel in huge amounts of aid and weaponry, and also received significant training on the Chinese side of the border. The growing CCP-ICP links had “momentous consequences” for the evolution of the war in Indochina, ranging from ideological influence to the fact that “Chinese aid created potential conditions for a significant strengthening of the revolutionary forces and the launching of the third phase of the people’s war” (Duiker 1996, 150). A 1950 border offensive was able to carve out further space in the north for the Viet Minh, forcing the French to tighten their perimeter. Vu further argues that Chinese aid allowed the ICP to consolidate its rule in 1949 by purging some of the other social forces incorporated into the movement in hasty years of early expansion. The ICP targeted many of the non-ICP elements it had brought into the Viet Minh, using its military prowess, political acumen, and external support to shatter potential internal rivals. From this point, analyses treat the Viet Minh military apparatus as essentially a unitary state actor, engaging in military and diplomatic

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120 Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power*, p. 142.
122 Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power*, p. 147.
123 Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power*, p. 152.
124 In building a coalition, “the risk was that the corporate identity and ideological cohesion of their organizations might be compromised and weakened.” Vu, “Late Leviathans,” p. 172. “communist leaders [in 1945] in fact had a precarious control over the movement and over their own party.” Vu, “Late Leviathans,” p. 173.
125 Massive purges occurred in the early 1950s Vu, “Late Leviathans,” p. 205. Prior to these, however, “compromise and incorporation generated poorly integrated political organizations and incoherent state structure.” Vu, “Late Leviathans,” p. 162.
initiatives to wring victory or substantial concessions from the French. A series of offensives and campaigns by both the Viet Minh and French, culminating in the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, led to a negotiated settlement and (temporarily) partitioned Vietnam.

**Explaining Viet Minh Cohesion.** This case does not work very well for my theory because the ICP’s endurance and organizational reach was the endogenous product of an organizational ideology. Political commitment and drive created new social structures, rather than appropriating or transforming preexisting networks. Yet there are areas of the Viet Minh experience that accord with my argument. It was enormously difficult to construct the ICP bonding network, and previous revolts resembled foco-ist network-led rebellions. Only when there were expansive political opportunities did the ICP have the space to endogenously construct new a social-organizational infrastructure. External aid from China played a helpful role in bolstering organizational cohesion, and the ICP experienced problems of local control and incorporation in trying to consolidate its rule over the new state due to the social heterogeneity of the coalition it had assembled.

The ICP and Viet Minh thus are not a success for my theory: “when we consider the almost incredible cohesiveness of the little group of Vietnamese communist leaders who were to hold the reins from 1945 to 1986, it is striking to see how heterogeneous the movement was

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127 “despite their talents and great following, the fate of the Indochinese communists might under such ‘objective conditions’ have resembled that of their Indonesian, Malayan, and Philippine comrades. . . . the August Revolution made Vietnam unique. It provided the Viet Minh with national legitimacy, gave Vo Nguyen Giap more than a year to train and provision his army, and promoted Ho Chi Minh to an unrivalled position as leader of the nation.” Tønnesson, *The Vietnamese Revolution*, p. 416. “the reason why the revolution succeeded so easily and demanded so little blood was the power vacuum that abruptly emerged with the Japanese surrender.” Tønnesson, *The Vietnamese Revolution*, p. 394. “the 9 March coup utterly changed the fate of the Viet Minh.” Tønnesson, *The Vietnamese Revolution*, p. 414.
during its early history.” Nevertheless, the elements of the outcome are closely in line with what we would expect to see: ultimate cohesion and success were the result of an unusual and highly contingent intersection of variables that was absent in the other SE Asian cases under study. The case suggests both that it is possible for a small group of committed revolutionaries to endogenously create a strong rebel group – and that it is also enormously difficult to do so, as we would theoretically expect. Agency and innovation can consciously construct new networks in line with a powerful organizational vision, but only when political opportunities create a context in which collective action is relatively low risk.

B. Huks in the Philippines: Grassroots Mobilization and Organizational Collapse

The traditional historiography of the Hukbalahap left-wing peasant rebellion in the Philippines approaches it through counterinsurgent eyes, focusing on land reform, Ramon Magsaysay’s political leadership, and American support to the Philippine government. The fragmentation and de facto surrender of the left-wing Huk rebels is seen as an outcome of state behavior. Yet there is far less to these COIN initiatives than meets the eye: while Magsaysay was undoubtedly important, the broader structural changes in the Philippine military-political system were fairly marginal, particularly land reform. As Slater clearly shows, there was no thoroughgoing reform that fundamentally altered the political economy of the rural areas where the Huks drew most of their support.

129 There is a tendency in some of the writing on the Viet Minh/ICP to attribute to them a mystical vision and organizational skill that cannot be understood through mundane study. But it is important to remember that “most of history’s revolutionaries were losers, and the few winners seem to have succeeded not because of revolutionary planning, but because particular circumstances offered them unexpected opportunities. And then, precisely because they were aware to what extent they owed their success to fortuitous circumstances, they felt an immediate need to portray their revolution as the consequence of careful planning.” Tønnesson, *The Vietnamese Revolution*, p. 424.
130 More formally known as the Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan (People’s Liberation Army, HMB), and less formally as the Huks.
131 Slater, *Ordering Power*. 

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The spirals of internal division and fragmentation that ripped apart the Hukbahalap movement cannot be explained by state policy. Instead, I will argue that they were a result of the social coalition upon which the rebellion was based. Though speaking a language of Communist class solidarity, the Huks were built on a socially disparate coalition network base that combined, first, an urban-rural disjuncture between urban communist leaders and local peasant associations, and, second, a lack of social ties between these parochial peasant associations. The Huk rebellion thus foundered on the loose coalition between disparate, localized peasant associations in the countryside and a weak, urban communist party: it lacked a bonding network core that could forge elite cooperation while incorporating and controlling foot soldiers. Class solidarity, peasant mobilization, and Marxism-Leninism did not get the Huks anywhere. Despite the counterinsurgency conventional wisdom, it seems clear that the cascading fragmentation of the organization had more to do with deep and preexisting internal social divisions than with extremely limited land reform or an unimpressive Philippine military apparatus. Importantly, we can trace this social base and consequent organizational form to the 1930s period of mobilization and 1940s period of insurgent resistance to the Japanese, showing deep continuities across very different political contexts.

*Peasant Social Mobilization and Anti-Japanese Insurgency.* The Huk rebellion has its roots in peasant mobilization in the 1930s against landed elites, primarily in central Luzon (not that far from Manila) that expressed itself in the emergence of a variety of peasant associations. Challenging landlord dominance, these peasant associations engaged in protests and contentious politics aimed at wresting concessions on rent and ownership. However, “not even in the late 1930s, after the KPMP and AMT [two peasant associations] had merged, could a central
leadership orchestrate the peasantry.”132 He attributes this to social “gaps” within and between different strata of the leadership.133

Concurrent to the rural peasant mobilization in central and southern Luzon was urban mobilization by the Communist Party of the Philippines (Partido Komunista Pilipinaas, PKP), which saw the future running through the urban working classes. As Kerkvliet notes, “importantly, the PKP lacked strong ties with the peasantry. Few of its members were peasants, and the party did little political work in the countryside. Most of the active members lived in towns and cities where they focused on labor unions, especially those in Manila.”134 Thus from the 1930s on, an urban-rural distinction existed and so did divisions between the rural pockets of peasant collective action. It should be noted that there was not intentional cadre-building for the purposes of war during this period: “certainly rural folks never anticipated, let alone planned, the rebellion that was to come.”135

After the Japanese invasion of 1941, insurgent mobilization began that was built around these peasant organizations. The KPMP peasant association in particular played an important role in insurgent mobilization.136 The pre-war activities of World War-II Huk leaders show a clear correspondence between the peasant associations and the Huks.137 There was a deep “continuity between the peasant movement of the 1930s and the Hukbalahap.”138 However, many joined the Huks because of personal ties, the desire for revenge against the Japanese and

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133 “gaps between these two types of leaders and between top leaders and barrio activists help to explain why the movement was not controlled from the top.” Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion*, p. 49.
135 Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion*, p. 60.
136 Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion*, p. 67. KPMP was the Kalipunang Pambansa ng mga Magsasaka sa Pilipinas (National Society of Peasants in the Philippines).
137 “there were about fifteen or twenty of us who all knew each other. Some were AMT, others were KPMP like me. We had been on many parades and demonstrations together before the war.” Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion*, p. 78; see also the tables on pp. 84-5.
their Filipino collaborators, and a variety of other motivations. The Hukbalahap expanded beyond simply the peasant association base. There is abundant evidence of high levels of popular support for the Huks: "villagers worked hand in hand with the guerrillas"\textsuperscript{139} and "the Hukbalahap was a popular-based guerrilla movement with political organizations in the villages."\textsuperscript{140}

Lanzona explicitly argues that "the experience of Huk women highlights the importance of social organizations and networks in the mobilization of social and revolutionary movements. . . in a ‘high-risk’ social and revolutionary movement such as the Hukbalahap, familial and social networks, as well as contact with other activists, are even more crucial for effective recruitment."\textsuperscript{141} As a result, "the Hukbalahap army became rather effective."\textsuperscript{142} As such, it is clear that the Huks represent what Jeremy Weinstein would call an "activist" organization, engaged in grassroots mobilization and with mass popular support.\textsuperscript{143}

The Communist PKP continued to be a weak party with few ties to the countryside, a reflection of the social background of the Left’s political elites: "the Communist Party lacked deep roots in Central Luzon and could add little to the resistance."\textsuperscript{144} While attempting to exert some influence over the insurgency, because of the "tenuous relations the party had with the peasant movement in Central Luzon in the first place. . .major policies that PKP leaders made and asked the Hukbalahap to follow were, in large measure, ignored."\textsuperscript{145} A variety of initiatives demanded by the ostensible PKP leadership were simply disregarded by the major local

\textsuperscript{139} Kerkvliet, \textit{The Huk Rebellion}, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{140} Kerkvliet, \textit{The Huk Rebellion}, p. 115.
\textsuperscript{141} Vina Lanzona, \textit{Amazons of the Huk Rebellion: Gender, Sex, and Revolution in the Philippines} (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), p. 69 and p. 44.
\textsuperscript{142} Kerkvliet, \textit{The Huk Rebellion}, p. 93.
\textsuperscript{143} "the Hukbalahap had not been just another guerrilla group. It was a popular guerilla army with a mass organization spread across Central Luzon and parts of Southern Luzon." Kerkvliet, \textit{The Huk Rebellion}, p. 117.
\textsuperscript{144} Kerkvliet, \textit{The Huk Rebellion}, p. 99.
\textsuperscript{145} Kerkvliet, \textit{The Huk Rebellion}, p. 100.
commanders and units, showing a serious lack of discipline and cohesion even when fighting an extremely popular war against an oppressive foreign occupier.

_The Onset of HMB Insurgency._ The Huks fought alongside American forces after the US invasion of Philippines in 1944, part of a broader pattern of leftist groups in Southeast Asia being tacitly or formally allied with the Allies against the Japanese (similar behavior can be found in French Indochina and Malaya). However, at the end of the war the peasant organizations that underpinned the Hukbalahap organization were faced with the return of the traditionally powerful landlord elites. Many of these elites had happily collaborated with the Japanese, often abandoning the restive rural areas for the comforts of large estates in and around Manila. The Americans sided with the elites, and began disarming Huk units in the countryside without giving them significant credit for their resistance to the Japanese.  

Edward Lansdale, an American military intelligence officer, viewed the Huks as “true disciples of Karl Marx,” shaping the US response to political stabilization in post-war Philippines.

A post-war peasant movement, the PKM (Pambansang Kaisahan ng mga Magbukid), combined elements of the Hukbalahap, PKP, and other peasant associations. There was also some “brokerage” between the PKP and the PKM and other peasant groups in the form of the Democratic Alliance party, but despite large-scale support, “the PKM was far from being a tightly integrated organization. Nor could its leaders dominate it from the top.” Though there was peasant consciousness and shared grievances, there was not a robust organization due to the enduring organizational localism of the peasant groups and the weak, urban communist party.

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146 Kerkvliet, _The Huk Rebellion_, pp. 110-118.
147 Kerkvliet, _The Huk Rebellion_, p. 147.
148 "the major bridge between the peasant movement in Central Luzon and the Democratic Alliance as a national political party were those provincial and other leading spokesmen for the PMK and Hukbalahap veterans who were also prominent DA leaders." Kerkvliet, _The Huk Rebellion_, p. 142.
149 Kerkvliet, _The Huk Rebellion_, p. 132.
The underlying coalitional social structure of the Huk movement would fatally undermine its organizational power when the rebellion flared again in 1946 in opposition to the re-imposition of elite rule. Ex ante, the leftist social-organizational milieu closely resembled a parochial coalition network.

Violence escalated in the summer and fall of 1946 as village-level clashes turned into a wider conflict. Like the MCP in Malaya, the relationship between communists and post-war elites (and their external allies) turned from wary cooperation into war in a matter of a couple of years. Serious peasant support continued to flow to the HMB as it revitalized its war, particularly in central Luzon: “it was a people’s army, composed of and supported by villagers”\textsuperscript{150} and “judging from villagers’ conversations, nearly everyone in San Ricardo was implicated in the HMB. . . . and no one in San Ricardo openly supported the landlords.”\textsuperscript{151} However, the Huks also engaged in intra-community coercion and enforcement that reflected their violent power and interest in being a shadow government; this included killing and torture. Multiple armed bands emerged, each apparently built around prior Huk units and reflecting “the continuity between the rebellion and earlier years of the peasant movement.”\textsuperscript{152} A focus on the implications of prior social structure and mobilization for insurgent organization is clearly necessary even in this case of communism.

By 1948, there appear to have been between 5,000 and 10,000 insurgents.\textsuperscript{153} The HMB lacked external material support from any states or diasporas: its weapons largely came from guns that had been procured during World War II or from American and Filipino bases in

\textsuperscript{150} Kerkvliet, \textit{The Huk Rebellion}, p. 157.
\textsuperscript{151} Kerkvliet, \textit{The Huk Rebellion}, p. 166.
\textsuperscript{152} Kerkvliet, \textit{The Huk Rebellion}, p. 169.
\textsuperscript{153} Kerkvliet, \textit{The Huk Rebellion}, p. 174.
Luzon. This created a limit on military capacity, since the obvious government response was to try to clamp down on the distribution of these resources: “insufficient money and supplies were major problems.” The Philippine state began to redirect security forces into Luzon areas of rebellion with American support. The war pitted armed peasants against the armies of landlords and the state apparatus, with US support flowing into the Filipino government. US intelligence appears to have massively over-exaggerated the level of support from the Soviet Union (and even the American Communist Party) that the Huks were receiving, which cast the insurgency in a broader Cold War light.

The PKP and Democratic Alliance partners continued to engage in some legal and electoral activity in 1946-7, maintaining an opposition to the rebellion until 1948. The party was “seriously divided in 1947” over whether to throw its political and organizational weight behind the peasant movement. This meant that the HMB was launching a “spontaneous” rebellion on the back of previous military and social mobilization. Efforts by first the peasant HMB leadership and then later PKP leaders to create or maintain a highly centralized and disciplined armed group badly failed. To begin with, expansion efforts beyond the prior peasant association networks in central Luzon met with consistent failure despite broad peasant grievance. The lack of prior institutional and social connection with peasant mobilization beyond central Luzon meant that Huks lacked natural or reliable social avenues for local incorporation.

More seriously, the localized nature of the peasant and Huk mobilization undermined elite cooperation, with serious knock-on effects for local compliance and discipline. The PKP’s

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157 Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion*, p. 188. “serious splits within the party’s leadership. Conflicts grew, for example, within the politburo, between the politburo and other parts of the PKP’s to leadership (such as the party’s organization department), and between party leaders who were publicly known and others who were less visible because they were the party’s ‘second front.’” Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion*, p. 187.
initial opposition to the rebellion left the HMB without an early party leadership to pull together these local groups. But even when the PKP committed to harnessing and mobilizing the Huk rebellion in 1948, the party’s endemic, structural weaknesses made it impossible to achieve its goals of discipline and centralized. As had been true for decades, even prior to any thought of armed revolt, PKP “membership was not homogeneous nor was it a tightly disciplined organization.”¹⁵⁹ This was massively exacerbated by the weak links of the PKP with the peasant associations in the countryside: this was a brokered alliance without strong social underpinnings. A shared commitment to some kind of Marxism-Leninism was not enough glue to create organizational solidarity.

Kerkvliet clearly identifies a coalition social base and its consequent organizational failures in the case of the Huks:

“[Communists] stated that the PKP should lead the HMB at all levels: village, municipal, provincial, and national. The party’s national leaders knew, however, that real leadership of the rebellion required more than an alliance between top PKP leaders and key HMB leaders. Nor was it enough that some important HMB leaders were also party members... the PKP had never been a ‘mass-based’ party, it had weak ties with the peasant movement in Luzon, and as a party memorandum stated in late 1949, even many supporters of the ‘armed struggle’ had a ‘deep prejudice against communism and communists’.”¹⁶⁰

The Rise and Fall of the Huks. What happened to the Huk rebellion? From its origins in 1946 through its peak in 1951 and disintegration in the mid-1950s, “it followed the course of most peasant revolts in history – it waned, then faded away. Many rebels simply left their HMB squads.”¹⁶¹ Combined with factional splits in 1953-4 among the high command and a series of surrenders, the Huks would essentially fall apart (though parts of their social organization would again be re-mobilized by the New People’s Army in the 1960s). Some attribute this outcome to clever government counterinsurgency policy, which reflects a broader trend of assuming that

counterinsurgency is a one-sided contest (what the state does determines the outcome). Land
reform, reform of the security sector, and free and fair 1951 elections are all identified as causes
of the insurgency's fragmentation and collapse.

Yet as Slater persuasively shows, Philippine government reforms were noticeable but
relatively minor. Land reform was limited and corrupt, and privileged elites continued to
dominate politics.¹⁶² There was no "democracy from below,"¹⁶³ nor a fundamental change in the
structure of the rural political economy. Ramon Magsaysay, who played a central role in COIN
as defense secretary and then President, was an inspirational and savvy leader, but there was not
sufficient change to make rural grievances disappear. There was improved treatment of civilians
by the armed forces, which apparently convinced many Huks to slip away back into pure civilian
life.¹⁶⁴ Yet in comparative perspective this is not a compelling explanation: in Northern Ireland,
dedicated Provisional IRA fighters maintained loyalty to the organization despite a British
security apparatus far less thuggish and far more professional than that of the Philippines.

Elections, even free and fair ones, did not make much of a difference to insurgent organization in
Sri Lanka, Kashmir, or Indonesia at various points. I argue that a crucial cause of Huk
fragmentation was the social base of the movement, which lacked a core set of socially-
integrated leaders who could keep their fighters and colleagues cooperative and mobilized.

Though there was Huk recruiting through the standard personal networks¹⁶⁵, these local
pockets of mobilization were not robustly tied to one another across space. More than in the

¹⁶² Slater, Ordering Power. Thomas McKenna, Muslim Rulers and Rebels: Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism
in the Southern Philippines (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 115, notes that the government's
policy of resettling Huks and their sympathizers in Mindanao was "the only element of its agrarian reform program
that was effectively implemented."
¹⁶³ Elisabeth Jean Wood, Forging Democracy from Below: Insurgent Transitions in South Africa and El Salvador
¹⁶⁴ Kerkvliet, The Huk Rebellion, p. 208.
¹⁶⁵ "Hus especially asked close relatives to join -- brothers, first cousins, people like" Kerkvliet, The Huk Rebellion,
p. 205 quoting.
more cohesive group studied in other cases, most Huks were fighting for very local motivations without being connected to a broader set of obligations and incentives that could encourage participation even in the face of effective state COIN policy. For the most part, local leaders do not appear to have been friends, former classmates, or relatives of local mobilizers elsewhere. There was a small group of people bridging local communities and linked to the PKP but it clearly did not constitute the bulk of the de facto insurgent leadership. Kerkvliet identifies this peasant localism (also reflected in the structure and behavior of more formal peasant associations), and the relatively limited goals it necessarily involved, as a key cause of war-weariness. 166

Strong parties can pull together disparate sites of local mobilization under a shared organizational structure and with a clear political-military goal. The great virtue of the Marxist-Leninist organizational weapon comes from this capability. But when communist parties lack strong ties to the rural communities they need to mobilize in order to keep a war alive, ideology and organizational vision alone may be insufficient. Wickham-Crowley finds this pattern in Latin America, and it certainly applies to the Philippines. 167 Even after it decided to take up the leadership of the rebellion in 1948 the PKP never solved its organizational problems, which stretched back to a decade prior to war onset, and its previous lack of focus on rural mobilization proved impossible to quickly make up for amidst an escalating war. The PKP was not stupid or myopic, and its leaders were not cowards. The party explicitly tried to create discipline: “left in this [unled, localized] condition, the armed peasants would surely fail. On the other hand, with proper tutelage and leadership from the PKP, the armed struggle would become an effective,
tightly organized ‘revolutionary movement,’” while PKP leaders took serious personal risks to put this model into practice. In 1951/2, the PKP heralded the “success of the Party in replacing the HMB and the masses under its supervision.”

Yet consciously embracing the Marxist-Leninist organizational strategy was not enough to actually conjure it into being, despite mass peasant support. The PKP’s social structure made it an ineffective vessel of insurgent control: “even at the movement’s peak...one of the most troublesome problems from the national PKP leaders’ viewpoint was that leaders of section committees, squadrons, and field commands frequently refused to comply with party directives. This happened even if these local leaders were party members. . . . [PKP/HMB] failed, despite their numerous efforts, to standardize procedures for recruiting people into the party.”

There remained looming gaps between leaders and Huk cadres, with localism and indiscipline endemic both within the party and the broader Huk movement. There was a “precarious alliance in the first place, as represented by its policies and top leadership, and the peasant rebellion itself.” PKP military and political commanders found peasant cadres “‘undisciplined’...this included numerous faults, but among the most serious, the PKP literature argued, was that people put their families, friendships, and local concerns ahead of the movement as a whole.”

As the Philippine government did engage in some reform, these defections from the HMB began to accelerate. Some surrendered to the government, but many just slipped away

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169 Kerkvliet, The Huk Rebellion, p. 223.
170 Kerkvliet, The Huk Rebellion, p. 223.
173 Kerkvliet, The Huk Rebellion, p. 228.
174 “the second major reason [for Huk] defeat was government reforms.” Kerkvliet, The Huk Rebellion, p. 237. There were fair 1951 election and clearly serious support for Magsaysay approach. “Philippine military did improve enough to make rebellion much more costly to the Huks” (Kerkvliet, The Huk Rebellion, p. 241);
back home. Though Goodwin attributes this to the “libidinal constitution”\(^{175}\) of Philippine society, it is a common dynamic amongst fragmenting insurgent groups, no matter what their libidinal status is. The deep social gaps that had been apparent underneath the peasants movement since the 1930s came ever more to the surface as the conflict endured, and “by 1953, the movement’s remaining leaders were powerless to prevent even larger numbers of armed peasants from leaving.”\(^{176}\) Southern Luzon was especially hard hit, since it was outside of the core central Luzon stronghold of the Hukbalahaps. The lack of guns and money probably accelerated this process, though I have not seen direct evidence beyond the increasing problems Huk fighters reporting in getting supplies. As the military and organizational pressures took their toll, the space available for conscious cohesion-building and grassroots politicization grew ever smaller, and “rebels had no more time for the movement’s work; they were too busy trying to survive.”\(^{177}\)

The always low levels of local incorporation and compliance with the HMB were joined by increasing intra-elite conflict, which shifted from simple non-cooperation to open feuding. In 1954, “several important leaders split into two factions over this question of what to do.”\(^{178}\) It then got worse by the mid-1950s: “significantly, the movement had not one set of leaders but at least three, which developed as the unrest expanded. . . . generally, leaders varied with respect to their connections to peasant organizations and with respect to their ideologies or outlooks.”\(^{179}\) The PKP’s coalition base was not a robust enough infrastructure upon which to construct an

\(^{175}\) Goodwin, “Libidinal Constitution.”
\(^{176}\) Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion*, p. 234.
\(^{177}\) Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion*, p. 245.
\(^{178}\) Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion*, p. 246.
\(^{179}\) Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion*, p. 262. There were of course some linked to both party and peasants – including Taruc, who quit in 1954. Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion*, p. 263.
enduring rebellion; it could not knit together the disparate local associations and networks that
made up the Huk revolt.\textsuperscript{180}

\textit{Explaining Huk Fragmentation}. Kerkvliet sums up the social structure of the Huk
rebellion: “the alliances, when they did occur between peasants organizations or peasant rebels
and the PKP, remained tenuous. This was another reason why the party had only limited
influence on the course of the peasant movement. First, its ties to the peasant movement were
mainly at the upper levels of the movement – primarily through national and middle-level leaders
of the Hukbahalap, PKM, and HMB. The party had few roots in the villages and municipalities
of Central Luzon.”\textsuperscript{181} This played an important role, though obviously among other factors, in
the cascading defection and disintegration that would pull apart the movement from within. More
broadly, Scott argues that the rebellion was a “classical case” of the tension between locally-
focused peasants and a very socially and ideologically distinct set of (urban) revolutionary
elites.\textsuperscript{182}

Arguments that tightly link communism to organizational discipline must deal with the
fissiparous nature of the Huks. As I show in the MCP and Viet Minh cases, this ideology can be
a potent force, but it most likely to be effective when harnessed to large-scale external material
support and given serious breathing room by state power. In the Philippines, a site of indigenous
peasant mobilization, rapacious rural elites, and the explicit embrace of a Marxist-Leninist
model, the lack of a bonding network core from either peasant associations or the PKP and
absence of external support left the Huk/PKP rebellion unable to hold itself together across time
and space. Instead, “peasants and radicals glided past each other, each going the opposite way

\textsuperscript{180} “the party’s small membership was not tightly disciplined.” Kerkvliet, \textit{The Huk Rebellion}, p. 265. Moreover,
“even those party members who were in the rebellion did not act in unison.” Kerkvliet, \textit{The Huk Rebellion}, p. 265.
\textsuperscript{181} Kerkvliet, \textit{The Huk Rebellion}, p. 265.
\textsuperscript{182} Scott, “Revolution in the Revolution,” p. 113.
from the other and from the way each had been going before." My theory can help us gain significant understanding of the Huk rebellion; rather than simply focusing on state policy it illuminates why the HMB was so unable to harness peasant unrest and to forge a classical Marxist-Leninist robust insurgency.

C. Malayan Communist Party

British colonial rule in Malaya introduced ethnic pluralism/division, by expanding the presence of Chinese and Indians relative to Malays. In the run-up to and during World War II, a powerful communist movement emerged among the Chinese population in Malaya. In 1948, after several years of intense labor unrest, the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) launched a rebellion against the colonial government by deploying its armed MNLA wing. Mobilizing the Chinese community, the MCP gained significant power by 1950, but from 1950-51 it progressively lost organizational cohesion and military power. It essentially was pushed out of Malaya by the end of the 1950s, holding on in base camps on the Thai side of the Thai-Malaysian border until signing a deal with the Malaysian state in 1989. Though I focus here on the 1948-57 period, there was more explicit factionalization in the 1970s and 1980s during the group’s long Thai exile.

The MCP is the intermediate case among our communist armed groups in SE Asia. The MCP is a complex case to code, combining attributes of both cohesion and fragmentation that make it hard to clearly assess. The MCP/MNLA was somewhat more cohesive than the Huks, retaining a clear central command without splits for most of its existence, but also suffering from serious and pervasive problems of internal betrayal and surrender. This places MCP in a category less cohesive than Viet Minh but significantly more so than the Huks.

Kerkvliet, The Huk Rebellion, p. 266.
What explains the MCP’s initially moderate cohesion and its consequent collapse? There are two variables that were very important in this case that my theory does not include. First, the MCP’s organization-building strategy consciously infiltrated and captured preexisting Chinese networks for its purposes. Though my theory suggests the importance of these prior structures, the MCP went beyond simple social appropriation towards an intentional, conscious strategy of institution-building. This process, from the late 1930s through late 1940s, was very clearly driven by the communist organizational vision being advanced by the Comintern and the examples of other Marxist-Leninist movements. The leadership of the MCP drew on preexisting networks, but itself was quite socially heterogeneous and fluid, as British repression undermined leadership continuity. Second, the slow collapse of the MCP has a lot to do with British COIN strategy, particularly its food control, population resettlement, and amnesty policies. Moreover, intelligence penetration during and after World War II left the group without an experienced or deep leadership, which contributed to waves of surrenders and defections.

My theory can illuminate important aspects of the MCP experience. First, the group drew most of its lower and mid-level cadres from fairly robust Chinese ethnic and associational networks that provided mechanisms of local recruitment and incorporation. This allowed the organization to integrate new fighters without seeing a rise of factionalism from below. Nevertheless, this is not a fully satisfactory explanation of the MCP’s leadership cohesion. Second, the MCP lacked significant external material support which severely restricted its access to food and weapons as it became isolated from social support. Unlike the Viet Minh, the MCP did not have a powerful foreign patron: Thailand tolerated very low-level MCP activities but there were no flows of guns, food, cash, or training from the Thais or anyone else. This seriously undermined the MCP’s military power. My argument can tell us some important things about
Malaya, but explaining this case fundamentally requires accounting for state and ideological variables.

*Communist Mobilization and the Rise of the MCP, 1930-41.* The Left in colonial Asia faced fairly pervasive repression from law enforcement during the 1930s, including under British rule in Malaya. The Malayan Communist Party emerged after a series of abortive organizational attempts in the early 1930s. However, during most of the 1930s it was divided along ideological and clan lines within the Chinese community, and lacked significant reach into either the Indian or Malay communities. “the MCP leadership was not as united and cohesive as might be expected. In fact, it was plagued by serious internal dissension on two occasions during the years 1930-1935.”

While “the MCP adopted the Leninist organizational principles of democratic centralism,” in the early 1930s “MCP leadership was still by and large dominated by the Hainanese.” Yong points out the deep links between the MCP and the dynamics of communism in China. But until the Japanese invasion of China in 1931, the MCP “did not have a strong mass base.”

While the earlier dynamic of leadership turnover and confusion never changed, as the 1930s went on the MCP found an organizational strategy that worked: particularly starting in 1938 it harnessed nationalist Chinese organizations that aimed to raise funds for the CCP and KMT in their fight against the Japanese invasion of China (Stenson 1970). The MCP deployed its cadres to infiltrate and control preexisting nationalist organizations, while also setting up a broad array of Anti-Enemy Backing Up Societies (AEBUS) that attracted young Chinese men. It

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185 Yong, *The Origins of Malayan Communism*, p. 152.
186 Yong, *The Origins of Malayan Communism*, p. 167. Yong notes the “incessant struggle for political survival,” p. 147, on the part of early Malayan communists.
used this organizational apparatus to also influence labor mobilization and militancy in the late 1930s until the outbreak of the Pacific War, aiming to control union activity. As Yong notes, “by capitalizing on and leading these two movements, the MCP not only deepened its industrial base but also broadened its mass support.”

During this period, the MCP emerged as a relatively disciplined Marxist-Leninist party, though in retrospect it is clear that after 1935 one of its main leaders (Lai Teck) was in fact a British Special Branch agent (and during World War II would be a Japanese agent). The MCP controlled labor agitation both on the Malayan Peninsula and in Singapore, turning on and off strikes to suit its political agenda. It was also building up a dedicated core of MCP loyalists through its core and front organizations: “by organizing and mobilizing secondary Chinese school students for political action against the Japanese, the MCP secured one of the most important recruiting and training grounds for potential MCP membership. These young Malayan-born ‘new bloods’ were to form the nuclear of the political and military leadership of the MCP during the Japanese occupation and the post-war years.”

**MCP During the Japanese Occupation.** As the Japanese juggernaut drew closer, the MCP and the British reached a rapprochement to unite against the Japanese forces. This included some training and weapons for MCP members by the British with the aim of these cadres acting as part of the “stay behind” guerrilla forces on the Peninsula. The MCP created the MPAJA as its anti-Japanese armed wing. As the British were swept out of Malaya and Singapore, the MCP was able to assert itself as a well-known insurgent opponent of the Japanese. The Japanese were

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188 Yong, *The Origins of Malayan Communism*, p. 201. “successful mobilization of labor unions which flexed their industrial muscles and served as the backbone of the Malayan communist movement. The second was the burgeoning National Salvation Movement of the Chinese community... by capitalizing on and leading these two movements, the MCP not only deepened its industrial base but also broadened its mass support.” Yong, *The Origins of Malayan Communism*, p. 201.

189 Yong, *The Origins of Malayan Communism*, p. 257.

190 Coates, *Suppressing Insurgency*, p. 10.
particularly reviled for the massive anti-Chinese purges that accompanied the fall of Singapore, as well as (obviously) the Japanese military occupation of large parts of China. These organizations would play an important role in “the support of the Anti-Japanese Union, or, in its later form, the Min Yuen, which was essentially to the maintenance of the armed guerrilla camps.”\textsuperscript{191} As a result of the political-military chaos on the Malayan Peninsula, “the Japanese occupation offered the MCP new opportunities, such as military training, guerrilla warfare and rural bases.”\textsuperscript{192} While the Japanese opposed the MCP, they had bigger problems to focus on and never created an internal state apparatus that could rival the British; this allowed breathing space for the MCP.\textsuperscript{193} There was some limited support from the British (in Force 136) but the political rapprochement between the two groups was hazy and tentative.

There are several discordant notes within this picture of MCP success during the Japanese period. First, the organization was penetrated by Japanese security forces, in large part due to its leader Lai Teck being a Japanese (and before and after, British) spy. This intelligence penetration allowed the Japanese to severely attrite the MCP’s command structure. As British observers noted, “central control of operations was weak.”\textsuperscript{194} Second, the MCP and MJAPA were not able to mount the same level of anti-Japanese attacks as the Huks in the Philippines, and for the most part remained confined to rural fastnesses. Nevertheless, Short argues that “it says much for the resilience of the MCP that it was able to survive these disasters and to continue as the directing force behind the bulk of the resistance groups.”\textsuperscript{195} The MCP would reap the

\textsuperscript{192} Yong, \textit{The Origins of Malayan Communism}, p. 275.
\textsuperscript{193} “within the jungle camps, the very long periods of inactivity gave the MCP its greatest opportunity of providing an ideology that was fashionable, exciting, and not altogether unrealistic.” Short, \textit{Communist Insurrection in Malaya}, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{194} Coates, \textit{Suppressing Insurgency}, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{195} Short, \textit{Communist Insurrection in Malaya}, p. 22.
rewards of its resistance in the form of political credibility at a time when many other political forces in Malaya were collaborating, imprisoned, or simply absent.

Between the Wars: 1945-48. When the Japanese left Malaya and the British returned, an uneasy calm ensued. While the MCP was “one of the strongest communist parties in southeast Asia,”\textsuperscript{196} it nevertheless decided to follow a moderate path. The MCP demobilized and decided to pursue the peaceful route of labor-focused mobilization and agitation in line with much of the Soviet line in 1945, rather than adopting the Viet Minh approach. Part of this was a decision, but there were also serious organizational constraints on MCP strategy: The problems of the MCP were certainly accentuated by the role of Lai Tek as a Kempetai agent. The weaknesses in party policies and the destruction of the party organization ensured that the MCP was unlikely to be in a position to take advantage of opportunities which came its way in the vacuum following the Japanese surrender.”\textsuperscript{197}

In the immediate aftermath of the war, and the communal clashes between Chinese and Malays that shaped the future political trajectory of Malaya, “the MCP was unable to control its own men who were allowed to do virtually whatever they liked.”\textsuperscript{198} The MCP created ex-guerrilla veterans’ associations (the MPAJA Ex-Comrades’ Association)\textsuperscript{199} of demobilized MPAJA fighters (which would become the future armed wing of MCP).\textsuperscript{200} Peace presented its own challenges.\textsuperscript{201} The goal was Malayan independence, and more specifically independence under communist control.

\textsuperscript{196} Coates, Suppressing Insurgency, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{198} Kheng, Red Star Over Malaya, p. 297.
\textsuperscript{199} Coates, Suppressing Insurgency, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{200} Kheng, Red Star Over Malaya, p. 260.
\textsuperscript{201} “Lai Teck made sure that by mid-1946 none of the old guard of the top leadership and very few of the middle level officers were left.” Richard Stubbs, Hearts and Minds in Guerilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency, 1948-
Though "weakened by purges and led by a man noted for collaboration with authorities," the MCP began to revitalize its role in labor unions and political front organizations. The Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions (PMFTU) was the dominant labor force under MCP control and it led large-scale unionization and protest activities. Coates argues that the MCP by 1947 controlled 214 out of 277 labor unions. The swirling clash of both class- and communal-based political mobilization had profound effects on Malaya, as the British scrambled to revitalize the state apparatus and build social coalitions to consolidate colonial rule. As Slater argues, the long-term consequences of this combination of contentious politics would be the underpinning of an authoritarian alliance between Chinese, Malay, and Indian elites, but in the meantime challenges came both from the left and along ethnic lines. The MCP began to attract recruits through both preexisting networks and new organizations, which they used to pull new members into the Communist movement. As Stubbs notes, "the key to the recruiting process was personal contact. Recruits became associated with front organizations either through ‘existing friendships’, such as family ties or friendships made at work or at school, or through ‘created friendships’, such as those resulting from one neighbor, worker, or student helping another." 

There was ample social space to work with; while "the most salient fact about the Chinese in Malaya before the war," writes Soh Eng Lim, "was their dividedness," there was nevertheless a rich associational life for the MCP to tap into: "Chinese society has traditionally

202 Kheng, Red Star Over Malaya, p. 299.
203 Coates, Suppressing Insurgency, p. 15.
204 Slater, Ordering Power.
205 Stubbs, Hearts and Minds, p. 49.
been honey-combed with groups, associations, and societies. For many Chinese, membership in such organizations is an essential part of their lives. . . the MCP and its satellite organizations had many of the characteristics of a powerful secret society – ‘underground pressure, intimidation, the impalpable influence which no one dares to defy.’”

Within the party, “decision-making was highly centralized” (Stubbs 2004, 54). However, Lai Teck, the MCP leader, disappeared with a stock of money in 1947, showing that centralization was not necessarily a positive situation for the organization. This defection previewed some of the problems of defection (though not organizational splitting) that would later beset the MCP’s armed struggle, and in 1947 “it took months to recover.”

*Revolt: The Emergency Begins, 1948-49.* Labor unrest in the Malayan Peninsula and Singapore escalated in 1946-48, with the MCP trying to use left-wing mobilization as its wedge for achieving independence and control. However, Stenson argues that the MCP’s labor unrest strategy, while quite effective in creating contention and strikes, was undermined by divisions within the different components of the grand coalition the MCP was trying to fashion. Repression, concessions, and communal politics all peeled away important parts of the labor front and left the MCP worried that it had peaked. The British cracked down hard on the

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207 Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds*, p. 49. “the MCP was able to tap the nationalistic, xenophobic, and revolutionary sentiments which had become an integral part of the Malayan Chinese education curriculum.” Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds*, p. 49. “the Malayan Chinese had no real alternative organization other than the MCP to which to look for leadership” Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds*, p. 52.


211 “even among the more urbanized or industrialized (and thus economically strategic) non-Malays, the MCP did not possess a sufficient body of hard-core, self-conscious and disciplined support to maintain a policy of controlled moderation in the face of determined, even aggressive employer-government onslaughts.” Stenson, *Repression and Revolt*, p. 12.
unions and proved unwilling to grant large-scale concessions, while Malays of various political affiliations avoided the CMP and its fronts for ethnic reasons.

Combined with Lai Teck’s defection, a period of crisis faced the party, particularly from February 1947. If it continued to pursue the peaceful path, the British and their indigenous allies would wipe out the party and its affiliates, thereby eliminating all of the progress made since 1938. Many of the PMFTU leaders appear to have actually bought into a reformist labor style, undermining the MCP’s strategy of using the unions as a cutting edge of the revolution. The shift in geopolitical context by 1948, with growing confrontation between the Western and Soviet blocs and escalating anti-colonial wars in French Indochina and Indonesia, contributed to the shift towards militancy. A new, relatively young and inexperienced leadership faced the further challenge of repudiating the previous policies of Lai Teck and establishing its credibility. Though the MCP tried to prepare itself, “it was chronically short of funds, much of its rural organization had been disbanded, and it needed time to respond to the groundswell of criticism from its grass-roots members.”

In April 1948, the MCP decided to launch an armed uprising. Yet “from the MCP’s point of view, their guerrilla campaign went off at half cock” and its early operations indicated “the Party’s lack of readiness.” The party “lacked the strict control over its members required for the successful implementation of a revolutionary coup.” A wave of poorly-coordinated strikes ensued both in Singapore and especially the Malayan peninsula, followed by the classic early stages of armed insurgency from mid-May. Stenson argues that “this spontaneity [in the MCP

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212 This is the central argument Stenson, Repression and Revolt, makes for the onset of the revolt.
213 Moreover, many seemed to believe that there was a high likelihood of more global conflict which would provide assistance to the MCP from friendly communist states.
216 Stubbs, Hearts and Minds, p. 61.
218 Stenson, Repression and Revolt, p. 15.
revolt] which completely destroyed any chances of success the revolt may have had" and units launched operations on their own initiative.” The British gained room to respond and fortify, rather than being swept aside by disciplined revolutionary cadres. A rural insurgency began on the peninsula, while Singapore was never a site of armed insurgency. The insurgency was technically waged by the Malayan National Liberation Army, the MCP’s armed apparatus.

The MCP looked to two major sources of initial social support. First, it activated the ex-MPAJA veterans who had been de-mobilized into a veterans’ association. Clutterbuck argues that a relatively small proportion of these veterans (~30%) answered the call to become the core of the new MNLA. They were almost entirely Chinese – over 90% according to the British intelligence reports. This was clearly the first place the MCP went as it somewhat shambolically went to war in the summer of 1948. Former leader Chin Peng said that “we were quite confident we can get the people, ex-AJA men, including the Secret Army, including the Open Army, and we were quite confident most of them will join us.” A classic Leninist cell system was technically put into place, with a centralized and hierarchical command structure.

Second, the MCP relied on civilian supporters who in many cases had been originally mobilized through front organizations, particularly the AEBUS and labor unions. The Min Yuen (short for Min Chung Yuen Tung, or People’s Movement) was the civilian support apparatus that

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219 Stenson, Repression and Revolt, p. 20.
222 Early accounts referred to the MCP’s armed wing as the Malayan Races Liberation Army, but this was apparently a mistranslation by Special Branch.
225 Hack and Chin, Dialogues, p. 137.
226 The organization chart and distribution of units can be found in Coates, Suppressing Insurgency, pp. 54-56.
provided auxiliaries and suppliers to the fighting forces. There was an elaborate apparatus, at least on paper, intended to fuel the organization with men, food, and money to keep the war alive. Yet this civilian support was not enough to fund the MCP’s warfighting needs: “the main handicap to mobilization was lack of funds. The squatters were poor, and they were not always able to feed party workers.”

In some ways, these provided a robust social base to the MCP, a stock of fighters and supporters who had been linked by strong preexisting social ties over the previous decade. In 1949-50, the MCP was able to deploy a militarily credible force of several thousand hard-core fighters backed by a socially-embedded network of supporters in local communities. As Stubbs argues in a clear echo of other cases studied in this dissertation:

“it was because of the strength of these friendship ties that the many associations and societies that the MCP had assiduously formed during the post-War period began to pay off for them in the initial stages of the Emergency. As well as kinship and friendship ties, loyalties associated with districts, provinces, and common family name could also be called upon. As Duncanson has noted, at least in the early years of the Emergency, the MCP had little difficulty in ‘seizing upon the natural organization of village society and exploiting it for its own end’”

The formal structure of the organization was less important than its social underpinnings. Many units were far below their claimed strengths and others were more powerful than the organization chart would suggest. Instead, “unit strengths were determined by influences outside the Central Committee’s control. Each group developed in almost exact relation to the strength of its popular base and following among the local community, and the effectiveness with which

228 Coates, Suppressing Insurgency, p. 58.
229 Bayly and Harper, Forgotten Wars, p. 430. Note that Weinstein and others assume that social support is enough to fund war, when in fact it may be insufficient.
230 On the importance of ex-MPAJA fighters see Stubbs, Hearts and Minds, p. 88, and on the multiple motivations for joining MCP see Stubbs, Hearts and Minds, p. 89. Of the Malayan Chinese “theirs was largely a self-contained society.” Short, Communist Insurrection in Malaya, p. 255.
231 Short, Communist Insurrection in Malaya, p. 211. There are also some indications of Hakka dominance within the Chinese, but this is somewhat fluid – in the early 1930s there was Hainanese dominance. See Yong, The Origins of Malayan Communism. On some intra-Chinese divisions, see Bayly and Harper, Forgotten Wars, p. 475.
232 Stubbs, Hearts and Minds, p. 91.
individual leaders attained this by pre-existing family and local ties, by terror, or by both. The Leninist isomorphism of the MCP’s ostensible command structure was less important than the actual social relationships governing militant mobilization on the ground. Certain areas became MCP strongholds, while others were far less helpful to the organization, despite the diffusion of communism and shared Chinese ethnicity.

As Bayly and Harper note, “where families, communities, and livelihoods were secure, the tight networks of kinship and friendship in the villages and workplace took on a compelling significance, and MCP’s cadres were able to enmesh themselves in this.” However, there was no broader social structure that could tie together these local social networks, given the weakness of the ICP as a party structure. This helps to explain the disorganized, fractured nature of the initial rebellion. Building a strong communist parties is easier said than done.

Moreover, at no point was there significant external material support for the MCP. In stark contrast to the Viet Minh, for the MCP “nor was there ever more than a trickle of material support from outside.” Thailand was not a communist state, the Indonesian Communists were engaged in power struggles of their own amidst an incredibly violent and complex domestic-political realm, the Viet Minh were locked in a war with the French, and Chinese attentions were focused on internal consolidation and Taiwan. The later peace deals in Korea (1953) and Vietnam (1954) further reduced the likelihood of aggressive communist support for the MCP’s war. The Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia was divided in its loyalties and mobilization strategies, including a set of KMT supporters and members of the MCA in Malaya who were not

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236 “nor could the guerrillas count on any outside material aid being provided by sympathetic government [sic].”
238 Coates, *Suppressing Insurgency*, p. 49.
sympathetic to the MCP’s agenda. Thus the MCP/MNLA was forced to generate resources from within the combat zone ("there was virtually no infiltration in support of the MCP by land or sea") rather than being able to access guns, money, and training in and from third parties.

Response and Changing Tide: COIN, 1949-52. The British responded with a state of emergency and an escalating set of COIN measures. The inability of the MNLA/MCP to rapidly wipe out the governing apparatus created space for the colonial government to regroup, though it found itself flailing in early responses. 1948 and 1949 saw fairly poor counterinsurgent intelligence, but a clear commitment to coercion and control that created serious bulwarks against MCP success. The guidelines of British policy would be found in the Briggs Plan, adopted in 1950. The MCP was able to influence large portions of the Chinese population, particularly squatters in semi-urban areas.

The basic contours of the Briggs Plan aimed to physically resettle a huge proportion of the Chinese in Malaya (eventually over half a million would be moved), with a focus on squatters, in order to control the population and thus deny its support to the MCP. The New Villages of the resettlement policy would become a centerpiece of the struggle. This policy was feared by the MCP, which realized that "the party’s best means of supply and support could well be cut off." The counterinsurgency state was being born, and "less than three years after its virtual collapse, the state was taking on unprecedented new functions."

The refocusing and revitalization of British efforts came alongside significant discontent within the MCP. Elite ideological battles led to the killing or expulsion of several key leaders, showing that the MCP was not a highly cohesive organization; several of these senior leaders

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239 Coates, Suppressing Insurgence, Chapter 2 is a good overview of the British response to the onset of the war.
240 Coates, Suppressing Insurgence, p. 62.
241 Bayly and Harper, Forgotten Wars, p. 441.
would end up working in some capacity with the British colonial regime after “a series of mutual recriminations which lasted for almost two years.” The lack of experienced leadership “was to haunt the MCP throughout the Emergency.” However, it is important not to overestimate the effects of this ideological debate on operations: “despite the heated dialectic which these incidents aroused, they are unlikely seriously to have affected the morale of the organization or its efficiency; certainly not with any immediacy. Communications were so poor that even official instructions took a long time to reach the rank and file.” The bigger problem was found among units on the ground, which were increasingly unreliable.

The MCP could not rely on any external flows of material aid, which led to Chin Peng’s dawning realization that “without foreign aid, we could not defeat the British Army, even if we expanded our forces to 10,000 at the most.” This material weakness combined with growing resettlement policies to create serious food and supply limitations in the jungle. Interestingly, even when the MCP was able to get cash, it had trouble getting food. Lack of access to resources exacerbated internal morale issues (“dwindling food supplies proved debilitating and demoralizing” and by 1951 the MCP was facing severe structural challenges of internal control and military strength.

The MCP on the Margins, 1951-57. Though 1951-2 saw serious fighting between the MCP and the British state, the trend line from 1951 was fairly clear, though this was not certain
at the time. The Briggs Plan laid out a sound strategic vision and its implementation by Briggs and then (the highly energetic and focused) Gerald Templer resulted in growing MCP fragmentation as defections and surrenders began to spur further intelligence penetration, which in turn led to more defection. Templer’s great contribution was the implementation of the Briggs Plan, forging a coordinated counterinsurgency state with high levels of administrative efficiency. The indigenous aspects of this apparatus would later provide some of the underpinning of independent Malaysia’s durable authoritarian regime. 250

In response, the MCP attempted to reform by trying to grow closer to the people and to rely less on coercion. 251 In fact, it consciously adopted Maoist/Marxist-Leninist insurgency approaches in its October 1951 directives. 252 There was a clear and intentional effort to forge a Viet Minh-style organizational weapon linked to broader social networks, but it faced serious organizational obstacles to doing so. It was being strained from within while hedged in by the growing British counterinsurgency effort, which included the creation of a collusive elite political pact that included key Chinese business leaders who could attract the loyalties of large sections of the Chinese population. 253 The lack of external support meant that “the Malayan revolution – unlike the revolution in Vietnam – had to fall back entirely on its own resources, and had already begun to eat its own.” 254

250 Slater, Ordering Power, argues that insurgency and state-building in what became Malaysia were intimately intertwined. Bayly and Harper, Forgotten Wars, p. 526 note that “this resulted in an infrastructure that few countries in Asia could match. It also created a strong – and potentially overbearing – state.” See also Tim Harper, The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
251 Short, Communist Insurrection in Malaya, p. 319.
252 Mao’s thought was an explicit ideological template. Coates, Suppressing Insurgency, p. 66.
253 The Malayan Chinese Association became an elite vessel for control of the Chinese population and its representation in the broader Malayan context.
Chin Peng identified the resettlement policy as particularly devastating to the MCP as an organization: “they forced you to go, and they burned all your house.”\textsuperscript{255} In addition, food denial operations and amnesty programs made life extremely difficult on the MCP and its cadres. The Briggs Plan was clear in the need for “breaking up the Min Yuen within the populated areas,”\textsuperscript{256} and its massive effort to resettle the Chinese squatter population drew dividends.\textsuperscript{257} This was not “population security” but instead population control, and “the process changed substantially the human geography of Malaya.”\textsuperscript{258} As a result of this enormous government endeavor, “the new Malaya envisaged by the MCP was deprived, for the foreseeable future, of such social basis as it had.”\textsuperscript{259}

The MCP withdrew further into the jungles, and began to prepare to emulate a Maoist peripheral insurgency model in expectation of a protracted conflict: a “little Long March” became the idea of the leadership.\textsuperscript{260} The terrain was perfect for insurgency.\textsuperscript{261} Yet surrenders continued to flow away from the organization. As Short notes, within units “the hard core and the leader himself ultimately surrendered not because their own morale was destroyed but because they realized that their organization was disintegrating.”\textsuperscript{262} Cascades of defection occurred, often over fairly mundane objectives and motivations.\textsuperscript{263} Consequently, “the possibility of infiltration by Government agents became a preoccupation of the guerrilla leaders.”\textsuperscript{264}

\textsuperscript{255} Hack and Chin, \textit{Dialogues}, p. 155.
\textsuperscript{256} Briggs Plan quote in Coates, \textit{Suppressing Insurgency}, p. 83.
\textsuperscript{257} “the operational technique which finally ‘dug out the roots’ of the insurgent infrastructure was food denial.” Coates, \textit{Suppressing Insurgency}, p. 127. Bayly and Harper note that “it was in the squatter settlements that battle was joined most fiercely.” Bayly and Harper, \textit{Forgotten Wars}, p. 448.
\textsuperscript{258} Coates, \textit{Suppressing Insurgency}, p. 93.
\textsuperscript{259} Coates, \textit{Suppressing Insurgency}, p. 94.
\textsuperscript{260} Short, \textit{Communist Insurrection in Malaya}, p. 439.
\textsuperscript{261} “the country itself was a guerrilla’s paradise.” Coates, \textit{Suppressing Insurgency}, p. 143.
\textsuperscript{262} Short, \textit{Communist Insurrection in Malaya}, p. 490.
\textsuperscript{264} Stubbs, \textit{Hearts and Minds}, p. 193.
were “mass betrayals” within the organization and “the mood of paranoia and betrayal that had so dogged the Party since the war became deeper still.” Surrendered Enemy Personnel (SEP) became a crucial resource for the British in targeting the MCP organization. Yet at the same time, there remained a distinct and functioning MCP/MNLA that continued to recruit, direct, and train its forces: this highlights the difficulties of cleanly putting the MCP in a single category on the dependent variable. A core held on amidst serious challenges to internal control and motivation.

What explains this movement towards fragmentation (while keeping in mind the endurance of important elements of cohesion) during the 1950s? The lack of external support clearly exacerbated military weakness and local autonomy, with disastrous effects. The comparison to the Viet Minh, and its Chinese guns and sanctuary, is striking. Alongside this lack of serious support, the British COIN policy effectively removed the fighting cadres from the social networks (labor, AEBUS/National Salvation Movement, and MJAPA institutions that were the basis of the Min Yuen) upon which the MCP relied. Local embeddedness meant nothing if cadres were physically removed from their communities, which in turn were surrounded by barbed wire, patrolled by security forces, and restricted in access to food. Thus state policy here was crucial in sundering social relationships by removing insurgents from their social environment: “in the new settlements people often had little in common, not even a shared language. The trauma of removal did not encourage the formation of new community ties, whether through dialect associations, clubs or temples. Social trust was deeply damaged.”

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resettlement policy. Neither communism or ethnicity were sufficient to keep the organization in the field; social relationships were the crucial target of the British effort.

This was combined with a focus on intelligence and amnesties that targeted the internal working of the MCP. The latter policy was important, though we know in comparative perspective that intelligence-focused COIN is not sufficient for insurgent fragmentation (for instance, in N. Ireland). The ability of the MCP to survive despite being separated from its social base appears to have something to do with the commitment of some of its cadres to Marxism-Leninism: far from home, clearly losing, watching comrades desert, there remained a cohesive ideological core of true believers. But this was a small and ever-diminishing group.

*Withering Away: The MCP in Thailand, 1957-89.* This core of true believers would have a long wait before they could ever go home. A short-lived negotiation process occurred in December 1955 but without any tangible results given the MCP’s unwillingness to surrender and the government’s lack of interest in the MCP existing as a legitimate political party. In the face of organizational, political, and military pressures, the MCP was a battered insurgent force by the time the Federation of Malaya gained its independence in 1957. The course of the war had should that “peasant resistance was futile.” 1958 marked “the end of the MRLA as an organized military force and the point at which armed Communism ceased to be the major threat to the security of Malaya.” Isolated in the sparsely-populated rural north of the peninsula, the MCP’s bid for power had failed.

Left with fewer than 2,000 supporters of any sort, the MCP largely withdrew to bases on the Thai side of the border, where there was uneasy coexistence with the Thai security forces,

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268 The MCP had also come to rely on the Orang Asli indigenous peoples in the mountains. They too were targeted for resettlement by the British. Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Wars*, p. 494.
270 Short, *Communist Insurrection in Malaya*, pp. 492-3.
who appear to have viewed the MCP as a possible counterweight against Malayan (later Malaysian) support for potentially-separatist Muslim Malays in southern Thailand.\textsuperscript{271} The MCP showed itself willing to act against some criminal gangs in the area, earning a degree of forbearance from Thailand.\textsuperscript{272} This never amounted to active state sponsorship, however, merely a low-level tolerance that was occasionally broken by crackdowns on MCP members. The MCP, which renamed itself the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) tried to reorganize in the form of an internal “rectification” campaign in the late 1960s replete with executions\textsuperscript{273}, which led to two splits by main camp groups. Camps at Sadao and Betong West were unrepresented in the Central Committee and broke away in suspicion of the accusations and trials launched by the leadership.\textsuperscript{274} The central CPM-Orthodox spawned the CPM-Revolutionary Faction (CPM-RF) and CPM-Marxist-Leninist (CPM-ML), which endured along the border, sometimes in confrontation with the CPM-O. In the 1980s Beijing would broker a unification of the CPM-RF and CPM-ML into the Malaysian Communist Party (the second iteration of the MCP acronym).

In the late 1960s and early 1970s the CPM-O launched another insurgency, but again with very limited success. The areas along the Thai border were simply not hospitable to significant militancy, primarily (and sparsely) inhabited by the aboriginal Orang Asli and bereft of food or strategic resources (even though the terrain was favorable). The Malaysian state, at this point increasingly internally stable and engaged in rapprochement with the Chinese Communist regime, was easily able to blunt the challenge. “The MCP could prolong the war indefinitely, but it could not win it.”\textsuperscript{275} The CPM-O was able to tap into some Chinese communities in southern Thailand while also exploiting local economies but it and its splinters

\textsuperscript{271} This account of the MCP’s long exile in Thailand is based on Hack, “The Long March to Peace.”
\textsuperscript{272} Hack, “The Long March to Peace,” p. 176.
\textsuperscript{274} Hack, “The Long March to Peace,” p. 192.
\textsuperscript{275} Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Wars*, p. 515.
were essentially completely marginalized. In 1987 the new-look MCP made its peace with the Thai state and demobilized, and in 1989 the CPM-O, still led by Chin Peng (though he had spent considerable time in Beijing) gave up the fight. The social remnants of these organizations endure along the Thai border in resettlement villages.

*Explaining MCP’s Organizational Trajectory.* Thus the MCP (later the CPM) ended up with a rather complex organizational trajectory – periods of relatively high elite cohesion, periods of large-scale defection and betrayal, and a long period of slow decline in exile. It did not dramatically shatter like the Huks (or INLA, PLOT, or Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen in other cases), but it also was unable to maintain high levels of internal compliance and cooperation. It is thus firmly in the mushy middle of our cases, and squarely the intermediate among the three Southeast Asian communist armed groups studied here, and in the broader dissertation as well.

To some extent, this outcome accords with our theoretical expectations. There was something like a bonding network social core at the heart of the MCP built around prior labor and Chinese organizations, though one without deep roots, and the group’s lack of access to external support contributed to organizational fragmentation. The combination of a bonding network based group with lack of external support should be a consensus-contingent group, which falters over political-military strategy and occupies an intermediate organizational trajectory. Like the EPRLF in Sri Lanka, GAM in Aceh, or Official IRA in N. Ireland, there was a mix of social solidarity and military weakness that provided some incentives for cohesion and some distinct incentives for fragmentation. So the theory does offer some insights into crucial dynamics of the Malayan Emergency.

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276 MCP leader Chin Peng said in the late 1990s that “I don’t think there was any opportunity of our success. Without foreign aid, we could not defeat the British army, even if we expanded our forces to 10,000.” Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Wars*, p. 515.
Yet this is a limited explanation for two reasons. First, the aspects of the MNLA’s social base that were most helpful (links to labor and Chinese nationalist associations) were consciously *constructed* in a strategy of infiltration and manipulation. The party that led this strategy, the MCP, was itself marked by fairly high turnover and social heterogeneity, kept alive by a commitment to a particular communal/communist ideology independent of social networks. An ideology contributed to the linking and mobilizing of social structures and to the staffing of the MCP by committed believers, particularly once the preexisting networks were disrupted by resettlement. Second, British state COIN policy was hugely important. Most dramatically effective was mass population resettlement and food control, which created serious distance between fighters and social supporters. While this strategy of controlled, massive displacement is not common across cases, it was clearly very important in this conflict. So an honest reading of the MCP case offers at best mixed support for my theoretical argument. A compelling account of this conflict requires incorporating with a crucial set of other variables.

D. Communist Insurgents in Comparative Perspective

What should we make of this comparison of communist armed groups? It has applied my theoretical argument to a very different set of contexts than the core case chapters found previously in the dissertation. Communist armed groups aimed to re-form political loyalties and reshape social bonds in pursuit of a disciplined revolutionary blueprint. Nevertheless, the armed groups in question varied dramatically in their ability to achieve the goal of Marxist-Leninist discipline, providing rich material for a comparative study of organization.

My focus on preexisting networks fails to explain the ability of Ho Chi Minh and his ICP to create a cohesive Viet Minh. The ICP, after decades of effort, created cadres of committed revolutionaries loyal to the party even without strong preexisting ties to one another. Social
continuities were often shattered by state repression, which involved massive attrition. Instead, the Viet Minh is best explained by highlighting the shifts in political context that opened room for ICP mobilization and the impressive leadership and organizational strategy of Ho Chi Minh.

My theory does help us to understand, however, why it was so difficult for the ICP to built new social bonds in the face of French repression in the 1930s and 1940s, showing that my argument can provide important insights even when it mispredicts the ultimate outcome. Moreover, the forging of the Viet Minh did involve profound challenges of internal control, necessitating purges and compromises by the ICP; mass communist-nationalist aspiration on its own was not enough. External support from a variety of Chinese armed actors was extremely helpful, as we would expect, particularly in providing leverage for purges. The Vietnam case thus offers mixed and very incomplete support for the theory. Incorrect predictions like this are helpful to avoid charges of tautology or post hoc coding. Communist ideology, individual leadership, and political context played crucial roles in explaining the rise to power of the Viet Minh and its ICP controllers.

The Huks in the Philippines, by contrast, support my theory well. Marxism-Leninism and aggrieved class interests were insufficient to forge a strong institution due to prior lines of social division and localism in the peasant movement that formed the basis of the HMB. The weak communist party and weak links between local leaders encouraged division and dissension as the risks of militancy rose, undermining attempts to forge a leftist organizational weapon. The lack of external support created severe problems in acquiring guns, money, and sanctuary for Huk fighters, clearly contributing to dissatisfaction and defection. Alternative explanations lack much support in this case. Marxist-Leninist organizational ideologies and peasant class interests were clearly insufficient for organization-building. Mass mobilization and politicization did not create
a new generation of committed activists, but instead proved weaker than the localized collective
action of particular pockets of rebellion. Philippine state counterinsurgency was of secondary
importance, since it achieved few structural reforms and retained landlord dominance, though it
did add to the risks of rebellion and thus exacerbated preexisting internal cleavages.

The MCP is the most ambiguous outcome to assess, falling uneasily between the clear
cohesion of the Viet Minh and clear fragmentation of the HMB. The MCP held together a small
command core deep into even the 1980s, but most of its fighting cadres had dropped out of the
war by the mid-1950s. There is significant, though incomplete, support for my theory in the case
of the MCP. It drew on strong local ties, but British and Japanese repression had eliminated layer
after layer of leaders in the prior decades, leaving the organization with an inexperienced stock
of young leaders who did not know or trust one another in many deep way. Local units were
loosely attached to headquarters, with the organizational chart not reflecting actual operations
and Marxism-Leninism not providing sufficient incentive to avoid defection and surrender. The
MCP’s broad front policy during the 1946-48 period was effective in controlling strikes, but not
in embedding cadres at both the local and national level, particularly in the rural areas of the
Malayan peninsula. This social form was reflected in organizational functioning. The lack of
serious external support became devastating as the British imposed their will on the population
without sufficient MCP firepower to change the balance of control.

Nevertheless, there are important elements of this outcome that require looking at other
variables and processes. Most important is British counterinsurgency policy, which used food
control and population resettlement extremely effectively to disrupt local social ties and to create
powerful incentives against civilian support for the MCP. The amnesty policies of the government
made it easier for insurgents to defect. Had the British faced a Viet Minh-like organization, these
policies would have likely been far less effective, but they were ideally suited to breaking an MCP that during periods of both violence and non-violence had always suffered from weak links between key leaders and between those leaders and local communities. Though British policy has been portrayed by some as focusing on “hearts and minds,” the real story was much grittier and more about the shattering of local networks and command structures. The political settlements of the period were primarily between communal elites who were not MCP supporters to begin with (especially among the Malay and Indian communities).

Thus a network-and-external support story can get us somewhere even in the case of leftist insurgents battling colonial regimes. My theory does not get us where we need to be in the explaining the Viet Minh, but it still offers some important insights. The argument works reasonably well, though not completely, in the Huk and MCP cases. Given that communist organizations intentionally focus on reshaping and rebuilding new social ties, this is a context in which we should expect the least support for a social network approach, so it is reassuring that my theory retains some explanatory power. Perhaps most importantly, this comparative study should lead us to question arguments that focus primarily on organizational ideology, class interests, or political context: instead, we need more synthetic and multi-causal accounts that shed light on multiple important aspects of rebel organization.

III. Challenging the New Order: Separatist Insurgency in Indonesia

Indonesia is one of the world’s most populous countries and has been the site of endemic political violence since World War II. The banner of revolt has been raised by a remarkable array of political actors, from Muslim ulama to mutinying army officers to Christian politicians. I focus here on one particular slice of that far broader history of mobilization and contention: separatist insurgenecies in Aceh and East Timor between 1975 and 1999 (East Timor) and 2005.
(Aceh). Both revolts began at approximately the same time against the same Army-dominated central regime, and both then continued into the post-1998 era of Indonesian democracy.

The primary armed groups, Fretilin in E. Timor and Gerakam Aceh Merdaka (GAM) in Aceh, held themselves together in the face of extraordinarily brutal Indonesian counterinsurgency that had a combined ferocity and duration unlike anything we have seen elsewhere in the dissertation. State-centric theories would expect these revolts to shatter apart under the weight of the massive troop presence, state violence and population displacement that credibly targeted insurgent supporters, and oscillations in central policy towards these regions that both opened and closed doors to political mobilization. Yet Fretilin held on and was able to become the dominant force in an independent Timor-Leste from 1999 on, while GAM negotiated and implemented a peace settlement in 2005 that occurred without any major splits or feuds.

Neither GAM nor Fretilin were as cohesive as the PIRA, Viet Minh, or LTTE. Instead they occupy a more intermediate trajectory, like the EPRLF in Sri Lanka, in which there was significant strategic control (and few, though still occasional, elite splits) but far looser tactical control over units and thus considerable autonomy on the ground. I argue that Fretilin resembled a mix between a factionalized and consensus-contingent organization, lacking external support but built around strong local networks that allowed it to endure in the face of an intense Indonesian military onslaught. However, there was important social heterogeneity in its initial leadership structure that undermined attempts at high-risk cooperation until a purge mostly eliminated internal opponents of the leadership in the mid-1980s. Fretilin and its armed wing Falintil were forced to adapt to intense Indonesian COIN; the resistance impressively survived but for much of its existence lacked robust, institutionalized structures of command and control.
GAM in Aceh started off as consensus-contingent, but the Acehnese diaspora in Malaysia and (rather strange) training from Colonel Qaddafi in Libya provided helpful external support that spurred GAM’s revitalized war in the late 1980s. The diaspora, though squeezed by Malaysian state policy, continued to provide an avenue for guns and money to flow into Aceh. Though it remained quite informal and decentralized, GAM appears to have suffered fewer major splits and violent internal feuds than Fretilin/Falintil, offering useful variation in this comparison.

The goal in the following section is to see whether the argument I offer can tell us something about these groups’ endurance and varying organizational trajectories in the face of two regimes: first and primarily, the military-led authoritarian New Order, and then the democratic regime that followed Suharto’s fall. The latter is more relevant in Aceh, since it spent more time facing the democrats in Jakarta than did East Timor (though E. Timor felt the brunt of a massive state onslaught even after Suharto fell). I will argue that GAM’s embeddedness in robust, if relatively narrow, and overlapping networks along with the development of external supply networks allowed it to generate higher levels of cohesion than Fretilin, which, though bigger and more universally supported, had to overcome the legacies of internal social heterogeneity and the absence of any significant external aid. While GAM was hammered by Indonesian security forces it maintained forces in the field, Fretilin largely abandoned serious violence from the late 1980s on. Ironically, despite these differences, GAM accomplished less of its war aim than Fretilin, showing the contingency and unpredictability of ultimate war outcomes.

A. Aceh
Aceh is located on the far western edge of Indonesia, on the northern tip of the island of Sumatra. It is currently a province of Indonesia with special autonomy and a population of about 4,000,000. Perhaps the earliest site where Islam was introduced to Indonesia, Aceh’s history has been marked by anti-colonial war against the Dutch and then a pair of rebellions against independent Indonesia’s Jakarta-based regimes. I focus on the second of those post-war rebellions, that of the GAM against Suharto’s New Order between 1976 and 1998 and the democratic government that replaced the New Order from 1998. My analysis ends with the 2005 Helsinki peace agreement and demobilization of GAM into a relatively normal political party. Like the Northern Ireland case, this conflict ended in a negotiated settlement with international assistance; however, in Aceh this was preceded by the devastating 2004 tsunami.\(^{277}\)

As noted above, GAM occupies an intermediate, consensus-contingent trajectory of cohesion: its unit-level autonomy was quite high but up through the 2005 peace settlement and demobilization there were relatively few significant splits – there was an enduring but low-impact leadership feud in the diaspora that apparently did not affect military operations, and two tiny Islamist splinters broke off with Indonesian military encouragement during the 1990s.\(^{278}\) I argue that this outcome occurred because of the preexisting social network, embedded within and across local communities, that constituted the bulk of GAM’s leadership in initial mobilization, combined with a low but rising level of external support from the Acehnese diaspora and Libya.

The history of GAM, and especially its social base, is linked to a very different type of rebellion that rocked Aceh between 1953 and 1962, the Darul Islam revolt that demanded Islamization of Indonesia. Aceh was one of the core areas of the broader Darul Islam movement


\(^{278}\) After the war, there was electoral competition within the post-GAM milieu, but that is very different than in-war splits and fragmentation.
(though the DI core was in West Java) but had its own local leadership built around the ulema of the PUSA, which resisted the centralizing impulses of Jakarta and attempts by landowning elites to reassert their power. This was not a separatist war, but instead an attempt to both maintain autonomy and to create an explicitly Islamist Indonesian state in alliance with other attempts elsewhere in the archipelago. Darul Islam was a very different type of revolt than GAM’s later war: it was Islamist, ulema-led, and did not demand an Acehnese state. Deals were cut by the state with different parts of the DI movement in 1959 and 1962 that ended the conflict. The Indonesian state then launched a campaign of co-optation that both linked many of the ulema to the state structure and that encouraged the rise of an Acehnese technocratic middle class.

GAM’s war was not Islamist and it was state-seeking nationalist, marking it as a completely different type of revolt than DI’s. However, the social residue of the DI rebellion was crucial for forming the nucleus of the GAM, despite a very different ideology. GAM’s founder was Hasan di Tiro, whose family had a long history of leading resistance against the Dutch and then the DI. As a young man, di Tiro was involved in the PUSA young wing, and this “background gave him personal connections to the main PUSA leaders.” He showed a commitment to Indonesia, though an Islamist Indonesia. Having moved abroad in the United States in the 1950s, however, di Tiro watched the PUSA leadership and its ulema networks make their peace with Jakarta and the broader Darul Islam movement disintegrate throughout Indonesia, along with other revolts that were slowly but surely crushed or co-opted.

*Creating GAM.* During this time, di Tiro began to develop an explicitly nationalist-separatist ideology that radically diverged from the Darul Islam. After a somewhat meandering

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279 For our purposes, the mobilization of ulama networks to lead the Darul Islam movement in Aceh bears resemblance to the theory advanced in this dissertation, though conflicts between distinct ulama blocs helped to cause the end of the conflict.
existence, di Tiro managed to return to Aceh in the mid-1970s. It is not clear whether he intended to launch a revolt, or only made this decision after being frozen out of a business deal involving Aceh’s bountiful natural resources (especially natural gas), though it seems that rumors and ideas of revolution had been in the air for several years. The Aceh Merdeka that emerged once di Tiro decided to launch a revolt was not forged on the back of an appeal to mass ethnic identity, class solidarity, public goods provision, or a well-defined political program.

Instead, di Tiro tapped into a narrow, specific set of family and Darul Islam networks to form the nucleus of his organization. Despite the fact that GAM’s revolt was aimed at a totally different outcome with a totally different ideology than Darul Islam, di Tiro’s links to the networks of former DI fighters provided him with the credibility and trust to persuade parts of these networks to go back to war, or at least support a new generation. GAM was built by “reinvigorating networks that were already itching for action. What sort of people were attracted to di Tiro’s message and joined his movement? There were two main groups, both of which had Darul Islam links. The first group was a small number of young intellectuals and professionals.”

Of the young intellectuals, “all those named were part of a single clique. . .they had all studied together at USU in the late 1960s and early 1970s” and that “almost without exception, their fathers had been important in Darul Islam.”

The second group, obviously linked to the first, were “the old Darul Islam networks”:

“the second main group in the early Aceh Merdeka were older men who had been directly involved in Darul Islam, especially the group that had initially rejected compromise and remained loyal to Daud Beureueh until 1962. Such men, mostly in their late forties and fifties,

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281 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 61.
282 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 62.
283 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 63.
284 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 63.
were especially important in the military structure and logistical network of the new movement."\(^{285}\) The old DI networks were geographically dispersed through northern Aceh, though not through all of Aceh: "the networks on which Aceh Merdeka constructed itself also explain the geographical spread of the movement. . . . Pidie was important largely because of the personal influence of Hasan di Tiro and Daud Beureueh, who were both from the Aceh district. . . . over the next fifteen years or so the chief operating areas for GAM were, along with Pidie, the neighboring districts of North Aceh (where the gas industry was located) and East Aceh"\(^{286}\) and "this east coast distribution also replicated almost exactly the base areas of the old Darul Islam revolt."\(^{287}\)

Yet it is crucial not to view this as simply a renewal of DI; in addition to the different ideology and war aims, "in sharp contrast to the Darul Islam movement, which was led directly by senior ulama and bureaucrats, including bupati, GAM was a movement of relatively marginal figures."\(^{288}\) Sulaiman notes that "the Islamic slogans of GAM were apparently not enough to attract the ulamas to their side"\(^{289}\) and Drexler emphasizes the discontinuities between the two movements.\(^{290}\) Nevertheless, GAM built itself through parts of this preexisting network in a way closely resembling the mobilization of the Provisional IRA in Belfast: "early adherents of Aceh Merdeka always began by contacting people they already knew and trusted. . . . this approach meant that the movement spread organically through established kinship and friendship

\(^{286}\) Aspinall, *Islam and Nation*, pp. 64-5.
\(^{288}\) Aspinall, *Islam and Nation*, p. 64. "the social background of GAM leaders was very different from that of the leaders of Darul islam." Aspinall, *Islam and Nation*, p. 202. There was also rural recruitment from ulama: "they [recruits] brought with them into the movement the social networks and friendships they had formed there." Aspinall, *Islam and Nation*, p. 203.
networks.” Aspinall argues “recruitment to the movement was not based on impersonal general appeals or mass shared political experience. Instead, it involved direct and secretive approaches by people one knew intimately.” Other authors agree with this interpretation.

Despite a quick and effective Indonesian suppression, GAM held on as an organization because of the “movement’s ability to merge with the networks that crosscut Aceh’s rural and small-town life and to draw strength from the cultural practices that underpinned that life. Ties of kinship and place were especially important.” GAM thus looks very similar to the model of insurgent mobilization presented in Chapter 3 and found in the core conflicts studied in this dissertation: a preexisting social base providing the “first movers” and organizers who could then provide the basis for building a robust institution. Prior ties of personal experience, friendship, and kinship became mobilized for violence across and within localities, even if they were previously forged either for a different purpose (an Islamic Indonesia) or through totally mundane marriages and school experience. Arguments about deep-seated Acehnese grievances, the impact of the developments in the resource sector, or state policy all need to deal with the actual nature of GAM mobilization, which was clearly not spurred by mass identity or shifts in the political economy of distribution, but instead the micro-mobilization of very specific social networks.

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291 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 78.
293 “the analysis presented here suggests that there was continuity between the two periods [Darul Islam and GAM].” Edward Aspinall, “Violence and Identity Formation in Aceh under Indonesian Rule,” in Anthony Reid, ed., Verandah of violence: The Background to the Aceh Problem (Singapore: NUS Press, 2006), p. 151. “DI veterans would start and lead the Free Aceh Movement” (Nessen in Reid 2006, 180); “the core of AM at its start were DI veterans, including hunter-trackers (pawing) and village heads (geuchik), and the younger family members of DI men, including 30-something intellectuals and doctors.” William Nessen, “Sentiments Made Visible: The Rise and Rason of Aceh’s National Liberation Movement,” in Anthony Reid, ed., Verandah of violence: The Background to the Aceh Problem (Singapore: NUS Press, 2006), p. 184. In addition, “for and against [among DI vets] seems to have fallen largely along the old lines of the DI zuama-ulama split.” Nessen “Sentiments Made Visiblem,” p. 185. Note that Nessen is quite close to GAM and his analysis may be biased by that perspective.
294 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 85.
However, GAM at this point lacked any international flows of resources, and was reliant for weapons on what it could buy or steal in Aceh. This created obvious organizational problems in attracting new recruits, while also forcing GAM into the central mountains and away from significant military activity that would signal its power and credibility. GAM also did not either at this time or later provide the much-vaunted social services that are said to attract people to insurgent groups: “Aceh Merdeka strikingly lacked anything resembling a social program” and “GAM provided few services to the community.” In the absence of military power, social service provision, or mass appeals to broad identity categories, GAM instead relied heavily on the norms and personal connections found in family and ex-combatant networks linked to a totally different previous rebellion. These ties were appropriated for militancy in pursuit of not an Islamic Indonesian but instead an ethnic Aceh, and created a consensus-contingent organization held together by shared commitments and trust.

*Staying Alive: GAM Endurance and International Links.* Indonesia’s generals do not suffer rebellions gladly. The Indonesian security apparatus, ABRI (later TNI), repressed GAM with a vengeance in the late 1970s, driving di Tiro and a number of his followers into exile while killing or arresting a number of others. Some have argued that GAM then essentially disappeared until 1989, but the most recent histories of the organization make it clear that “a skeletal movement persisted during the years of apparent quiescence.” It is to the endurance of GAM in the period from 1980 to 1989 that we now turn our attention. Could GAM maintain an organizational structure, despite a lack of mass mobilization, grassroots service provision, or political upheaval in Aceh, and while the New Order retained its coercive capacity? I argue that

295 “in the 1970s they had been constrained by their lack of weapons.” Aspinall, *Islam and Nation*, p. 110.
the survival of GAM can be attributed to two factors, and both of them are closely in line with my theoretical argument. This conclusion is not my own, but instead is actually found in the definitive recent study of GAM:

"the first factor was that the movement derived sustenance from, and even fused with, patterns of social organization and belief systems that permeated Aceh’s rural society. It rode on kinship and other preexisting networks. It gained authority because its ideas resonated with villagers’ own views about proper social order and behavior. The second factor was the global dimensions of the movement and the ways in which it transformed and sustained itself through exile. Not only did GAM leaders formulate and disseminate the Acehnese nationalist vision from exile, but overseas sites, especially Malaysia and Libya, supplied recruits, training, and logistics, enabling resumption of hostilities in the late 1980s.”

Preexisting social structures, embedded both in and across particular localities, combined with Libyan state support and the increasingly pro-GAM sentiment of the Acehnese diaspora community in Malaysia to fuel GAM’s survival and then its military revitalization in 1989. We start with the social base underpinning of GAM, which I argue resembled the structure of a bonding network. The organization was reproduced in hard times by family ties within the GAM milieu, building on previous Darul Islam links. Aspinall argues that “many of di Tiro’s key allies were close relatives...bonds between fathers and sons and between brothers were crucial for the coherence of Aceh Merdeka over successive generations...many early leaders felt they were continuing a struggle begun by their fathers during Darul Islam” and “once people were inducted into the movement, intermarriage was important for maintaining coherence.”

Indeed, “by the late 1990s it was difficult to find a senior GAM figure without such ties.” Thus “the struggle for national liberation was not merely an imagined kinship but a real and direct kinship in which they were fighting alongside relatives and others to whom they had

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299 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 120.
300 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 91.
301 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 91.
302 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 92.
been close all their lives.” Interestingly “the military understood that GAM was embedded in Acehnese society through family networks,” leading a number of scholars to notice that ABRI particularly targeted GAM-linked families. There is a clear analogy here to the behavior of the Indian security forces towards Jamaat-e-Islami families in Kashmir. Despite the restricted political opportunities GAM was able to find pockets of separatist loyalty and insurgent participation.

The second element that held GAM together in these difficult times was its increasing access to overseas support “the from the 1980s on, it [global presence] became more important as participants in the movement found sanctuary in foreign lands, especially Malaysia and Libya.” This took on two forms. First, Colonel Qaddafi decided to support the GAM with training, though no weapons. Young Acehnese were smuggled out of Aceh or the Southeast Asian diaspora to Libya in several batches, leading to very roughly 1,000 trained GAM fighters. This process resembled normal recruitment: “young men were chosen [for Libyan training] in ways that reflected the recruitment patterns already discussed. Family ties were important.” This training in Libya “generated intense fraternity among participants” and “Libyan-trained fighters went on to be main leaders of the military struggle inside Aceh, both in the early 1990s and a decade later.” The effect of Libyan aid was somewhat different than what I discuss in my theory: there were no flows of guns and money encouraging centralization; instead, social bonds were heightened through training and socialization overseas. This shows another possible effect of external support on organizational cohesion.

303 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 95.
304 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 92.
305 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 85.
306 Libya “did not provide weapons.” Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 106.
309 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 108.
A more traditional (and theoretically predicted) channel of external flows was the international diaspora, which provided both sanctuary for the leadership and guns and money for the fighters. After Hasan di Tiro fled Aceh, he and a number of other leaders found sanctuary in Sweden. For the purposes of war-fighting, however, Malaysia became crucial fund-raising and gun-smuggling node. As Aspinall notes, “acquiring enough modern weapons to seriously threaten the Indonesian military had long been a major challenge and source of internal friction” so it was essential as the organization was retooling in the 1980s and then fighting in a serious way again from 1989 to get more and better guns. The diaspora provided a way to achieve this goal: “the importance of Malaysia to Aceh’s insurgency can hardly be overemphasized... Ache’s diaspora was not widely dispersed or wealthy, but the presence of a concentrated Acehnese community in Malaysia was crucial to GAM’s resurrection and survival. Malaysia provided a place of refuge; a source of finances, weapons, and recruits; and a window onto the wider world.” The prolific and massive arms markets of Southeast Asia became the supply of weapons purchased by GAM supporters and sympathizers in Malaysia.

This diaspora support, however, was partially endogenous to the Libyan support (which came rather by surprise and was highly contingent). Some of the key organizers of GAM in Malaysia were men who had been trained by Qaddafi and “these ex-Libyans formed the nucleus of a strong Aceh Merdeka network in Malaysia that from this time forward was to be crucial in sustaining the insurgency across the strait.” The mobilization of Malaysia only occurred after Libya’s mildly bizarre intervention. Nevertheless, Malaysia played an important role in keeping

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310 “the chief leaders stayed in Sweden, from where they tried to direct the insurgency back home.” Aspinall, *Islam and Nation*, p. 105.
312 more on arms trade in Aspinall, *Islam and Nation*, p. 118.
GAM armed and mobilized during both its quiet years in the 1980s and then the return to violence in the 1990s.

*Back to War: Aceh and Martial Law, 1989-1998.* In 1989, GAM returned to violent militancy, with command structures that “covered Aceh Besar, Central Aceh, Pidie, and North and East Aceh.” In late 1989 and early 1990, GAM was able to operate fairly freely and to even attract cooperation from members of the local government. In addition to run-of-the-mill attacks on security forces, government officials, and alleged informants, GAM also targeted industrial sites linked to New Order economic interests and ethnic Javanese within Aceh, who it portrayed as colonial interlopers. This was a serious challenge to the writ of the Indonesian state. Schulze writes that “in 1989, after their troops returned from Libya, they had become better organized, more systematic and forced the Indonesian security forces onto the defensive.” The Indonesian security forces were taken aback, but responded with large-scale troop deployments in 1990. Elite central forces like Kopassus were sent into action and the military took over Aceh. As a result, “though it had a rear base in Malaysia, a core group of trained fighters, considerable support among the general population, and the assistance of some members of the Indonesian authorities, the Free Aceh Movement was to prove no match for the powerful and ruthless Indonesian armed forces.”

Jakarta’s military elites cracked down and “between mid-1990 and 1998, much of rural Aceh, especially the districts of Pidie, North Aceh, and East Aceh, became like a country under

military occupation. The importance of state power in my argument is that it restricts political opportunities and breathing space for “brokerage” and the creation of new loyalties. The Indonesian response pushed GAM back into a subterranean insurgent existence, with a grim game of wits and guns throughout central and northern Aceh. GAM was able to survive as a mostly unified force even though “the [government] violence was not random in its overall intent or effect (although there were many individual arbitrary acts). Instead, it was part of a purposeful counterinsurgency policy” (Aspinall 2009, 112). GAM, however, was able to find support both in its core networks and in the sanctuary provided by Malaysia. In response, the New Order command kept large-scale forces in Aceh until the collapse of Suharto’s regime in 1998. GAM militancy largely died down but its organization remained embedded on the ground even in the face of the military counteroffensive.

Regime Change, Peaceful Mobilization, and the Third GAM Wave. The fall of Suharto in 1998 was brought about in the midst of the East Asian financial crisis, street protests in Jakarta, and elite factional battles. It was in no way caused by the Aceh rebellion, but it unexpectedly opened space for political mobilization in Aceh. The military elite’s attention focused on the battles for power in the capital as Suharto was eventually forced to resign in the summer of 1998, and the new democratic government looked to find a way out of the long-running insurgencies in Aceh and East Timor. In Aceh, students and intelligentsia mobilized for a settlement and negotiations. However, elite divisions within Aceh, the lack of interest in a decentralizing policy in Jakarta, and GAM’s continued quest for independence by the gun collided to undermine a tentative peace process and referendum plan. In late 1998, and peaking in the early 2000s, Aceh

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319 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 111.
320 “part of the underground structure begun in the 1970s and periodically renewed since then had remained intact, and throughout the 1990s there were functioning command structures in Pase, Peureulak, Pidie, and Batee Iliek, although their members largely abstained from violence.” Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 163.
returned to “the shadow world of war, guns, and money” as GAM and ABRI (now the TNI) clashed.

Though some allege that the Indonesian military was controlling and directing parts of GAM for its own purposes, others discount this. Instead, in 1998-2000, “the movement quickly reactivated its old network and cadres” and took advantage of the confusion within the local administration. GAM drew once more on its core networks as the first-movers of the renascent offensive. There continued to be no social service provision (“GAM provided government without governance”). During this period, GAM’s organizational discipline appeared similar to previous incarnations: a reasonably well integrated command core but very significant autonomy on the ground, particularly among village-level commanders. An influx of Libyan-trained Acehnese previously in Malaysia combined with the Habibie government’s release of GAM prisoners to provide experienced cadres who could bolster the organization’s size and potency. Aspinall argues that GAM was “a movement with a powerful sense of ideological mission and relatively strong central organization.” Davies argues, contra Schulze, that the decentralized nature of the GAM organizational structure was actually a strategically appropriate response to the pressures of insurgency.

However, GAM also grew dramatically, possibly even into the tens of thousands, though Aspinall suggests that the number of modern weapons was somewhere roughly between four and

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321 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 152.
322 Drexler, Aceh, Indonesia.
323 “in fact, much military intelligence work was clumsy.” Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 156.
324 “Just as the discontinuities between the movement of the 1970s and that of the 1980s has previously been exaggerated, so too was the analytical confusion that accompanied the resumption of violence in late 1998 due partly to ignorance of the extent of GAM’s preceding activity” plus forced exodus from Malaya increased cadre size. Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 163.
325 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 159.
326 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 191.
six thousand.\textsuperscript{328} During the period 1998-2003, political upheaval gave GAM room to maneuver and it seized the opportunity.\textsuperscript{329} As the political opportunities presented by the fall of Suharto expanded, GAM was able to attract more recruits, and fighters from new areas well beyond the core networks that had kept it unified and enduring over the previous two decades. This represented a serious mass expansion: "as in the past, kinship, village, and friendship networks still played a role in recruitment, but the rapid and public growth of GAM meant that many of the new members lacked previous ties to the movement."\textsuperscript{330} This increased heterogeneity of backgrounds and viewpoints within the movement, but the command core remained primarily dominated by older GAM men and Libya/Malaysia-trained fighters.\textsuperscript{331} Though the new influx included criminals and opportunists, "it is difficult to square the Aceh case with those analyses that stress the determining role of large-scale economic resources in funding rebellion."\textsuperscript{332} There was violent extortion, gangsterism and underworld links, appropriation of state resources, and even murky deals with corrupt TNI officials. But viewing GAM as a primarily "predatory" armed group would be a massive over-exaggeration; it retained strong local embeddedness in crucial communities and networks that militated against the disintegrative tendencies of criminality. In addition to pecuniary and local agendas, there was a clear strategy of internationalizing the conflict and waiting out the Jakarta government, part of an Indonesia that many GAM leaders saw as an artificial and ultimately temporary polity.

\textsuperscript{328} Aspinall, \textit{Islam and Nation}, p. 161.
\textsuperscript{329} in 2000 "GAM had the only meaningful political network and remains the only organisation capable of coordinating large numbers of Acehnese for political action of any kind" (Nessen in Reid 2006, 193);;
\textsuperscript{330} Aspinall, \textit{Islam and Nation}, p. 166.
\textsuperscript{331} Aspinall makes an interesting observation: "Most GAM fighters were bound by intimate social ties to the villages where they operated, and this constrained their behavior. A few operated in places where the movement had previously been weak and lacked local networks; here the fighters could be more coercive." Aspinall, \textit{Islam and Nation}, p. 168.
\textsuperscript{332} Aspinall, \textit{Islam and Nation}, p. 179.
Though "it appeared to many outsiders that GAM was fighting a quixotic battle and was hopelessly outgunned," a humanitarian pause came to Aceh in 2000-1 that gave GAM more chances for entrenchment. A renewed military offensive in April 2001 pushed GAM back, and it returned to a primary reliance on its core networks: "after about 2001, as the movement’s fortunes declined, criminal and opportunist elements tended to desert." After the failure of another set of talks in 2002, in 2003 the TNI returned to intense COIN: the army planned "to destroy GAM once and for all." Though GAM did not suffer large-scale losses of key leaders, the new offensive did severely test the fighting power of the organization. After the December 2004 tsunami, GAM accepted an internationally-brokered peace deal. Though there had been a pair of tiny Islamist splinters and diaspora conflicts in the past, "GAM leaders enforced submission to the agreement among their followers. There was little internal dissension, and only a few malcontents in the diaspora opposed the settlement" and "they emphasized the strict code of absolute loyalty to the leadership inculcated in GAM fighters." Even during the complications of the various political and negotiating opportunities that opened up after Suharto’s fall, “it appears in retrospect that the key GAM field commanders were loyal to their leaders in Stockholm.”

The GAM case offers fairly strong support for the theoretical argument advanced in this dissertation. The organization was built around a core set of overlapping social networks that linked insurgent entrepreneurs in and across local communities. During periods of Libyan and

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333 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 171.
334 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 192.
335 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 229.
336 Schulze, The Free Aceh Movement (GAM).
337 Aspinall, Islam and Nation, p. 221.
diaspora support there was a clear increase in organizational cohesion and military power. The group was able to hold itself together even in the face of repeated Indonesian COIN offensives over three decades, though it was never able to directly challenge ABRI/TNI supremacy on the battlefield. Even shifts in political opportunities (particularly the mass expansion and then contraction from 1998 to 2001 in the wake of Indonesian democratization) did not fundamentally change organizational form, with its impact being felt on the margin rather than in the leadership.

There are some aspects of this case that are outside my theoretical approach. External support from Libya was valuable not for its guns and money, but because training bolstered the links between recruits (though these recruits were already drawn from traditional family networks). This echoes a process we can also see in Iraq, where the ISCI gained cohesion as a result of its decades in Iran. External support clearly can have more multifaceted effects than my theory gives it credit for. Nevertheless, GAM’s experience provides reason for confidence in the power of my argument. As a separatist revolt on the periphery of a far larger and more powerful state, the Aceh conflict has clear resemblances to the cases of Sri Lanka, Kashmir, and Northern Ireland found previously in the thesis and thus the shared context may help to explain the tight link between predictions and reality. This suggests, in combination with evidence from the Philippines and East Timor, that even if my theory has trouble with Marxist-Leninist groups it nevertheless retains great value for explaining patterns of cohesion in ethno-separatist organizations.

B. East Timor

On the other end of Indonesia from Aceh is the island of Timor, of which the eastern edge is now the country of Timor-Leste. This area was formerly known as East Timor and was the site of a protracted insurgency between a set of pro-independence groups (primarily but not
exclusively Fretilin and its armed wing Falintil)\textsuperscript{340} and the Indonesian state from 1975 until Indonesia relinquished control in 1999 and it became Timor-Leste in 2002. East Timor had been an extremely under-developed Portuguese colony up until the leftist military coup in 1974 Lisbon pushed aside the fascist/colonialist regime and triggered decolonization in the Portuguese empire. Several armed groups emerged in the wake of the exogenous Portuguese decision to withdraw and (after clashes among them) a massive Indonesian invasion in 1975 then pitted Fretilin against the Indonesian military. The conflict between these two sides (which also involved a nebulous array of pro-state militias) took an unknown, but very high, number of lives and involved pervasive state repression and violence.

The height of the resistance against the Indonesian invasion was from 1975 through the mid-1980s, when Falintil first relied on standing conventional forces and then switched to a guerrilla strategy amidst reorganization in the early 1980s. The attempt to hold liberated zones in the 1976-79 period turned into a disaster, with extremely high levels of attrition and significant dissension and splitting within the organization. Falintil combined local embeddedness with fairly weak intra-leadership social integration, leaving its organization to survive primarily due to local connections. A purge by the leadership in the 1980s reduced elite dissension, but did not eliminate it. Falintil was quite factionalized until this purge (which wiped out a hard-left faction with its origins in the Portuguese colonial army), and even after the purge the leadership (particularly Xanana Gusmao) was forced to play a delicate balancing game with internal rivals.

Other Timorese political groups linked themselves to Fretilin under an increasing broad umbrella coalition that emerged in the mid-1980s with a greater focus on non-violent mobilization and international diplomacy. The military side of the insurgent equation was

\textsuperscript{340} Several other political parties ended up supporting the resistance in some capacity, including some which had previously been allied to the Indonesian state.
explicitly downgraded and the size of Falintil and tempo of its operations both declined. The conflict in East Timor consequently attracted greater international attention and after the fall of Suharto’s regime in 1998, a referendum was held to determine the preferences of the population. Despite an onslaught of thuggery and violence by pro-integration militias backed by the Indonesian security forces, East Timor voted for independence. After a UN trusteeship it has become, despite recurrent instability (some of it linked to divisions within Falintil that became embedded in the new national military), the independent state of Timor-Leste.

Our focus is on the military struggle of Falintil versus ABRI/TNI and its Timorese paramilitary allies. Falintil varied over time in its cohesion: during the earliest years of the war it was fairly cohesive, but as Indonesian pressure increased in 1977-79 it began to dramatically fracture, and then was based on a set of disparate local networks until a purge in the mid-1980s consolidated leadership in the hands of Xanana Gusmao. Fretilin never achieved the level of elite consensus that GAM seems to have been able to. What explains this outcome? I attribute Falintil/Fretilin’s organizational trajectory in part to the disparate social origins of the organization: though there was a core of urban intellectuals who originally founded Fretilin, it rapidly became a coalition of local notables, urban students, and Timorese members of the Portuguese colonial army. This created a coalition network social base with accompanying internal dissension, which was exacerbated by the extraordinarily high level of attrition that Indonesian COIN forces imposed on the Fretilin command. Most of the Falintil command was killed or captured in the late 1970s.

There was important change in organizational form, however. Over time, some of these elements would be discarded and others bound together by shared experiences, though the legacies of these social and ideological divisions could be found deep into the civil war and even
into the structure of the post-independence security forces. Fretilin forces were able to fall back on robust, traditional local networks that kept the organization alive despite its other problems and despite massive Indonesian counterinsurgency. Endogenous purges and battles in the 1980s loosely unified the organization under Gusmao’s personalized control as Falintil became less important than the non-military side of the resistance.

*Portuguese Colonialism and De-Colonization.* Portugal colonized East Timor in the mid-16th century as part of its commercial expansion into the Indian Ocean and East Indies. The Portuguese created and maintained a very low footprint governance structure, basically using Timor as a glorified trading outpost. The capital in Dili housed some Portuguese administrative staff and military personnel, but this was not equivalent in scale or ambition to the other colonial projects in the region. East Timor remained extremely poor with very little infrastructure. Though there had been some low-level revolts in the past, in general were was relatively little organized or well-developed nationalism to speak of in Timor prior to 1974. 341 East Timor was characterized by a variety of regional ethnic groups and languages, and was largely untouched by the tides of nationalism that had swept neighboring Indonesia in the 1940s. While a small group of urban intellectuals looked to other anti-Portuguese colonial movements for some inspiration, the majority of Timor remained rural and characterized by traditional social structures.

This stable status quo changed dramatically in 1974. A left-wing military coup in 1974, the Carnation Revolution, led to a policy of withdrawal from empire. Elements in the Portuguese military, drained by African counterinsurgency campaigns, overthrow the fascist regime that had succeeded Salazar. Thus the retreat from empire was totally exogenous to any events in East Timor: the pressure came from insurgencies in Africa and political developments in the

metropole, not from any developments in the ground in Timor. The Portuguese policy change spurred a rapid mobilization of different political parties. The two major parties were Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente (Fretilin) and the União Democrática Timorense (UDT). Several smaller parties also emerged but they were not significant political players. The crucial question facing East Timor amidst decolonization was rapid independence (Fretilin’s goal), some form of continued link with Portugal with a more incremental development of independence (UDT’s strategy), or union with Indonesia (the aim of the small APODETI party). UDT drew on some of the more wealthy and traditional families in Timorese society, while Fretilin’s original base was “mostly younger, educated Timorese, some of whom had studied or worked abroad in the 1960s and early 1970s.”

This rapid politicization in 1974-5 “formed the ideological and institutional framework for much of the conflict and violence that followed.” Initially the UDT and Fretilin allied in a coalition. Fretilin soon surpassed UDT in popularity by engaging in an active program to mobilize the rural masses. Though revolutionary in some senses, Fretilin relied heavily on preexisting social networks: “Fretilin attempted to build upon what its leaders saw as the strengths of this society in resisting colonial control, most notably its system of kinship alliances.” Taylor notes that Fretilin was able to build links in the countryside in part because

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342 Fretilin was originally called ASDT, for Associacao Sosial Democratica Timorense.
343 “the UDT leaders tended to be drawn from the wealthier landowning families and employees in the higher echelons of the colonial civil service... the UDT’s support was strongest in the agriculturally rich, coffee-growing areas of Ermera, Maliana, and Maubara.” Robinson, If You Leave Us Here, p. 30.
344 Robinson, If You Leave Us Here, p. 31.
345 Robinson, If You Leave Us Here, p. 30.
347 John Taylor, “The Emergence of a Nationalist Movement in East Timor,” in P. B. R Carey and G. Carter Bentley, eds., East Timor at the Crossroads: The Forging of a Nation (Cassell, 1995), p. 33. It also was “building up regional power by working with existing political alliances based on kinship... Fretilin emerged as a nationalist movement with extensive popular support and an effective decentralized political structure.” Taylor, “The Emergence of a Nationalist Movement,” p. 36. As he notes in later work, it was “comprised mostly of the newly recruited members
it allied with traditional rural notables, as well as a new program for literacy and politicization. Fretilin at this point remained a “fairly loose political organization” due to its extreme youth as a political entity. Among the initial founders of Fretilin, “most of the leaders had been personally known to each other long before the foundation of FRETILIN, through school and other contacts. This led to a certain level of mutual trust.” Ideologically, this was “a broad-based anti-colonial association with a nationalist ideology” but characterized by multiple different strands within this overarching worldview. 

Organizational challenges would increase after UDT and Fretilin fell out in mid-1975, leading to a civil war within East Timor (as the Portuguese looked on) between the two parties after UDT launched a coup in August 1975. Suharto’s Indonesia played an important role in manipulating tensions between the major Timorese parties with the goal of “integrating” East Timor into Indonesia. To this end, Indonesian intelligence and security forces became actively involved in interference in the region’s politics, and prepared to support pro-Indonesian forces with guns and sanctuary and, if necessary, full-scale invasion. The war between UDT and Fretilin resulted in a clear Fretilin victory, in part because it was able to win over the loyalty of

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348 “it [ASDT] began to draw support from all levels of the rural social structure and, most importantly, from a number of prominent liurai.” Taylor, *East Timor: The Price of Freedom* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1999), p. 27. Liurai are traditional rural notables.


350 Hill, *Stirrings of Nationalism*, p. 95.


353 For an overview of the run-up to this conflict, see Taylor, *East Timor*, pp. 48-52.

354 As we have seen in Aceh, during Suharto’s reign the military had extraordinary autonomy and freedom to make policy as it wished. East Timor would soon become a set project of Kopassus, with its focus on counterinsurgency.
Timorese members of the Portuguese military. Most of the remnants of the UDT either fled into
foreign exile or to Indonesian patronage. The Indonesia security apparatus clearly then began
to prepare for an illegal invasion under the pretense of a continuing UDT-Fretilin civil war, with
Fretilin portrayed as a hard-line communist party. Portugal abandoned any real interest in its
colony and adopted an extremely hands-off policy.

This intra-Timorese conflict had two effects on the politics of the region. First, “the civil
war of August 1975 left a powerful legacy of distrust among East Timorese, and hardened
political loyalties and enmities that had until then appeared somewhat malleable.” Some of the
cleavages created by this conflict would endure over time (“the Timorese community split into
two bitterly divided factions”), and the general lack of trust and cooperation would find an
echo in the violent clashes and rivalries of the post-independence period, though with more fluid
alliances.

Second, and more directly relevant, Fretilin found itself governing East Timor as a de
facto state apparatus. Part of the state formation experience was the incorporation of a large
bloc of Timorese military veterans into Fretilin’s armed wing Falintil, who had a very distinct
socialization background and political viewpoint that was not necessarily in line with the civilian
political worldviews. Fretilin won its war against the UDT in large part because its cadres in

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355 Some would become local paramilitary and political allies of the Indonesian security establishment, while others
would become very disenchanted with Indonesia and later link up loosely with Fretilin as part of the increasingly
important non-violent portion of the resistance in the 1980s and 1990s.
357 Niner, *Xanana*, p. 28.
358 “Fretilin transformed itself from a loose political group into a de facto government.” Sarah Niner, “A Long
Journey of Resistance: The Origins and Struggle of CNRT” in Richard Tanter, Mark Selden, and Stephen
Rosskamm Shalom, eds., *Bitter Flowers, Sweet Flowers: East Timor, Indonesia, and the World Community*
359 Most of the new E Timor military after the UDT coup was defeated had been either sergeants or lieutenants, not a
well-developed officer corps. Dunn, *East Timor*, p. 231.
the military brought their fighters to the side of Fretilin.\textsuperscript{360} The tension between military and civilian that was introduced by this rapid incorporation of this new social grouping, the “new breed of field commanders,”\textsuperscript{361} would have negative effects on future Fretilin cohesion.\textsuperscript{362} This civil-military distrust was matched by “a growing tension between Marxism and nationalism within the Timorese resistance movement [that] from this time would become acute after the Indonesian invasion.”\textsuperscript{363} Though Fretilin was able to extend its reach into rural areas, its ideology and political program remained somewhat hazy, a mix of anti-colonialism, Marxism, and pragmatism.\textsuperscript{364} Internal factional maneuverings continued within Fretilin/Falintil between the civil war of August 1975 and the Indonesian invasion of December 7, 1975.\textsuperscript{365} The tension between the social structure of the non-military Fretilin with the much more centralization-focused new military veteran bloc already was creating internal dissension even prior to the Indonesian invasion.\textsuperscript{366} There were no major feuds or splits, however, and the organization would remain at least loosely unified until 1977.\textsuperscript{367}

\begin{itemize}
\item Niner, \textit{Xanana}, p. 28. “FREITILIN forces, calling themselves FALINTIL (Forcas Armados de Libertacao Nacional de Timor-Leste) struck back, under the command of Rogerio Lobato, then the highest ranking Timorese in the Portuguese army, who was able to persuade many of his fellow soldiers to join FREITILIN ranks. FALINTIL was thus born not out of the struggle against Indonesia but as a party to a civil war. A general free-for-all ensued,” International Crisis Group, \textit{Resolving Timor-Leste’s Crisis} (Brussels: International Crisis Group, October 10, 2006), p. 2.
\item Dunn, \textit{East Timor}, p. 181.
\item “the influx, at all levels, of military men who previously had not been members of FREITILIN but who, because of the role they had played in defeating UDT were demanding a voice, brought some changes in political and ideological emphasis.” Hill, \textit{Stirrings of Nationalism}, p. 149.
\item Niner, “A Long Journey of Resistance,” pp. 17-18. \textit{Chega!} notes that this division was already in place before the invasion, so it was not endogenous to dynamics that occurred after war onset. \textit{Chega! The Report of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation} (Dili, Timor-Leste: Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, 2006), 5.70, p. 18.
\item This would be a major issue of contention, with Indonesia arguing that Fretilin was a hard-left communist grouping and Fretilin supporters arguing that it had a much less doctrinaire ideological vision.
\item Lobato became prominent in the leadership and offered in some ways the most fervent anti-colonial nationalism, “particularly with the ascendancy of the ex-army officers in Fretilin, who allied with him increasingly throughout 1975.” Taylor, \textit{East Timor}, pp. 47-8.
\item Taylor, “The Emergence of a Nationalist Movement,” p. 36.
\item “FREITILIN did not seem to suffer so many internal disputes in its early days as some of the African liberation movements did. . . . FREITILIN for the first three years of its existence was free from conflict of this type [big splits

587
The Indonesian Invasion and Conventional War, 1975-79. The confusing and unexpected challenge of state-building was made dramatically more difficult when Indonesia invaded in December 1975. Put bluntly, "Indonesia had no intention of accepting a Fretilin-dominated East Timor." Operasi Komodo, the Indonesian strategy for intervention, used the UDT vs. Fretilin conflict as an excuse for involvement. Initial movements of ABRI forces began in October 1975, and culminated in a full-scale invasion on December 7, 1975. Originally pretending to be supporting UDT-linked Timorese forces, it almost immediately became a fully Indonesian operation with both regular conventional units and specialized COIN formations blanketing East Timor. The United States, Australia, and other interested states tacitly supported Indonesia, which opened the door to extensive human rights abuses.

This was an enormous shock to Fretilin, which was rapidly pushed out of urban areas. However, Fretilin and its Falintil armed wing were able to retreat to the mountains with large numbers of civilians. They relied on the armory left behind by the Portuguese military (with fairly high-quality NATO weaponry) for arms, temporarily reducing any need for external material aid. The initial strategy, pushed particularly hard by the former military bloc, was to hold territory and fight in conventional style against ABRI. Falintil could call on up to 20,000 fighters, though of extremely variable training and experience. The terrain helped immensely, as did the poor planning and preparation by a massively overconfident Indonesian military.

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369 Robinson notes that at the heart of this repressive apparatus was the elite counterinsurgency force, Kopassus.” Robinson, *If You Leave Us Here*, p. 69. Kopassus and other Indonesian forces turned E. Timor into a kind of military playground over the next two decades.
370 There was quite a lot of NATO materiel left over in Portuguese arms dumps so initially there wasn’t a need for external support. Dunn, *East Timor*, p. 251. Moreover, many within Fretilin/Falintil felt that any reliance on outside powers would be politically constraining.
Yet Fretilin’s reasonably good response (all things considered) to the invasion would prove insufficient. In May 1976 Fretilin and Falintil leaders reconvened to try to sort out the overall strategy. The second plenary session of the Fretilin Central Committee broke up Fretilin-controlled territory into sectors in which civilian and military structures were tasked with feeding and organizing the civilian population. The military side of the equation was more problematic, as local military units initially “operated relatively independently of the central command and focused mainly on their own zona.” Attempts at restructuring Falintil were made in 1976 and 1977 that aimed to centralize control over local units and make them more willing to fight for other areas. The strategic vision was a protracted people’s war that would rely on popular mobilization and politicization to keep forces in the field over long periods of time. This was a classic “activist” insurgency in Weinstein’s terms, as the civilian population “were the source of power for the armed forces.” This should have led to a resilient and tightly-controlled armed group.

Yet despite this effective mass politicization and mobilization, “as pressures built up, it was no surprise to learn in 1977 that serious divisions were beginning to appear within the leadership of Fretilin.” Already in 1976 there had been clear divisions over the choice of strategy and direction of restructuring. At least according to future leader Gusmao, who has a clear political stake in the interpretation of this history, civil-military tensions rose dramatically

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371 Chega!, 5.15-5.20 (pp. 3-6) outlines the civilian structures.
372 Chega!, 5:23, p 7
373 Chega!, 5:24-28, pp. 7-8
374 This was the “bases de apoio” strategy. Chega!, 5.65, p. 17.
375 Chega!, 5.68, p. 17.
376 Dunn, East Timor, p. 272.
377 May 1976 “meeting made clear the different ideological positions amongst this new resistance. Ex-Portuguese army soldiers, many of whom came from strong Catholic and politically conservative backgrounds, were frequently at odds with the Fretilin politicians. Former sergeants of the Portuguese army were loyal to Nicolau Lobato who held to a tough self-reliant and anti-colonial nationalism. Differences centered on Fretilin’s social and political programs that were predicated on an ideological revolution to overthrow colonial and traditional power structures. Fretilin adopted a strategy of a ‘protracted people’s war’ along the lines of Maro Zedong’s movement in China.” Niner, Xanana, p. 31.
in the wake of the incorporation of the soldiers' bloc. These clashes intersected with debates over Marxism and nationalism within Fretilin to drive increasingly bitter and violent internal feuding, with purges, executions, and defections starting to tear apart Fretilin from within as ABRI battered it from without: “internal conflicts grew and opponents of a single revolutionary front were denounced as ‘counterrevolutionary’ and ‘reactionary.’ . . . Cadres were tried. Some were tortured and killed.” CAVR notes that the most important internal division was over the right military strategy to pursue against Indonesia, which became increasingly salient as the costs of the conflict grew higher. This conflict at least roughly reflected some of the prior social divisions, with the military veterans and civilian political leaders viewing each other with distrust.

378 “ex-Portuguese colonial army soldiers . . . were frequently at odds with the politicians. Differences centered on Fretilin’s social and political programs calling for the overthrow of colonial and traditional power structures . . . . In 1977, sharp debate centered on a proposal to declare Fretilin a Marxist movement . . . as the Indonesian offensive isolated Fretilin bases, internal conflicts grew and opponents of a single revolutionary front were denounced as ‘counterrevolutionary’ and ‘reactionary.’ The revolutionary ideology that the Fretilin Central Committee had embraced provided the rationale for arrests and executions of ‘counterrevolutionaries.’ Cadres were tried. Some were tortured and killed.”

379 Niner, “A Long Journey of Resistance,” p. 19. Gusmao makes a series of claims about the nature of internal unrest, which should be taken with a grain of salt, in Xanana Gusmão, To Resist Is to Win!: The Autobiography of Xanana Gusmão with Selected Letters & Speeches. Edited by Sarah Niner (Richmond, Vic: Aurora Books with David Lovell Publishing, 2000). Gusmao would later purge key figures in the soldiers’ bloc, so he has powerful incentives to portray them as uncooperative and fractious. However, this overall interpretation of civil-military tension seems reasonable, if not necessarily the resistance of soldiers to leftism. Some examples: “at a meeting in Bariqué in April 1976 it became obvious that the military had an aversion towards those of us who were politicians” (p. 41); “many soldiers had been appointed to the Central Committee. We all knew that this was a way of avoiding a rebellion of the soldiers against the Fretilin Central Committee, which would drag with them the military commanders” (p. 42); “it was obvious that Xavier had lost control because he knew so little about politics. Nicolau was on the other side, the soldiers continued to form a separate nucleus and the majority of us, the members of the FCC, were unpoliticized” (p. 43); “Fretilin was originally a front that sought to encompass many political ideologies and many members of the resistance forces did not understand or agree with its increasingly radical left wing ideology, especially the ex-Portuguese army soldiers, many of whom come from strong Catholic and politically conservative backgrounds” (p. 43).


380 Chegal, 5.80, p. 21 notes “this difference of opinion was sharpened by the tensions between the military commanders and civilian leaders about the reduced authority of military commanders, which dated from before the exodus to the interior. The tensions were compounded further by the animosity felt by some of the former Portuguese army sergeants towards military commanders who had previously been political leaders.”
There were several particularly prominent internal feuds. First the Fretilin president, Xavier do Amaral, was deposed along with his followers and “the presidency was taken over by Nicolau Lobato who had long been Fretilin’s main leader.” Then “the second fracture within the Fretilin leadership manifested itself a little more than a year later when Minister for Information and Internal Security Alarico Fernandes announced over the Fretilin radio that he and some of his comrades had broken away from the Central Committee. . .this division led to fighting between the opposing factions, with a considerable amount of killing in the central Fretilin-controlled areas.” These major splits and feuds are accompanied by persistent internal executions. Thus by early 1978 “Fretilin’s structure had begun to break down” and “against this increasingly desperate backdrop, the internal political fighting grew.”

As feuds along various lines of internal cleavage damaged Fretilin, the renewed Indonesian offensives of 1977-79 largely wiped out the command cadres and foot soldiers of Fretilin and Falintil, through death, capture, and surrender. In addition to the internal fighting,

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381 At a broad structural level, “the military and political wings of the organization largely existed independently, but at the head of both was the same person and senior command structure. It was this aspect of the struggle that was to cause divisions, as competition opened up between insiders and outsiders, and within insider and outsider groups, over strategy, ideology, and allegiances.” Damien Kingsbury, East Timor: The Price of Liberty. 1st ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 52.

382 Dunn, East Timor, p. 272. “As the Indonesian advance continued, accompanied by widespread atrocities, divisions intensified within FREITILIN about how to respond. Splits erupted over the principle of subordinating the military to political leaders, even when the latter were young and inexperienced; over strategies to adopt in confronting the enemy; and over how far the civilian population should be incorporated in the resistance. In 1977, Xavier do Amaral argued for allowing civilians to surrender; he was accused of being a defeatist traitor and was deposed as president, replaced by Nicolau Lobato. The party took a more radical Marxist line and purged more dissidents.” International Crisis Group, Resolving Timor-Leste’s Crisis, p. 3.


384 Examples can be found in Chega!, 5.73-5.77, pp. 19-20. “reflecting these internal divisions, from 1976, Fretilin began executing members who adopted a strategic position different from that of the party’s central committee.” Kingsbury, East Timor, p. 53.

385 Dunn, East Timor, p. 273.

386 Kingsbury, East Timor, p. 54.

387 The different issues of contention within Fretilin are well outlined in Chega!, 5. 69-87; pp. 18-23.

388 Senior commander Lobato was killed Dec 31 1978 as Fretilin trying to deal with a massive Indonesian offensive. Dunn, East Timor, p. 273. Indonesian forces also created and encouraged E Timorese pro-state to augment pure military offensives. Robinson, If You Leave Us Here, p. 54. The 1978-9 ABRI push was known as the ‘encirclement and annihilation’ strategy.
some leaders began to jump ship: “there were ad hoc efforts from military commanders and
civilian leaders to negotiate surrender with the enemy,”\textsuperscript{389} efforts which were sometimes stopped
by Fretilin loyalists killing the possible defector. Before he was killed by the Indonesians in late
1978, President “Lobato was unable to reign in the internal conflicts which grew along with the
military operations.”\textsuperscript{390} The disparate social coalition underpinning Fretilin’s fighting formations
was pulled apart, particularly along the socially- and politically-defined line of the party versus
the gun. Ultimately, “unity proved fragile in the face of old suspicions and Indonesian military
offensives,”\textsuperscript{391} despite a vaguely common goal and the mass mobilization of the Timorese
citizenry.

Fretilin would thus “come close to total collapse in 1979.”\textsuperscript{392} The attempt to wage “static
positional defence”\textsuperscript{393} had been shattered in the face of ABRI superiority and cascading internal
fragmentation. The first phase of the war involved “near total destruction of the East Timorese
armed resistance and the slaying of the first generation of leadership.”\textsuperscript{394} Ultimately, “the links in
Fretilin’s organizational structure had been broken”\textsuperscript{395} with fighters only now able to rely on
highly localized pockets of collective action. Indonesia had destroyed the conventional forces,
and the possibility of organized and decentralized guerrilla resistance had been undermined by
the feuds and disagreements within Fretilin. The latter can be attributed at least in part to the
rapid incorporation of new social and political groupings in the wake of the sudden
decolonization of 1974, which created a coalition social base upon which to wage war. Shared
opposition to Indonesia, shared Catholic-Timorese identity categorization, shared dedication to

\textsuperscript{389} Chega!, 5.84, p. 22
\textsuperscript{390} Niner, Xanana, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{392} Robinson, If You Leave Us Here, p. 77.
\textsuperscript{393} Chega!, 5.89, p. 23
\textsuperscript{394} Niner, Xanana, p. 36.
\textsuperscript{395} Kingsbury, East Timor, p. 55.
some vision of an independent Timor were, and mass political mobilization had decisively failed to hold Fretilin together in the face of intense COIN and internal social division.

Rebuilding Falintil: Feuds, Purges, and Gusmao’s Ascendancy, 1979-1987. According to Gusmao, for Fretilin late 1979-1980 was a time of “suspicion, chaos and surrender.” Only three of the fifty Central Committee members were still alive and free. In wake of this debacle, “for the next two years at least, there was uncertainty and disagreement about the strategic direction that should be taken.” Yet local networks endured that would provide the underpinning for an enduring, if never highly cohesive or effective, armed struggle. As Falintil crumbled and was overrun, its surviving fighters had fallen back on traditional local social ties to feed and hide them. These would provide the support needed to keep the struggle alive, since there was absolutely no external material support at any point for the insurgents. Though “Falintil was only a small part of the story of East Timor in the 1980s and 1990s because of the move towards non-violence and internationalization, its endurance and organization remained an essential tool of leverage and reassurance.

Gusmao and a few other mid-level leaders had survived and tried to “slowly get back in touch with previous networks.” Rather than the spontaneous support of a politicized people, a “reliance on local traditional alliances and modes of travel and communication were critical.”

396 Gusmão, To Resist Is to Win!, p. 58.
397 Chega!, 5.97, p. 26
398 Robinson, If You Leave Us Here, pp. 78-79.
399 “no material support getting to Fretilin from the outside world.” Dunn, East Timor, p. 294.
400 Dunn, East Timor, p. 297.
401 Niner, Xanana, p. 45.
402 Niner, Xanana, p. 46. “retreating to more traditional lines of kinship, loyalty, and support based on much more localized allegiances, small groups still continued to move about.” Kingsbury, East Timor, p. 55. This is a major theme in Taylor: Ermera, Venilala, Bacau and, above all, Lospalos. It seemed that, despite the destruction of the organization, the resistance was continuing, but on a more local, isolated level, based firmly on an organization centred on traditional kinships ties and allegiances. . . during 1979 and 1980 this reliance on traditional forms of organization was crucial for the maintenance of the resistance.” Taylor, East Timor, p. 115. eastern areas where Xanana et al recuperated; “this process of regrouping within a local network also occurred in the Baucau region, in the north-central sector in Ermera, and in Bazartete.” Taylor, East Timor, p. 115. They regained contact “in each
Prior social structures underpinned the revival of Falintil, particularly in the eastern areas of East Timor.\textsuperscript{403} In 1981 and 1982, Falintil was reorganized to focus on guerrilla warfare, as part of a broader political coalition. Gusmao and Reinaldo Correia (Kilik Wae Gae) were the leaders of the guerrilla Falintil, backstopped by the umbrella political organization CRRN.\textsuperscript{404} Fretilin as a party remained dominant within CRRN, while the party’s political activities became subservient to the armed struggle.\textsuperscript{405} At no point did Falintil as a guerrilla organization provide social services and its overall organizational structure and operation remained tightly constrained by Indonesia’s counterinsurgency operations.\textsuperscript{406} Nor did it ever receive external aid.\textsuperscript{407}

As the 1980s progressed, Gusmao decided that reliance on insurgency was unlikely to deliver much on its own, however, and began to formulate a strategy that would unite different Timorese factions under a broad but centralized front while emphasizing international diplomacy and non-violent political mobilization. Having attributed the failure of the liberated zones strategy to a failure of leadership, he decided to reshape the resistance – under his own control.\textsuperscript{408}

Falintil would remain active, but more as a low-level continual threat than as the cutting edge of

case passing along established kinship networks, from one region to another” Taylor, \textit{East Timor}, p. 116), while “the resurgence of the resistance movement in the aftermath of \textit{Operasi Keamanan} owed much, as previously, to the extensive support received from the traditional social and political networks of Timorese society” Taylor, \textit{East Timor}, p. 135) and “the rebuilding of a national framework... relied heavily on recreating ties between regional units which had survived because of their place in local kinship systems and political structures” (Taylor, \textit{East Timor}, p. 136)

\textsuperscript{403} As Niner argues, “the rebuilding of a national framework relied heavily on recreating ties between regional resistances units that had survived within local kinship systems. The resilience and strength of indigenous systems to re-constitute communities in face of adversity meant they provided a significant contribution to the re-building of the new resistance.” Niner, \textit{Xanana}, p. 78.

\textsuperscript{404} The Revolutionary Council of National Resistance (Concelho Revolucionario de Resistencia Nacional). See \textit{Chega!}, 5.100, p. 27 on formation.

\textsuperscript{405} \textit{Chega!}, 5.110, p. 30.

\textsuperscript{406} “if Fretilin’s leadership structure in 1975 could be described as ‘rather ponderous and clumsy’, by 1981, with the addition of structures and positions inherited from RDTL, it was now much worse. Where actual responsibilities lay was even more ambiguous.” Niner, \textit{Xanana}, p. 73.

\textsuperscript{407} “neither China nor Vietnam – nor any other country, for that matter – was disposed or was able to provide military or other material assistance to the embattled Fretilin forces.” Dunn, \textit{East Timor}, p. 320.

\textsuperscript{408} Gusmao argued of the late 1970s failure: “It was because there was no command during that difficult period.” Gusmão, \textit{To Resist Is to Win!}, p. 67. “Xanana... sought to overcome the lack of unity that bedeviled the movement.” Niner, “A Long Journey of Resistance,” p. 20. But this would become a highly personalized unity around his own particular vision, not deep institutions.
the resistance. This move towards a broader front would require both the dropping of Marxism-
Leninism and the downgrading of Falintil. Falintil up until this point had remained a somewhat
tenuous coalition of Gusmao, Kilik the chief of staff, and surviving local factions. As Gusmao
tried to push his new strategy, “internal differences festered... this was the beginning of the
divisions that would plague East Timor after independence.”409

Battles over Marxism-Leninism, the role of Fretilin within a broader front, and the
primacy of the armed struggle contributed to growing unrest, as did a failed 1983 ceasefire.410
This resulted in a coup attempt in 1984, with the Chief of Staff, Red Brigade commander, and his
deputy trying to bypass and overthrow Gusmao but failing.411 This coup was squashed, with the
dissidents splitting to join the Indonesians, going into exile, or dying in more or less mysterious
ways.412 This was a bitter split that had long-term repercussions for Timor, both before and after
independence.413 The ultimate outcome was a successful purge by Gusmao that endogenously
strengthened his control over Falintil – it was a dynamic change over time that cannot be
attributed to prior social structural coalitions, though the coalitional structure of Falintil provided
the opportunity for serious internal dissension in the first place. This “purge of hardliners by

409 Kingsbury, East Timor, p. 57.
410 There were deep disagreements about ceasefire talks in 1983. Niner, Xanana, p. 90.
411 “the differences reached their height when Falintil Chief of Staff, Commander Kilik, Deputy and Chief of
Falintil’s Red Brigade, Mauk Moruk (Paulino Gama) and Commander Olo Gari Aswain began reporting the
outcome of military operations directly to Fretilin’s external delegation in Lisbon, bypassing Gusmao’s command.
They then attempted a coup against Gusmao”; this was a “deep split,” Kingsbury, East Timor, pp. 57-58.
412 Chega!, 5.123, p. 33.
413 “These policies were not popular with FRETIILN hardliners, and in 1984, a split took place, so bitter that in
September 2006, it came up in almost every conversation about the current crisis. Senior FALINTIL officers, who
were also members of the FRETIILN central committee, attempted a coup against Xanana.14 Led by Chief of Staff
Kilik Wae Gae; Mauk Moruk (Paulo Gama), a brigade commander; and the latter’s deputy, Oligari Asswain, it
failed. The fallout was heavy. Mauk Moruk surrendered to the Indonesians. His brother, Cornelio Gama, better
known as L-7 (Elle Sette), was purged, and although later taken back, developed a separate power base in the
Baucau area through a cult-like organisation, Sagrada Familia. Oligari was removed from FALINTIL and resurfaced
in independent Timor-Leste as a leader of a dissident group, CPD-RDTL, that for the first years after the Indonesian
departure was a major security headache for the transition government. Kilik died under disputed circumstances; his
wife became a FRETILIN central committee member.” International Crisis Group, Resolving Timor-Leste’s Crisis,
p. 3.
Xanana can be seen as the beginning of his unopposed leadership within Timor and of a longer-term rift within Fretilin. Xanana established a firmer grip on command with Ruak as his trusted military deputy and Hudo and Huno as his Fretilin collaborators.\textsuperscript{414}

\textit{Downgrading the Gun: Internationalization and Mass Mobilization, 1987-1999.} Having purged his enemies and consolidated control over Falintil, Gusmao was finally in a position to put his strategy into action. He vociferously criticized previous Fretilin leaderships for creating “fatal divisiveness and a notorious resentment at all levels of the organizational structure”\textsuperscript{415} and moved beyond the incorrect assumption that Fretilin would succeed by launching “a popular revolution that would destroy all the opposing forces like an avalanche.”\textsuperscript{416} He argued that a focus on doctrinaire Marxism and on Fretilin dominance within the broader resistance had undermined the struggle for independence.\textsuperscript{417} Gusmao declared Falintil to be non-partisan and placed Fretilin formally in subordination to the broader CNRM front.\textsuperscript{418} The new focus would be internationalization and non-violent mobilization, with Falintil continuing to exist and operate but at a low level.\textsuperscript{419} This led to another feud, with the more hard-line external wing of the party, particularly former leader Abilio de Araujo who was also sidelined in favor of Gusmao.

\textsuperscript{414} Niner, \textit{Xanana}, p. 106.
\textsuperscript{415} Gusmão, \textit{To Resist Is to Win!}, p.134. “the suppression of any other political choice has created in our bosom a fatal divisiveness and a notorious resentment at all levels of the organizational structure... meanwhile, the practicalities of conducting the war were handed over to the initiative – more or less uncontrollable and inconsistent – of local military commanders. This was a drawback during the period of the support bases.” Gusmão, \textit{To Resist Is to Win!}, p. 134.
\textsuperscript{416} This 1987 statement is found in Gusmão, \textit{To Resist Is to Win!}, p. 131.
\textsuperscript{417} December 7 1987 Gusmao “attacked the Central Committee of Fretilin for committing ‘enormous and excessive political errors.’ The Central Committee, he said, had been guilty of ‘political infantilism’ and doctrinaire Marxism.” Dennis Shoesmith, “Timor-Leste: Divided Leadership in a Semi-Presidential System,” \textit{Asian Survey} 43, no. 2 (April 2003), p. 240.
\textsuperscript{418} \textit{Chega!}, 5.126-128; pp. 35-36. CNRM was the National Council of Maubere Resistance (Conselho Nacional de Resistencia Maubere). A motivation for this move was “the feeling was that CRRN had failed to implement National unity because of the partisan behaviour of many Fretilin and the because of the lack of unity in the diaspora.” Niner, \textit{Xanana}, p. 111.
\textsuperscript{419} Indeed by the late 1980s/early 1990s before the 1991 Santa Cruz massacre, Falintil was at around 100 fighters. \textit{Chega!}, p. 39 notes that this “was a difficult time for Falintil.”
loyalists. Gusmao’s rivalries with external Fretilin elites were not problematic during the war, but the divisions within the resistance would return in force once Timor was independent.

The new strategy moved forward and Falintil became increasingly irrelevant to the Timorese resistance, though it remained valuable for reassurance. The mobilization of both old and new networks continued, but with more of a focus on students, human rights, and attempts to gain the attention of the international community. This was never a tightly centralized movement, but it regained much of the internal compliance that had been lost from the late 1970s through mid-1980s.

A massacre of civilian protesters by the Indonesian forces at Santa Cruz in 1991 was “probably the turning point” in the overall struggle, making East Timor far more visible in the international eye. Gusmao was himself captured in 1992, and “the Timorese leadership was thrown into a spin, showing up the weakness inherent in Xanana’s centralized leadership.” One of Gusmao’s loyalists took over Falintil and “kept up low-level guerrilla operations.”

Regardless of the problem of adapting to Gusmao’s capture, the focus of the Timorese pro-independence movement was on passive resistance and mobilization, with the armed wing of

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420 In 1980s Abilio de Araujo attacks national front approach and is replaced by Gusmao loyalists Kingsbury, *East Timor*, p. 58; and Niner, *Xanana*, pp. 118-119.
421 “The FRETIIL-FALINTIL divorce had profound implications for the political dynamics of post-conflict Timor-Leste. It meant that the party’s political leadership was concentrated in the diaspora, particularly with key central committee members based in Angola and Mozambique, and that those who stayed in FALINTIL until the end were virtually all Xanana’s men. And it created a built-in divide between the party and the military, and the party and Xanana, after independence.” International Crisis Group, *Resolving Timor-Leste’s Crisis*, p. 4.
422 “CNRM’s military wing, Falintil, began to decline in numbers and in its military capability, but an extensive network of non-military support in the towns and villages of East Timor was developed, a network on which its survival depended.” Dunn, *East Timor*, pp. 296-7. “the CNRM was intended to overcome the many differences among Timorese - including loyalty to different political parties – that in Gusmao’s view still hampered the quest for independence.” Robinson, *If You Leave Us Here*, p. 79.
423 “tacitly recognizing its inability to centralize and to better serve its purposes and evade Indonesian repression, the resistance movement did not place the Clandestine Front inside East Timor (and later in Indonesia) under clearly defined or rigid structures. Lacking strict discipline, the clandestine grassroots thus remained an amorphous constituency bound only to the resistance by a self-imposed and perhaps even benevolent sense of moral obligation” (UCLA 1998 p. 501)
426 Niner, *Xanana*, p. 156.
the party held back from large-scale activity. Fretilin, Falintil, and the broader Timorese coalition survived during the 1980s and 1990s by relying on traditional networks and then overlaying them with more modern organizing tactics. Unlike GAM, the Viet Minh, or MCP, Fretilin went much more explicitly political and non-violent.

Legacies of Falintil Division: Independence and Security Force Factionalism, 1999-2009. With the fall of Suharto in 1998, the Habibie regime and its successors decided to embrace a referendum on independence in East Timor. The tale of the referendum is complex and well-studied elsewhere: Indonesian security forces were bizarrely convinced that, with the help of pro-state paramilitaries, they would win the referendum. When the vote went decisively against independence, TNI and its allies went on a rampage of destruction before finally withdrawing in the face of an international intervention led by Australia. During this period, Falintil remained largely quiet – interestingly, in part because its commanders refused orders to protect the population due to the retaliatory consequences that would bring. The United Nations and international community began a period of midwife-ing independence for Timor-Leste with independence formally occurring in 2002.

This is a totally new context, and not one that is directly studied in this dissertation, but the post-2002 period shows the importance of social networks in structuring organizational form. The legacies of intra-Timorese social divisions and absence of bonding network social core at the heart of the Timorese independence movement led to an escalating set of conflicts and splits

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427 “The capture of Xanana was in a military sense a setback to the armed resistance, but Falintil’s tactics had shifted away from military operations . . . the independence movement had moved to broaden its base to become a popular movement with a new focus on passive resistance.” Dunn, East Timor, p. 337.
428 “Indonesia thus encountered a society with two predominant features: indigenous structures with long-established capacities for self-sustained regional reproduction, combined with newly established institutions and ideologies embodying nationalist aspirations.” Taylor, East Timor, p. 65.
within the new security forces, which were heavily drawn from Falintil. The new “leadership was incapable of indoctrinating the diverse members of its amorphous constituencies,” with political elites drawn from exile, Falintil, Fretinil, non-Fretilin Timorese parties, and Gusmao’s loyalists. Gusmao stocked the new FDTL security forces with his loyalists who were heavily drawn from the east, which led to resentment by westerners over their treatment. A wildly intricate set of political maneuvers, betrayals, and factional rivalries led to a major crisis in 2006 and attempted assassinations in 2008, all linked to intrigues over the police and army. Gusmao’s tensions with Fretilin that found clearest expression in debates over the united front in the 1980s were particularly central in the emerging crises of independence Timor-Leste.

Put simply, these new post-independence crises were driven in large part by the lack of tight cohesion and control within Falintil before independence. Gusmao had managed to purge and balance off the various contending factions, but this was a temporary and personalized expedient rather than the kind of institutionalization we have seen in the Viet Minh and, to a much lesser extent, GAM (which split politically post-2005 but not as an armed organizing of any form) and MILF. As Weldemichael argues, “in East Timor the absence of political cohesion and discipline, and the lack of unitary control of the state’s coercive and distributory capacities . . . precluded the monopolization of the independent state by any individual or group.” Timor-Leste’s political future remains intricately bound to historical legacies of distrust, competition, and disparate social mobilization that can be traced back as far as the 1970s.

C. GAM and Fretilin in Comparative Perspective

431 Shoesmith argues that “the Falintil core has been transformed into the national army.” Shoesmith, “Timor-Leste,” p. 248.
432 Weldemichael UCLA, p. 506
433 Specifically, “the officer corps of the FDTL was selected from those Falintil commanders loyal to Gusmao and the to Falintil commander, and now commander of the FDTL, Brigadier-General Taur Matan Ruak,” Shoesmith, “Timor-Leste,” p. 246.
A sub-national comparison of two different ethno-separatist conflicts provides for some interesting virtues: it holds constant the regime and security forces across space, since Indonesia’s powerful military and Suharto’s dictatorship and then the post-Suharto democratic governments were the central forces battling these rebellions. The organizational variation between GAM and Falintil is not dramatic but it is fairly clear: though certainly not approaching the cohesion of the LTTE or PIRA, GAM was able to avoid the violent internal feuding and dissension that characterized Falintil during much of its existence. I attribute this to GAM’s embeddedness in family and political networks linked to prior (but very different) rebellions and to its Libyan and diasporic material support. We can observe these networks ex ante and trace them back to very different conflicts and processes, showing that reverse causality and endogenous network-building very simply were not at work in this case.

Falintil started off with a diffuse coalition base, which under increasing counterinsurgent pressure led to a series of intense feuds and splits that almost annihilated the organization by the late 1970s. The lack of external support, caused by geopolitical alignment with Indonesia, exacerbated military and organizational weaknesses. Only an endogenous set of purges and political maneuvers by Gusmao and his loyalists in the mid-1980s could create a tenuous central control, the limits of which were found in post-2002 Timor-Leste. A focus on the specific networks and institutions underpinning these groups, as well as an appreciation for the benefits of external support, helps to explain this variation and the processes associated with both groups’ mobilization and organization-building.

Alternative explanations for this variation are not very helpful. Falintil had clear mass popular support, while GAM’s support appears to have, at least initially, been much narrower and more constrained. GAM’s access to external resources improved its internal cohesion, rather
than turning it into a predatory organization; though there certainly were predatory, criminal elements within GAM they did not dominate the organization nor did they form its core fighting cadres. There were some hawk-dove divides within Falintil/Fretilin, but they also mapped onto prior factional loyalties and social cleavages in ways that make them hard to pull apart as independent; thus the ideological argument has some, but limited support, in this case. Ideological divisions within GAM existed but did spur splits or feuds before demobilization in 2005; post-2005, GAM as a political party experienced political rivalries, but these were of a “normal” political sort rather than the armed conflict we are interested in here. Finally, state policy does not appear to have played a central role, since the centralized nature of Indonesia’s military apparatus led to the same doctrines, units, and commanders moving between East Timor and Aceh. Attempts at triggering split and feuds were made in both cases, with greater success in 1970s East Timor due to the \textit{ex ante} observable coalition base of Fretilin/Falintil.

IV. Rebellion in the Southern Philippines: MNLF, MILF, and Trajectories of Separatist Organization

Having moved from cross-national studies of communist groups to sub-national studies of different separatist conflicts in Indonesia, we now return to within-conflict comparisons of armed groups (Leites and Wolf’s “interfirm contrast”\textsuperscript{435}). I focus on variation across two armed groups that are based on the same broad ethno-religious category (Muslims in the southern Philippines), fought against the same central state, and that have shared historical roots (one split from the other): the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The MNLF originally launched a rebellion in the early 1970s, but for the most part created its own separate, if sporadic, peace with the Philippine state starting in the late 1970s, which created a wave of defections that weakened the group. Among the splinters that broke

away from the MNLF after the late 1970s in reaction to the negotiations was MILF. Building around a much narrower but socially denser set of core networks, the MILF was able to construct a better-institutionalized and more cohesive organization (though one that is far from perfectly unitary). Resting on a narrower but denser ethnic social base and mobilizing around clerical networks, the MILF has been able to stay in the militant game and to maintain a strong organizational core despite determined COIN by the Philippine state backed by American military advising and equipment. The conflict closely resembles some of Indonesia’s separatist wars in certain respects; unsurprising given their social, historical, and physical proximity.436

The MNLF most closely follows the trajectory of a factionalized organization: “perhaps the major difficulty facing the MNLF has been internal divisiveness. The group has been marked by virtually continual splits and dissent.”437 The MILF, by contrast, I argue is more of a consensus-contingent organization, like GAM, which possesses “relatively greater internal cohesion”438 and is “South East Asia’s most formidable armed separatist group.”439 This variation can be explained by examining the different social structures and coalitions mobilized by the key leaders in each group: MNLF tried to knit together different ethnic groups and both elite (datu) and non-elite social elements under a broad front, while the MILF mobilized through a denser set of clerical, ethnic, and informal social networks that created a more homogeneous social base at Stage 1 that could structure institutionalization and mass expansion. The MILF is not extremely cohesive, particularly in the wake of decentralization necessitated after Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) offensives in the early 2000s, but it has a clear hierarchical

436 “GAM had a number of similarities with the Moro nationalist movement in the Southern Philippines in its causes and patterns.” Sulaiman, “From Autonomy to Periphery,” 140.
command structure and set of defined institutional responsibilities among its leadership. There are “lost commands” not under tight central control in more distant and ethnically heterogeneous parts of the southern Philippines, but these are in the minority. By contrast, MNLF has been torn by several major splits, including MILF, Abu Sayyaf, short-lived Bangsa Moro Liberation Organization (BMLO), and de facto breakaways by local factions and leaders.

*Origins of Muslim Separatism.* The southwestern-most edges of the Philippines remained Muslim in the face of centuries of Spanish colonization that explicitly aimed to Christianize the archipelago. The southern island of Mindanao and its surrounding islands (the Sulu archipelago) have remained the stronghold of Philippine Muslims, who represent roughly 5% of the Philippines’ population (approximately 3 million Muslims). Within the broad category of Philippine Muslims, there are three major ethnic groups and ten smaller groups.\(^4\) Philippine Muslims often are referred to, and refer to themselves, as Moros, with the struggle for a homeland to be called Bangsamoro.\(^5\)

Muslim society in the southern Philippines traditionally had a strict hierarchical structure, with an aristocracy of elite families (*datus*) and layers of lesser notables below them. Many of these elites became collaborators with the Spanish and American colonizers, and then subsequently with the Philippine Christian political structure. Rather than an ethnically or religiously-unified opposition to dominance from Manila, the responses of Philippine Muslims in the south has been heterogeneous and often collaborative (especially among elites), while at other times violently conflictual. The nationalizing and homogenizing agenda driven by

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\(^5\) The origins of this phrase lie in the Spanish link to the Moors, and Moro was originally used a derogatory epithet. It was then reclaimed as a positive phrase by Muslim political entrepreneurs.
Christian elites in Manila from 1935 onwards (but particularly from the 1950s) stirred growing resentment among southern Muslims, who were portrayed as backward savages needing to be civilized. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, one policy used to deal with the Huk rebellion in Luzon was to encourage resettlement by Christians to Mindanao, creating disputes over land and assimilation. In many areas this converted a Muslim majority into a clear minority within a matter of years.

Two trends combined in the 1950s and 1960s. First, a Commission on National Integration launched an effort to assimilate Muslims by bringing them to the Christian metropole for education. Scholarships were given to promising young students to study in Manila and elsewhere, creating a generation of intellectuals and professionals. Second, new networks of clerics (ulama) arose funded by and educated in other Muslim countries, particularly Egypt. This new ulama would begin to form the core of a counterelite able to challenge the traditional power of the datus and their patronage networks. Combined with the new students whose experience to the Christian Philippines often exacerbated their sympathy for Muslim separatism, new networks had been formed that could underpin social mobilization. Crucially for my theoretical argument, neither network-building initiative was launched to lay the basis for a future war or in expectation of civil conflict: instead, the government initiative was intended to have just the opposite effect, and the Muslim educational networks were part of a much broader, diffuse effort to revitalize Islam in the wake of colonialism, not to somehow build quasi-insurgent networks in Mindanao. Nevertheless, as McKenna notes, “two quite dissimilar education projects begun in the 1950s produced a distinct but variously composed Muslim counterelite by the late 1960s.”

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442 Majul, Contemporary Muslim Movement, p. 25.
443 Majul, Contemporary Muslim Movement, p. 33.
444 McKenna, Muslim Rulers and Rebels, p. 138.
Within this counterelite, however, remained ethno-linguistic fissures, class divisions, and uneasy, varying relationships with the traditional datu elites of the southern Philippines.445

The Onset of War and Dynamics of MNLF, 1968-1976. The spark that triggered increasing Muslim political mobilization was a massacre of Muslim army recruits by the AFP.446

This led to the formation of several formal and informal groups dedicated to separatism. Key leaders included Nur Misuari, an ethnic Tausug from Sulu who was one of the crop of students who had given a government scholarship. A political scientist, he founded the Muslim Nationalist League and would become the MNLF leader.447 Another early mobilizer was Salamat Hashim, who had studied in Cairo.448 Hashim founded a Muslim organization, Narul Islam, in 1970 and after splitting from MNLF in the late 1970s would become the head of the MILF. An umbrella organization, the Muslim Independence Movement (MIM) was created in 1968 and attracted separatists to its banner.449 The southern Philippines from 1968 to 1972 was rocked by protests and increasing sectarian violence, which many Muslims perceived as being enacted by Christians against Muslims with the support of the state. Christian militias proliferated and population displacement began, though it was not until 1972 that an eruption of serious insurgency began. Elections exacerbated violence and attracted the attention of Muslim countries and organizations, particularly Libya and Al Azhar in Cairo.450

445 Gowing notes that this was “not only of a profusion but als of a confusion of organizations. Certainly, some of the organizations were highly personalistic, forming and dissolving around leaders who had little more in mind than expanding and consolidating a political base.” Gowing, Muslim Filipinos, p. 187.
446 Though remaining somewhat mysterious, the Jabidah Massacre occurred when the AFP recruited Muslims to be trained for deniable attack on the neighboring Malaysian island of Sabah. When recruits resisted this mission, they were almost all executed. McKenna, Muslim Rulers and Rebels, p. 141. Majul, Contemporary Muslim Movement, pp. 40-43.
447 Misuari a Tausug from Sulu who was a political scientist at U of Philippines. McKenna, Muslim Rulers and Rebels, p. 141.
448 McKenna, Muslim Rulers and Rebels, p. 144.
449 McKenna, Muslim Rulers and Rebels, Chapter 7.
450 Majul, Contemporary Muslim Movement, p. 58. Al Azhar had trained many of the new clerics.
Insurgent mobilization was beginning even before 1972. From 1968 on, there was low-level military training in Malaysia for willing possible combatants linked to the MIM and other Muslim separatist groups. Funded by some discontent Muslim notables in the context of an increasing militarization of politics (including armed groups linked to parties), it would provide the first core of recruits. The Malaysians provided support in part to counter the Philippines’ threat to Sabah; this was therefore a geostrategic decision. In 1972, Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law, using the supposed threat of southern secessionism as the rationale for his consolidation of authoritarian rule. The various Muslim nationalist groups went underground, and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) emerged as the organizational manifestation of separatist sentiment. At its heart appears to have lain a mixture of students/professionals, ulama, and commercial elite who “forged an alliance that provided the leadership for the separatist rebellion.”

Misuari’s group, Hashim’s group, some younger members of datu families (though not most), and a variety of other localized pockets of mobilization combined under the MNLF banner. However, most of the leadership was quickly forced to flee to exile, often in Libya.

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451 McKenna, Muslim Rulers and Rebels, p. 148. “Beginning in 1969, cadres were sent abroad for military training... the first cohort, known as the ‘Top 90’ and including the ethnic Tausug/Sama MNLF chairman Nur Misuari, spent more than a year on Pulau Pangkor, near Malaysia’s Penang Island. In 1970 the ‘Batch 300’ followed, including Al-Haj Murad, who would succeed Hashim as MILF chairman. Next was ‘Batch 67’ or the Bombardier Group, which brought new skills in the use of light artillery from Malaysia. Libya replaced Malaysia as the principal training venue from the mid-1970s, supplemented through the 1980s by Syria, Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) camps in the Mideast, and Pakistan.” International Crisis Group, Southern Philippines Backgrounder, p. 4.

452 Majul, Contemporary Muslim Movement, p. 46 notes that most major families and political figures already had armed followers.

453 See Kadir Che Man, Muslim Separatism: The Moros of Southern Philippines and the Malays of Southern Thailand (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 139-40 on Malaysian support.

454 McKenna, Muslim Rulers and Rebels, p. 156, notes that in fact the ground situation in the southern Philippines in the first half of 1972 was much calmer than previously.

455 McKenna, Muslim Rulers and Rebels, p. 139.

456 McKenna, Muslim Rulers and Rebels, p. 159, outlines some of the leadership structure in early 1970s Cotabato, though he notes that “precise information... is unavailable.” McKenna, Muslim Rulers and Rebels, p. 159.
The leadership was clearly a parochial coalition network, falling back on prior organizational and personal networks in the face of the unexpected imposition of martial law and consequent escalation in violence. Reaching somewhere between 10 and 30,000 fighters, we see the emergence of a state-reliant organization for a brief period in the mid-1970s. This is because the “the authority over rebel fighters enjoyed by the MNLF derived at least partly from its access to critical resources, particularly weapons, from outside the Philippines.” Such flows of resources were a crucial source of leverage while they lasted. Libya supplanted Malaysia as the primary supplier of materiel in the mid-1970s, and “weapons and other defence supplies worth millions of dollars were delivered to the MNLF camp in Sabah” by the Libyans.

Yet on the other hand, due to the structure of the networks MNLF was built around, “the MNLF never controlled all of the rebels fighting the government and was, in fact, a loosely knit group, with the borders between those fighters who were members of, aligned with, or exterior to the MNLF never very clear. . . one of the reasons for the loosely knit character of the MNLF was the fact that virtually its entire core leadership was, by 1973, operating from outside the country, far from local commanders.” There was nothing beyond a vague appeal to Moro nationalism (itself a contested concept) that bound the disparate blocs of this organization: junior datus, professionals/students, clerics, and a variety of small nationalist groups, across varying ethno-linguistic lines. The leadership of MNLF tried to create an encompassing nationalist ideology

457 McKenna, Muslim Rulers and Rebels, p. 157.
458 Che Man, Muslim Separatism, p. 83, argues that “each provincial committee acted on its own initiative. Links among them were also weak.” Moreover, “the movement was led and supported by the local elite,” which varied significantly in social composition and background across the movement. Che Man, Muslim Separatism, p. 83.
459 McKenna, Muslim Rulers and Rebels, p. 157. Sabah was the conduit point for weapon flows from Libya and elsewhere. However, in 1975-6 the leader in Sabah, Tun Mustapha, was removed from power, an exogenous shock to access to external resources.
460 Che Man, Muslim Separatism, p. 140.
461 McKenna, Muslim Rulers and Rebels, p. 157.
to encompass the divisions within the category of Muslim Filipinos, but with very mixed success, as it “represented all ethnolinguistic and regional groups.”\textsuperscript{463} It “was created instantly as a region-wide network of organizations in an attempt to consolidate the various existing Moro forces that were fighting against the Marcos regime.”\textsuperscript{464}

This combination of some external support with a very diffuse, localized, parochial social underpinning left MNLF open to fragmentation, especially once international interest in the conflict declined. Nevertheless, from 1973 until 1977, there was intense violence throughout the southern Philippines, with tens of thousands killed and hundreds of thousands displaced. The AFP deployed the bulk of its forces into the south under the martial law regime\textsuperscript{465}, during a period of increasing de-institutionalization, corruption, and personalization in Marcos’ government. The MNLF had a military wing with varying levels of command, a political wing, and a provincial leadership body called the Kutawato Revolutionary Committee, showing formal institutionalization at least in form, if not necessary in practice (“it is unrealistic to suggest that the MNLF was a well-structured organization”\textsuperscript{466}).

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\textsuperscript{463} Majul, \textit{Contemporary Muslim Movement}, p. 63. ICG discusses these divisions further: “led by Nur Misuari, an ethnic Sama from Sulu, the MNLF drew adherents from the Tausug-dominated Sulu archipelago and the Mindanao mainland, where the Maguindanao and Maranao are the largest Muslim ethnic groups.” International Crisis Group, \textit{The Philippines: Counter-Insurgency vs. Counter-Terrorism in Mindanao} (International Crisis Group, May 14, 2008), p. 3. McKenna, \textit{Muslim Rulers and Rebels}, argues that in his ethnographic fieldwork he found relatively little “Moro” self-identification among Muslims in Cotabato. He also points out that Marcos was a consummate deployer of symbols.

\textsuperscript{464} Che Man, \textit{Muslim Separatism}, p. 82.


\textsuperscript{466} Moreover, “the effective structure of the MNLF was not as it was constituted on paper.” Che Man, \textit{Muslim Separatism}, p. 82.
Many prominent Muslim datu families stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Marcos in order to protect their enclaves of power. Unlinked and unbeholden to the other social constituencies within the MNLF, and pressured by the bulk of elites to side with the state, the few rebelling datus were relatively free to abandon the group if the Philippine government made a good offer. This process of elite defection would only grow more pronounced over time, degrading the MNLF from within and showing the limits of Misuari’s leadership even before the major ruptures of 1977 to come. Gutierrez notes the analytical consensus that “while it enjoyed mass support, the organization [MNLF] lacked a leadership consolidated around common goals and visions.”

Ahmad writes that despite the “nearly universal social support for the MNLF...the military stalemate brought the political weaknesses of the MNLF to the surface...the breaking of its large contingents into small, mobile regional units made it difficult to sustain cohesion. Tendencies toward localism and/or warlordism were rampant.” This let Marcos peel away both traditional datus and factional commanders (the balikbayans). Marcos also began to reach out to Arab and Muslim states to get them to reduce their support for the MNLF.

467 McKenna, Muslim Rulers and Rebels, p. 161.
468 Ibid., p. 162.
469 Ibid., p. 163 – “by 1980, virtually all members of the traditional elite had abandoned the rebellion.”
472 Gutierrez, “In the Battlefields of the Warlord,” p. 52. Many of the defectors became propped up as pro-state paramilitaries. However, there remain close local links between local representatives of the state and MNLF fighters, at least in Sulu.
Throughout, the Philippine state exerted serious coercive pressure and presence on the insurgency and broader political milieu in the southern Philippines. 473

Peace Processes and the MILF Split: Negotiation and Fragmentation in the MNLF, 1976-2009. By 1976, the Marcos regime and Misuari’s MNLF had fought and bargained to an apparent standstill. In late 1976 in Tripoli, Libya, a negotiated settlement (the Tripoli Agreement) was signed, with mediation from Libya and the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM played an important role as a diplomatic forum). 474 External backers supported the MNLF, but because they wanted it to make a peace deal, flows of large-scale guns, money, and training decreased as a way of encouraging this process. Combined with the removal of Sabah’s ruler, the result was that “these resources were drastically curtailed by late 1975 so that ‘groups which had joined the MNLF primary to secure their weapons supply had little incentive to remain loyal’ (Noble 1987: 195).” 475

A ceasefire was agreed to as part of a broader negotiating process, and negotiations continued into 1977. The basic structure of the deal was going to be autonomy within a Philippine state. 476 The major issue that arose was in actual implementation of the terms of the deal. A ceasefire endured while both sides assessed the trustworthy of the other, and local violence and Philippine state intransigence combined to undermine the implementation of the accord. Marcos’ regime was probably never particularly sincere about the deal.

As the settlement faltered, internal fragmentation arose: “after the signing of the agreement, the rate of defections from the MNLF accelerated, its support from foreign sources

473 As of the early 1980s there was “omnipresence of the army in Muslim areas.” Majul, Contemporary Muslim Movement, p. 102.
474 Majul, Contemporary Muslim Movement.
was reduced, and dissension intensified in its top ranks.\textsuperscript{477} External sponsors had generally pressured Misuari into a deal, but their role in sustaining actual fighting on the ground was limited, especially after the Tripoli Agreement.\textsuperscript{478} Major class, personal and ethnolinguistic divisions came out into the open within the “loosely knit”\textsuperscript{479} MNLF, reflecting varying assessments of the wisdom and consequences of the peace deal. The fracturing “also reflects lines of ethno-cultural background and personal loyalty.”\textsuperscript{480}

Several major ruptures shattered MNLF’s tenuous unity as it became increasingly clear that the Tripoli Agreement was not being implemented. There was not a clear hawk-dove division initially.\textsuperscript{481} The major break was by Salamat Hashim, the MNLF vice-chairman who had trained at Al Azhar in Egypt and was an ethnic Maguindanaon.\textsuperscript{482} He accused Misuari of being too secular and left-wing. His educational and ethnic background left Hashim embedded in a different part of the MNLF coalition than MNLF chairman Misuari, the ethnic Tausug from the archipelagic islands. Hashim was able to pull away the modernist ulama with shared networks and educational background, as well as the bulk of the ethnic Maguindanaon of central

\textsuperscript{477} McKenna, \textit{Muslim Rulers and Rebels}, p. 168.
\textsuperscript{478} Majul notes that “it was undoubtedly Muslim, especially Arab, sympathy and aid that helped push the MNLF to international prominence. It was also pressure from Arab countries that forced Misuari to shift his demand for secession to that of autonomy.” Majul, \textit{Contemporary Muslim Movement}, p. 82. Vitug and Gloria quote a former supporter/supplier of MNLF in Malaysia saying “up to 1976 (after the signing of the Tripoli Agreement), people (in Malaysia) were very sympathetic to the MNLF cause.” Marites Dañguilian Vitug and Glenda Gloria, \textit{Under the Crescent Moon: Rebellion in Mindanao} (Quezon City: Ateneo Center for Social Policy & Public Affairs, Institute for Popular Democracy, 2000), p. 174.
\textsuperscript{479} Che Man, \textit{Muslim Separatism}, p. 83. Ahmad writes that even before the 1976 agreement, “splits within the Central Committee were already brewing.” Aijaz Ahmad, “The War Against the Muslims,” p. 32.
\textsuperscript{480} Che Man, \textit{Muslim Separatism}, p. 89.
\textsuperscript{481} If anything, originally the future splitter Salamat Hashim was more moderate than Misuari. Eric Gutierrez and Abdulwahab Guialal, “The Unfinished Jihad: The Moro Islamic Liberation Front and Peace in Mindanao,” in Kristina N Gaerlan and Mara Stankovitch, eds., \textit{Rebels, Warlords and Ulama: A Reader on Muslim Separatism and the War in Southern Philippines} (Quezon City: Institute for Popular Democracy, 2000), p. 280.
\textsuperscript{482} Salamat “was ethnically a Maguindanaon, Misuari is Tausug; he was a cleric and seminarian; Misuari was more secularist; he was enmeshed in the Egyptian and Saudi networks, Misuari had his Libyan connection; and he allied himself for a time with the elite personalities of the BMLO.” Aijaz Ahmad, “The War Against the Muslims,” p. 36.
Mindanao. The coalition fissures within the MNLF, exacerbated by the exile of most its leaders, came to the fore.

Interestingly, Hashim’s “New Leadership” wing of MNLF, which renamed itself the MILF in 1984, did not try to spoil the peace or take extremist stands. The opposite, in fact: it tried to sell itself to external sponsors and to Muslims back in Mindanao as better able to implement a lasting deal than Misuari’s MNLF. Hashim tried to overthrow Misuari, who in turn expelled Hashim, who then took refuge in Cairo. We return to the MILF below, but for now it is worth emphasizing that this was a major split over both political direction and personality conflict.

Other splits and defections broke MNLF unity. Abul Khair Alonto, who had helped to found MNLF in 1972, jumped ship in 1975 and returned to the government, continuing a trend of elite families abandoning the rebel cause. Other traditional elites, based in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, broke away from MNLF and formed the Bangsa Moro Liberation Organization (BMLO), with a social appeal to ethnic Maranao. The BMLO itself never went anywhere, and its leader in turn returned to the Philippine government fold.

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483 ICG notes that “intertribal unity between the archipelagic Tausug and the mainland Maguindanaon proved unsustainable in the MNLF of the late 1970s.” International Crisis Group, *Southern Philippines Backgrounder*, p. 11. As a result, “a failed peace agreement signed in Tripoli, Libya in 1976 led Misuari’s head of foreign affairs, Salamat Hashim, to break away the next year to form his own faction – renamed the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in 1984. Salamat was Maguindanaon and took much of the MNLF’s central Maguindanaon following with him.” International Crisis Group, *The Philippines*, p. 3.

484 For a justification of the split from a MILF perspective, see Salah Jubair, *Bangsamoro, a Nation Under Endless Tyranny* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: IQ Marin, 1999), pp. 167-173, focused on government ceasefire violations, and then pp. 193-194 on the origins of the New MNLF (its pre-MILF name).

485 In late 1977, when rivalry with Misuari and his Tausug followers could no longer be suppressed. It is commonly believed that the breakaway of Hashim’s ‘New Leadership’ wing, which became the MILF in 1984, sprang from its more militant, faith-based agenda. . . in fact, Hashim curried support from OIC states by emphasizing willingness to abide by the terms of the Tripoli peace agreement.” International Crisis Group, *Southern Philippines Backgrounder*, p. 2.

486 See Majul, *Contemporary Muslim Movement*, pp. 87-88.


Reformist Group split off in 1982. “It was quite obvious that the schism in the MNLF was largely along tribal and ethnic lines and that the three rebel organizations were based on the three major ethnic communities of the Muslims in the South.” These were the traditional areas of collective

Thus by the late 1970s and early 1980s, the MNLF’s “troops were dispersed and almost in disarray.” Indeed, “the MNLF had no institutionalized set of doctrines or ideological framework to guide the organization.” The process of splitting and feuding that tore apart the MNLF “signaled the ineffectiveness of ethno-nationalism as an organizing principle for separatism.” Actual insurgent mobilization was instead built around preexisting structures of collective action, not simply resonant appeals to broad identity categories. Smaller and dispersed, but more robust, pockets of collective action, were the social underpinning of the MNLF, building cleavages into the very structure of the group from its founding. This at least vaguely reflected the highly diffused, decentralized social structure that historically emerged in the southern Philippines.

After the failed implementation of the Tripoli Agreement and subsequent splintering, the MNLF’s remaining leadership and structure endured both in the Middle East and in southern

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491 Bertrand, “Peace and Conflict,” p. 41.
492 Vitug and Gloria, *Under the Crescent Moon*, p. 46.
494 This meant that “every attempt at unity has been seen as benefiting one group more than the others.” Che Man, *Muslim Separatism*, p. 86. See Che Man, *Muslim Separatism*, pp. 90-97 for some field-based interactions with the different factions, and pp. 127-129 on the leadership composition of different groups. It also suggests some problems with scholarly assertions that all identity categories are equivalent to one another: some are deeper, more powerful, and thus more useful for risky collective action.
Philippines through the 1980s. However, the organization’s military capacity had been seriously degraded and the MNLF existed in a bit of a limbo between serious insurgency and actual peace. Political volatility in the Philippines increased in the mid-1980s, with both the MNLF and MILF at least loosely supporting challenges to Marcos’ regime. Once Marcos was overthrown, negotiations came on and off between the MNLF and Manila, but instability (particularly over civilian control of the military) made it difficult to consummate any deal. As MNLF slowly inched towards another settlement, it lost further splinters, including the MNLF Reformist Group in the early 1980s, the ultra-radical Abu Sayyaf Group breakaway, and MNLF-Islamic Command Council in the early and mid-1990s. These splits occurred along geographic and religious lines (ASG was heavily Basilan Island-based), further fragmenting the MNLF structure along preexisting social cleavages as chunks of the original MNLF coalition defected.

The Tausug ethnic base of the rump MNLF remained mostly unified behind Misuari’s leadership, but in the face of cascading organizational decay even this became tenuous, with some groups of fighters exhibiting high levels of autonomy on the ground. The MNLF became largely co-opted by a settlement in 1996, though the status of this settlement has remained

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496 The MNLF’s framing of its mission at this time can be found in Moro National Liberation Front, The Moro People’s Struggle: Documents from the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) (Mansfield Depot, CT: Philippines Research Center, 1980).

497 See data on attacks at http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?search=mnlf

498 “the second was the MNLF Reformist Group led by Dimas Pundato. This faction was formed in March 1982, accusing Misuari of being 'leftist' and formally declaring that they were removing him from power. When this move failed, members of the faction were expelled from the MNLF. They then formed their own 'MNLF'. The group also declared itself in favor of autonomy rather than independence.” Cline, “The Islamic insurgency in the Philippines,” p. 124. MNLF breakaways in 1996 in Sulu and in Basilan in 1991.

499 International Crisis Group, The Philippines, p. 7. ASG is referred to as “a network of networks, an alliance of smaller groups around individual charismatic leaders who compete and cooperate to maximize their reputation for violence,” p. 7.

uncertain, with ceasefire breakdowns and flare-ups of violence. Many of the members of the BMA were integrated into the Philippine police and armed forces, amidst jockeying for internal command over the remnants of BMA power. Misuari and some of his followers gained political power within the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), though the ARMM has had mixed success in mitigating the broader conflict. During its time in power, the MNLF was accused to continuing to support its ethnic backers, rather than evenly distributing the benefits to the broader Philippine Muslim category.

Moreover, the peace process “structures received little support from groups other than the MNLF because of the mainly Tausug base of the MNLF.” Sulu remains “an establish MNLF stronghold” and its ethnic “Tausogs dominate the MNLF leadership.” Some local MNLF groups have become allied with more radical jihadis, while others have launched a variety of leadership challenges to the Misuari leadership. The control of the ARMM ended in 2002, and though MNLF has become an “often forgotten element” in the conflict, it remains a loose presence on the ground, with links to both the local government and to violent armed groups. The initial social base of MNLF, and its appeal to a broad but not socially-embedded ideology of

502 International Crisis Group, The Philippines, p. 6, notes intra-MNLF factional rivalry.  
503 many people in the Cotabato and Lanao districts have accused the MNLF of supporting only Tausug constituents.” Bertrand, “Peace and Conflict,” p. 48. Additionally, “the former MNLF leadership, with Nur Misuari at its helm, represents a core leadership of the Muslim nationalist movement, with roots mainly among the Taugus.” Bertrand, “Peace and Conflict,” p. 49.  
505 Gutierrez, “In the Battlefields of the Warlord,” p. 48.  
506 One article from a pro-MILF website identified five groups claiming the MNLF name; http://www.luwaran.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1215:new-mnlf-faction-formed&catid=81:moro-news&Itemid=372  
508 Though Cline argues MNLF “has largely disappeared as a cohesive organized group,” (Cline, “The Islamic insurgency in the Philippines,” p. 126) it’s not clear that is in fact the case – it may not be cohesive, but it hasn’t disappeared. Its members were not forced to disarm and thus retain weapons.
pan-Moro nationalism, left it unable to construct enduring institutions. Pulling together socially-heterogeneous pockets of collective action under a common umbrella identity has been insufficient to forge robust insurgency.

Building the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, 1977-2000. Though the MNLF was the first mover in the insurgency, the “MILF is now the dominant insurgent group in the Muslim south.” Though somewhat opaque at times, it is possible to reconstruct at least the broad outlines of the organization. We can recall that Salamat Hashim broke away with a set of religious clerics to form the “New Leadership” wing of MNLF. It existed overseas and among ethnic Maguindanaon and Maranao Muslims within the Philippines from 1977 through 1984. In 1984, it was formally renamed the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, emphasizing the “Islamic” aspect of its mission. By 1984, the organization was headquartered in Lahore, Pakistan but had a strong support base in the Philippines. Here I assess MILF’s organizational structure from 1977 until the loss of its main military camp, Camp Abu Bakar, in 2000. We might expect the MILF’s

509 “Perhaps the major difficulty facing the MNLF has been internal divisiveness. The group has been marked by virtually continual splits and dissent. These became particularly marked after the failure of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement, which fell apart amid charges of violations by both sides. Three major factions emerged. The first was Misuari’s ‘mainstream’ MNLF faction; the second was the MNLF Reformist Group led by Dimas Pundato. This faction was formed in March 1982, accusing Misuari of being ‘leftist’ and formally declaring that they were removing him from power. When this move failed, members of the faction were expelled from the MNLF. They then formed their own ‘MILF’. The group also declared itself in favor of autonomy rather than independence. The third major faction was led by Salamat Hashim, who at one point was the vice-chairman of the MNLF. After his failure to unseat Misuari in 1977, Salamat Hashim and his faction left to form the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, to be discussed in detail below. Beyond ideological and personal power differences, some degree of ethnic differences appeared to play a role in the factionalization. Together with these factions, several other Moro groupings coalesced or re-formed.” Cline, “The Islamic insurgency in the Philippines,” pp. 124-5.

510 Ugarte, “The “Lost Command” of Julhani Jillang,” p. 315: “These observations suggest that the composition of the MNLF resembled pyramid-like systems of coalitions between small, distinct units, with each unit composed of a leader and his followers. Although arranged in an “order of subordination and superordination,” with the smallest coalitions building up to the largest one—the whole political organization—each unit retained its individual identity. In other words, when combined into an alliance, such units did not subsume their local identities into the new entity, but instead preserved them and continue to recognize the authority of their respective leaders. As Ahmad’s and Che Man’s remarks imply, the decentralized structure of the organization made it easy for its individual units to deviate from the true revolutionary path and engage in criminal activities, for the dispersal of power among their many commanders left them relatively free to pursue their own agendas.”

511 International Crisis Group, The Philippines, p. 3.

512 “although it is South East Asia’s most formidable armed separatist group, the inner workings of the MILF remain poorly documented and understood. It is often presented as monolithic.” International Crisis Group, Southern Philippines Backgrounder, p. 9.
trajectory to closely resemble the MNLF given its organizational lineage and shared appeal to southern Philippines Muslims.

Yet the MILF had a distinct leadership base with much tighter social ties based on educational-religious and family relationships, within a narrower ethnic and geographic bloc. The rise of the ulama was important in providing the leadership bonds to hold MILF together. Clerics were originally locally-embedded, but when in Cairo they developed shared worldviews and social ties to others. When they returned to Mindanao, they had access to both sets of networks, which overlapping and were ready to be activated. This social solidarity combined with the new credibility they brought from foreign education and lack of attachment to traditional elites. MILF was thus built around a social base that more closely resembles a bonding network than it does the MNLF's more socially heterogeneous and diffuse coalition structure. This social base allowed MILF to better retain the allegiance of fighters and factions. MILF has lacked significant external material support because most Muslim states continue to recognize MNLF. Like GAM for much of its time, MILF has been a consensus-contingent group, drawing on prior social structures to hold together. The social bonds and shared ideology of the key mobilizers of MILF have provided the infrastructure to avoid cascades of feuding and splitting (though not significant factional autonomy), even in the face of sustained state pressure and multiple rounds of peace talks.

We begin with the social underpinnings of MILF mobilization. The primary bloc constituting the Hashim splinter in 1977 were Muslim clerics, many of them linked to the

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513 “after a leadership dispute in 1977, Salamat Hashim broke off from the MNLF and established the MILF, which finds its support mainly among the Maguindanao and Maranao people... it has also created an alliance with Muslim scholars (‘ulama’) in its appeal for Muslim support.” Bertrand, “Peace and Conflict,” p. 50.
514 Vitug and Gloria write “that the MILF is funded by foreign money is a prevalent misperception.” Vitug and Gloria, Under the Crescent Moon, p. 117.
processes of Islamic diffusion and revitalization starting the 1950s. This had created a
generation of religious figures who became socially acquainted with one another and imbued
with similar values and worldviews in Cairo and elsewhere in the Muslim world. These
figures also retained local ties to particular families and communities in the southern Philippines.
As noted earlier, this network-building was absolutely not initiated with any eye towards future
insurgency or expectation of violent conflict.

Nevertheless, shared education and experience would provide a more socially integrated
basis for organization-building. As McKenna argues, “crucial to the MILF recovery in Cotabato
in the 1980s was an alliance of ulama and pro-MILF professional working aboveground to
advance its interests. The reason for the cooperation of the new ulama with the MILF is easy to
discern. Most al-Azhar-educated ustadzes in Cotabato were, like Ustadz Ali, connected to their
underground ulama colleagues by kinship links, cohort ties, and shared convictions” (McK
1998, 213). Researchers doing fieldwork in key military bases noted that “Camp Abubakar [until
2000 the main MILF camp] is dominated by members of the religious elite (ustaz) and religious-
oriented Maguindanao aristocrats.”

515 “the emergence of new ulama in Cotabato resulted from the reestablishment of ties with Islamic religious centers
after World War II, and unprecedented intensification of ties with al-Azhar University in Egypt.” McKenna, Muslim
Rulers and Rebels, p. 202. See also a discussion of Salamat Hashim’s cairo experience in Vitug and Gloria, Under
the Crescent Moon, pp. 131-134.
516 “Clerics are much more prominent among the leadership of the MILF than they are within the MNLF, whose
leadership is largely secular. There also reportedly is a significant presence of traditional aristocrats among the
MILF leaders. The ulama have significantly more independence from traditional rulers within the MILF than they
did either in the MNLF or in traditional Filipino Muslim society. At least one factor affecting this increased
independent role of the clergy likely has been the greater availability of external direct funding for the ulama from
religious institutions in such countries as Saudi Arabia and Egypt.” Cline, “The Islamic insurgency in the
517 Thus social ties were endogenously created through the education and socialization process – but not
endogenously by proto-insurgents trying to build a network for war. These networks were exogenous to the actual
onset of conflict (since MNLF was led by more secular Muslim nationalists) and certainly to the broader structure
of political relations between Manila and Mindanao.
518 Che Man, Muslim Separatism, p. 94.
The MILF could escape “the datu problem” in ways the MNLF had not. Instead, “the longer lasting and more cohesive Islamic movement in the Philippines, the MILF, has been characterized by extensive involvement by the clergy, including in significant leadership positions.” Cline argues that this has had a positive effect on organizational cohesion: “MILF seems to be more concerned with ideological qua religious training for its members. This likely explains the relatively greater internal cohesion of the MILF.” Bertrand suggests that “the MILF achieved a degree of ideological cohesion that was never reached by the MNLF,” in part because of an appeal to religious sentiment combined with preexisting social structures. Political entrepreneurs were able to deploy this infrastructure towards a mix of militancy and political mobilization, with kinship and social ties providing the connective tissue holding the movement together: “the aboveground coalition combined an Islamic message with well-developed kinship and economic ties among two rising elite groups – the ulama and the professionals and entrepreneurs.” These have been bolstered by various other social organizations that parallel military structures.

Crucially, this constituted a primarily Maguindanaon and Maranao ethnic bloc, avoiding the broader social coalition encompassing the Sulu archipelago of the 1970s MNLF. It also had the virtue of not relying heavily on the traditional (often secular) datu elite families who had

519 “the advent of the MILF marked a shift in the profile of separatist leadership away from the feudal elite, who by then had become heavily invested in the Philippine state, to religious leaders seeking to reform local religious and cultural practices and turn away from what McKenna termed the ‘Datu problem.’” Liow, Muslim Resistance, p. 12.
523 By contrast, he argues that “the concept of a Moro nation never had strong appeal among the Muslims of Mindanao.” Bertrand, “Peace and Conflict,” p. 51.
524 McKenna, Muslim Rulers and Rebels, p. 215. An influential politician linked to MILF who successfully challenged the traditional elite, Zacaria Candao, “also had close kinship and friendship ties with the Muslim commercial and professional elites in Cotabato City and its environs. . . he encouraged the formation of Islamic-oriented family organizations among these friends and relatives.” McKenna, Muslim Rulers and Rebels, p. 215.
525 Vitug and Gloria, Under the Crescent Moon, p. 109.
526 “the MILF is much tighter and concentrated in Central Mindanao, unlike the MNLF which was spread out.” Vitug and Gloria, Under the Crescent Moon, p. 120.
their own patronage networks and interests that encouraged rapprochement with the government. There are divisions between Maguindanaon and Maranao social structure, with greater traditional centralization in the former than the latter, which apparently has been reflected in MILF organizational structure. The fact that Salamat Hashim, who led the group from 1977 until his death in 2003, has a Maguindanaon father and a Marano/Iranun mother helped keep this (already smaller than with the Tausugs) ethnic distance from becoming a serious problem. This allowed the MILF to build over time “a relatively cohesive command structure.”

Organizational cohesion helped MILF become “by far the largest and most powerful resistance group operating in the Philippines today.” During this period MILF was able to set up parallel governance structures and to even control quasi-liberated areas, with thousands of arm under arms. This does not mean that there were not challenges in the 1977-2000 period, but instead that they were comparatively much less serious than MNLF. The AFP retained an extremely heavy presence on the ground, and relied on certain local families to act to Muslim counterinsurgents, which forced MILF to deal with a high-risk military environment, while various rounds of more-and-less-serious negotiations opened the possibility of fragmentation around a peace deal. Given the highly localized, personalistic nature of politics in the Philippines, MILF has been strikingly able to hold itself together.

527 International Crisis Group, The Philippines, p. 11.
529 International Crisis Group, Southern Philippines Backgrounder, p. 10.
530 Liow, Muslim Resistance, 13.
531 Vitug and Gloria, Under the Crescent Moon, pp. 108-115.
532 Malaguiak split in 1980, losing KRC committee chairman, but MILF rebuilds popularity and support with support from Hadji Murad. McKenna suggests that “the MILF was more influential in most matters than the ‘enemy administration.”’ McKenna, Muslim Rulers and Rebels, p. 209.
533 A rather dense but detailed discussion of various of these parleys is found in Vitug and Gloria, Under the Crescent Moon.
534 Local pockets of collective action are the underpinning of a whole variety of kidnapping gangs, small militant groups, and criminal-political organizations. For instance, Ugarte, “The “Lost Command” of Julhani Jillang,” p. 312, discusses a kidnapping gang in which “the most obvious parallel between the gang and a traditional alliance is its striking proportion of kinship and friendship ties. Consanguineal and affinal relatives normally make up the core.
Contemporary MILF: Adaptation since 2000. A major political-military shock came in 1999 and 2000, when the Philippine security forces launched an offensive to retake parts of Mindanao that had fallen under MILF control. The spasmodic peace process had come to a halt, at least temporarily. After 2000, in MILF “many ground units, popularly known as ‘lost commands,’ have begun operating autonomously.” This was a clear organizational adaptation to the radically altered military environment. The MILF decentralized – yet it did not experience splitting or feuding, even as peace talks revitalized later in the 2000s.

The contrast to the MNLF after the Philippine security forces struck back in 1974-5 is apparent, with the MILF maintaining higher levels of control even though it is “so decentralised that much of what ensues is not a shadow government, but pockets of anarchy” with local commanders “whose power is rooted in pyramids of particularistic clan and tribal loyalties.” As the MILF’s units extend to the periphery of its social base in distinct ethnic areas its organizational control grows far less significant, but decentralization since 2000 has not led to splitting or open feuding. There was significant speculation after the death of Salamat Hashim in 2003 that the MILF command structure would be unable to crack down on local units that were linked to radical Islamist groups (particularly Jemaah Islamiyah, the Indonesian jihadi organization), these fears appear to have not come to fruition.

supporters of a leader, subject to his alliance’s expansion and contraction in response to changing circumstances and “occasionally to fission when a former supporter becomes an opponent.” The group’s high percentage of friendship and kinship connections was due to the residence of a majority of its members in the same basic area.”

535 Liow, Muslim Resistance, p. 21.
538 There are some ethnic differences that continue to matter, though this is a far tighter base than the MNLF. “as in Zamboanga, weak grass-roots organization in Lanao limits the institutional cohesion of the MILF and political oversight of the military wing.” International Crisis Group, Southern Philippines Backgrounder, p. 11. Zamboanga and Lanao are either ethnically mixed or more heavily Maranao. See also Ugarte, “The “Lost Command” of Julhani Jillang.”
539 International Crisis Group, Southern Philippines Backgrounder, provides extensive background: “following the death of Hashim in 2003, the MILF came to a crossroads. Its leadership is divided along various lines: tribal, generational, religious versus secular orientation, and military versus political command” (p. 2); Maranao vs.
This ability to maintain at least loose cohesion and regularity of response has endured even through several more rounds of peace talks in the 2000s, including both ceasefires and failed ceasefires.\textsuperscript{540} The MILF has explicitly focused on avoiding splits and fragmentation, showing both an awareness of the past and the capability to do something about it.\textsuperscript{541} A political economy of counterinsurgency has endured in the southern Philippines\textsuperscript{542}, but without leading to insurgent collapse or serious fissiparousness among its 10-15,000 fighters, despite concerns that the process might falter because of organizational challenges.\textsuperscript{543} The organization has also been able to distance itself from international condemnation as a terrorist group.\textsuperscript{544}

C. MNLF and MILF in Comparative Perspective

The varying social structures of the MNLF and MILF help us to account in important ways for the different organizations of each group. While both lacked significant external support after the mid-1970s, the MILF was constructed around a fairly dense clerical network that was born of the experiences of southern Muslims in the Arab world and in new religious institutions. These clerics were not just linked to one another, but also to their home communities and other social blocs within the Maguindanaon and Maranao ethnic groups. By contrast, the

\textsuperscript{540} In 2010 another round was scheduled, with some Malaysian support, after the collapse of a deal in 2008.\textsuperscript{541} A MILF spokesman writes explicitly that “the MILF does not want to repeat what happened to the MNLF which was splintered into several factions.” Salah Jubair, \textit{The Long Road to Peace: Inside the GRP-MILF Peace Process} (Cotabato City, Philippines: Institute of Bangsamoro Studies, 2007), p. 170.\textsuperscript{542} Local elites with private armies control large swathes of the southern Philippines periodically engage in violent clashes, as well as vote-rigging and COIN on the cheap. “Arroyo’s dependency on Muslim allies in those anarchic enclaves, led by the Ampatuan clan – whose dubious captive votes sparked the crisis.” (International Crisis Group, \textit{The Philippines}, p. 23). This is a broader pattern in the Philippines, as “Successive administrations have allowed warlords to dominate parts of the country, using private armies to keep voters in line and to keep communist or Muslim separatist guerrillas out.” “A Martial Plan?” The Economist, December 10, 2009.\textsuperscript{543} Stratfor notes that “the cohesion and ability of MILF leaders to keep the group together will determine the success of the government's plans.” (http://www.stratfor.com/memberships/6330/analysis/philippines_government_seeking_split_rebel_group?ip_auth_redirect=1)\textsuperscript{544} MILF is not wildly fundamentalist (Gutierrez and Guialal, \textit{“The Unfinished Jihad,”} p. 281) and has not been deemed a terrorist organization by the United States.
MNLF tried to mobilize a much more heterogeneous, if also more spontaneously supported, social coalition with numerous ethnic groups, class blocs, religious and secular factions, and geographic spread. This contributed to the recurrent fragmentation of the organization, with its weak institutionalization being exacerbated by local recruiting that enhanced the power of particular factions rather than homogenizing them in the interests of the overall organization.

While neither group was perfectly cohesive (particularly in terms of local autonomy), the MILF has dealt much better than MNLF with the challenges of both war and negotiation, managing to avoid major splits and internal dissension even as leaders have died and political contexts have varied. More broadly, Ugarte provocatively suggests that all of the state and non-state armed groups in the southern Philippines, even including the Armed Forces of the Philippines, can be valuably studied by examining variation in local social structures.545

Alternative explanations have trouble dealing with the MILF and MNLF. High levels of broad social support for the MNLF’s ideology accompanied its fracturing rather than propelling resilience and discipline; an encompassing ethno-nationalism could not elide over the deeply-rooted divisions in how different segments of the community actually organized themselves. Both the MNLF and MILF were exposed to similar Philippine state strategies across regimes combining co-optation and repression, but these similar policies led to differing insurgent outcomes. There is no evidence that MNLF’s early external support harmed it; if anything, fragmentation followed the loss of external support rather than being caused by support. Instead,

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545 Ugarte, “The “Lost Command” of Julhani Jillang,” p. 317. Furthermore, “the alliance remains the fundamental political unit in the South and that alliance networks continue to compose the building blocks of the region’s political formations. They also imply that instead of treating the MNLF, the MILF, and the Abu Sayyaf as organizations that possess centralized structures, rigid chains of command, and functional specialization, it would pay to view them as being comprised of so many decentralized coalitions, connecting and detaching, quarreling and cooperating, in response to changing circumstances in distinct areas at particular times. It might also be useful to consider the AFP in a similar light (minus the kinship ties). Doing so would help account for its blemished record on Basilan and in the Sulu archipelago, where its personnel have in certain locales and periods battled against illegal logging, gun-running, smuggling, and kidnappings, whereas in others they have been involved in these very activities as sponsors and perpetrators.”
the best explanation for the variation is found in examining the different social structures and coalitions underpinning the two groups: while the MILF's social base is narrower than the MILF, it has been denser and more overlapping both among leaders and local communities, allowing preexisting social mechanisms to be deployed for the purpose of internal control and comparatively well controlled mass expansion.

V. Rebels and States in Southeast Asia
The comparisons offered in this chapter only examine a slice of the civil wars and insurgents in the region, but they cover extensive variation on the dependent variable, the goals of armed groups, nature of counterinsurgent regimes, and some of the most bloody and important conflicts. A detailed study of all of the rebellions in SE Asia will have to await a far vaster research effort, though there is some reason to believe that my theory has relevance to a diverse array of cases within the region. And there are many obvious reasons to move beyond Asia into other contexts. There is a huge amount of room for further research in and beyond the conflicts and regions studied in this dissertation.

Nevertheless, this focused comparative study provides significant support for the argument advanced in this dissertation, even in cases where we might expect other explanations to dominate. Clearly, a focus on social networks and mobilization can tell us important things about the consequent organization of violence in the region, despite varying war aims, resource

547 One very preliminary way of assessing whether my case selection has seriously biased findings is to compare my assessment of patterns on the DV with those of a cross-national quantitative study of insurgent movements in David E. Cunningham, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Idean Salehyan, “It Takes Two: A Dyadic Analysis of Civil War Duration and Outcome” Journal of Conflict Resolution 53, no. 4 (August 2009), pp. 570-597. In their dataset, they assess 125 groups as having “Strong” centralization, 40 as having “Low” centralization, and 240 groups as being characterized by “moderate” centralization (N=408; Unclear=64). This is a very blunt coding and I have some serious concerns about the unit of analysis. Nevertheless, it is an important and valuable effort. The overall pattern they suggest, of most groups being moderately centralized, seems to be borne out by the cases in this dissertation. I would be concerned if they found a high proportion of either strongly or weakly centralized groups, which would suggest I was studying a badly biased array of cases.
flows, and links to the state. In most of the cases studied, social structures channeled and shaped mass mobilization amidst shared grievances, determining which organizations could emerge as institutionalized war-fighting machines, and which faltered the weight of their internal social contradictions. External support played an important role as a military and organizational resource rather than encouraging predation and loot-seeking. The specific empirical manifestation of social bases varied across societies – from localized peasant associations in the northern Philippines to clerical networks in the southern Philippines to family networks in Aceh to coalitions of veterans, students and rural notables in East Timor. Yet these different empirical examples can be categorized and compared according to more abstract social-structural characteristics, revealing more fundamental social dynamics that are masked by cultural differences.

Alternative explanations can help us explain some of these cases, but none do well systematically. Mass popular support was clearly insufficient to forge robust organizations, whether in the Philippines (HMB), Malaya (MCP), the southern Philippines (MNLF), or East Timor (pre-1985 Falintil). Interestingly, in East Timor, organizational cohesion and control was only forged after a decade of conflict and a series of feuds and purges, despite undeniable mass popular support. Most of the groups studied provided no social services to their supporting population, regardless of their level of organizational control. Similarly, external resources and illicit economies did not lead to predation and thuggishness the way that greed/resource determinist theories predict. Quite the opposite, in fact: these were essential to the organization-building task. Identifying hawks, doves, and clear ex ante ideological differences as a means of explaining splits and feuds is enormously difficult, and many of the incentives of splitters appear
to have focused on organizational control, personal advancement, and factional rivalry rather than *ex ante* disagreement over high politics.

Organizational ideologies were certainly important in the Viet Minh case for explaining how the ICP social base at its core was able to regenerate itself, and to a lesser extent in the Malayan case for explaining how the MCP was able to maintain its survival. Yet in both cases, endogenous network creation was enormously difficult. In the MCP, there was never a firm overlapping network base, but instead a set of socially-diffuse and internally divided leaders; in the ICP, failed and highly fragmented rebellions in 1930-1 and 1940 showed the difficulties of creating a new revolutionary network in the face of repression and risk. A set of highly contingent events converged to forge the ICP and Viet Minh, from a favorable shift in political context with the collapse of French and Japanese power to the individual leadership qualities of Ho Chi Minh. By contrast to the ICP/Viet Minh, the Huks could not convert the Marxist-Leninist blueprint into actual organizational robustness. Studying when and how organizational ideologies diffuse and are successfully acted provide is an important area for future research.
Chapter 8
Conclusion: Studying Insurgent Organizations

Insurgent groups are intrinsically complex phenomena to explain. They draw on social support but shape and manipulate it to their own ends; they both challenge the state and are forced to react by its policies; they seek weapons and money through myriad distinct channels that lead them away from rebellion into crime and geopolitical maneuvering; they claim to represent broad political aspirations but often engage in intra-community violence and coercion. The argument and evidence I have offered in the preceding chapters allow a set of conclusions about insurgent organization but leave many unanswered questions that can be profitably explored in future research. This chapter summarizes what we have learned and what important questions remain to be studied. It then outlines the implications of these findings for policy makers and interested citizens.

I. Empirical Findings

Here I briefly pull together the empirical material covered in the previous four chapters and assess their match with the theoretical argument advanced in Chapter 3. There is fairly strong support for a focus on social networks and external support as important determinants of organizational cohesion. Yet there are some prominent cases that this theory cannot persuasively explain and some unexpected mechanisms that emerged in the empirical research. I discuss both successes and failures of my theory. I then consider the virtues and limits of alternative explanations.

Table 8.1 offers an overview of the support each case provides for my theory. When the general predictions of my theory are borne out with reliable data and are not better explained by an alternative theory, I code strong support. When the theory unambiguously fails to predict the outcome, I code weak/no support. When the predictions are only partially borne out, data is too
sparse to have great confidence, or it is difficult to plausibly dismiss alternative arguments, I
code unclear/mixed support. 18 of the 26 cases studied in this thesis offer strong support for the
argument. Given the complexities, strategic interactions, and contingencies involved in these
conflicts that is a reasonable success rate. But in 7 cases the evidence is unclear or the findings
mixed, and in the case of the Viet Minh there is a clear failure on the part of my theory. I now
turn to studying the successes, failures, and in-between cases.

Table 8.1: Overview of Findings

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<th>Conflict</th>
<th>Strong Support</th>
<th>Unclear/Mixed</th>
<th>Weak/No Support</th>
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<td>MILF</td>
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<td>S. Philippines</td>
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18/26 = Strong support for theory
7/26 = Unclear/mixed support for theory
1/26 = Weak/no support for theory
A. Support for the Theory

The overall pattern of the cases supports the argument I have advanced. Of the cases studied in Northern Ireland, the eventual outcomes and intervening processes leading to the Provisional IRA, INLA, Real IRA, and Official IRA are largely, though obviously not exclusively, in line with expectations. There is not much data on the Continuity IRA and it hard to draw any firm conclusions from its trajectory. The specific structure of social ties between the key insurgent entrepreneurs in these wars played a major role in determining the structure of the organizations that emerged. Tight family and party links were the underpinning of both the Provisional and Official IRAs, while external support allowed the PIRA to gain a decisive military edge over its weak rivals in the OIRA. Combined with divergences in political viewpoints, this allowed the PIRA to become more cohesive more quickly than the renascent Official IRA at war. External aid from the American diaspora was provided extremely early (and decisively) in the war before there was any credible track record through which to assess the cohesion and organizational structure of either PIRA or OIRA. Instead, the decision calculus of key diasporic mobilizers was based on ideology: the more traditional republicanism of PIRA was seen as more comfortable and less alien than OIRA’s left-republicanism.

The Real IRA and INLA were built around socially heterogeneous collections of defectors, criminals, and inexperienced young men, allowing easy infiltration, encouraging defection and dissension, and therefore minimizing the ability of leaders to construct enduring organizational structures. Local pockets of collective action and individual free agents were the primary organizers of these new groups. The ideological vision of the Real IRA was not radically different than that of the early Provisional IRA but not only was the Catholic population less interested in war, but the networks that RIRA could call upon were much more diffuse. Though
obviously networks and organizations changed and evolved over time, we can trace clear
continuities across decades and very different political contexts. The high levels of detail in the
case allow for quite detailed process evidence.

In the Kashmir conflict, Pakistani external aid was clearly driven by a strategic-
ideological logic in which the security services supported groups adhering to the Pakistani
strategic goal of the day. This interest changed over time, and support for groups was clearly not
driven by their prior cohesion or fragmentation: in fact, Pakistan dropped some groups that had
shown operational promise, and supported others that had a history of fractiousness. Among the
indigenous Kashmiri groups, the JKLF, Hizbul Mujahideen, and Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen clearly fit
the theoretical model, while the Muslim Janbaz Force, Al-Umar Mujahideen, and Al Jehad
appear to but are subject to severe data constraints. The social infrastructure of the Jamaat-e-
Islami party provided a ready-made base for Hizb militant mobilization despite the non-violent
previous history of the Jamaat and its relatively low popularity. Combined with Pakistani aid, the
Hizb as the closest group to a cohesive organization among the domestic group in Kashmir.

By contrast, the JKLF’s socially-diffuse social structure undermined its popular appeal
and mass mobilization, while the weak parties and mass movements that generated other armed
groups lacked the social integration necessary to forge robust institutions. These networks and
institutions long predated the onset of the 1988 conflict, and often had roots in non-violent
mobilization strategies carried out decades prior. This should minimize concerns about
endogeneity, particularly given how sudden and unexpected the onset of the insurgency was:
insurgent entrepreneurs had to scramble to mobilize whatever social structures they could rapidly
call upon, rather than being able to carefully construct new yet robustly embedded networks.
The primarily Pakistani groups fall loosely into expected trajectories. The diffuse and internally-divided nature of (non-violent and violent) Deobandi politics are reflected in the major Deobandi armed groups, Harkat-ul Mujahideen and Jaish-e-Mohammed. These groups were largely held together by state patronage, which provided incentives for cooperation despite social divisions and localized bases of collective action. Shifts in Pakistani state policy triggered fragmentation and disarray in these groups. By contrast, Lashkar-e-Taiba became a cohesive group by leveraging state support alongside social mobilization. As I note below, Lashkar is an ambiguous case because of data limitations about its earliest days: aspects of the LeT trajectory are in line with theoretical predictions, but others are not. The comparative context and data within this comparison are less appropriate for firm conclusions than among the indigenous Kashmiri groups, but they are nevertheless strongly suggestive.

The Kashmir and N. Ireland within-conflict comparisons thus reveal fairly strong support for my argument. But the Sri Lanka comparisons of Chapter 6 are less definitive. We can see a bonding network social core at the heart of the LTTE and observe the impact of external support on all of the Tamil groups. TELO, EROS, and LTTE fit quite firmly within the explanatory ambit of the argument, combining either socially-dense or diffuse social bases with greater or lesser degrees of external support from India and the diaspora. TELO took a state-reliant route, relying on Indian patronage in the absence of robust social mechanisms, EROS was highly factionalized, and the LTTE mixed a clear regional-caste command base with large-scale external aid to become first a consensus-contingent and then a cohesive group. Indian external support was provided based primarily on strategic goals and the personal relationships that Indian elites had with Tamil militant leaders. India and some Tamil political party leaders enthusiastically supported the fractious TELO, and then later the EPRLF. The LTTE’s cohesion
was not a ticket to the highest levels of Indian state sponsorship. This mitigates concerns about
the endogeneity or reverse causality of state support.

However, as I discuss below there are cases that do not work as well, and variables that
also mattered even in the cases that are correctly predicted (particularly in the LTTE). EPRLF
and PLOT are more ambiguous – in addition to severe data limitations, their outcomes have
elements that both support and disconfirm my argument. In the case of the LTTE, there is some
endogeneity in the mobilization of the diaspora. I discuss these problems in the section below.

Finally, the Southeast Asian chapter provides a valuable external validity check that
introduces new cases with extensive variation in the nature of conflicts. The fact that most of the
cases support my argument is extremely reassuring: the trajectories of GAM, Fretilin/Falintil,
MNLF, MILF, and the Huks all align with theoretical predictions. MNLF and the Huks
mobilized around clear coalition social bases, alongside high levels of popular support and
significant grassroots mobilization, and this social underpinning made it difficult to convert
popularity into institutionalization. Factionalization thus occurred, in the MNLF case most
dramatically once external material support for its violence disappeared in 1975-6. Fretilin
initially had a coalition social base, which led to serious problems of internal control and
discipline as risks increased. Over time, attrition and purges created more social homogeneity
and consequently growing internal control, though the military wing of the movement declined
in importance. Consensus was forged but only after the social heterogeneity of the initial base
was wiped out through war and feuding.

MILF’s clerical base (with leaders linked both to one another and to local communities)
and GAM’s ability to tap into strong preexisting family and Darul Islam networks provided
ready-made social institutions and relationships that generated comparatively the high elite
cooperation and significant local incorporation marking consensus-contingent groups that could expand without too much internal fracturing. External support for GAM from Libya and the diaspora was also very helpful and clearly improved cohesion as the organization was able to bring in both trained cadres and guns and money. As noted below, however, Viet Minh and to a lesser extent the MCP in Southeast Asia are not as well explained by this argument, though external support from the Viet Minh and its lack for the MCP help to account for variation between these two groups.

B. Failures of the Theory

My theory offers valuable insight into the bulk of cases studied in this dissertation. But there are several cases that offer either no support for the argument or mixed support. The fact that these cases exist is both good and bad. Obviously it is not ideal to have failures for the argument. On the other hand, this clearly indicates that the theory and its empirical assessment are not built on post hoc coding or tautology: we can separate out the independent variables and their related processes from the dependent variable of interest. Failures are part of the scholarly enterprise and should be explicitly discussed.

The most worrying problems come in the Sri Lanka case. Some of this may be due to serious data constraints, but even leaving these aside there are reasons for concern. First, there is a huge amount of agency at work in both cohesive and fragmented groups. Prabhakaran in the LTTE was clearly identified as having an organizational vision very different from many of his contemporaries; he could have chosen a different strategy which may have led to a different trajectory for the Tigers. On the other end of the spectrum, Uma Maheswaran’s PLOT did draw on a caste base, though it was a more socially-diffuse caste and social category than the LTTE’s Karaiyar, and yet ended up highly fragmented. Importantly, much of PLOT’s trajectory appears
to have been due to Uma’s personality – he alienated Indian politicians and bureaucrats and became obsessed with purges and internal control in ways that actively undermined organizational cohesion. Had Uma been more like Prabhakaran it is possible that PLOT would have been a very different kind of organization.

A second problem in Sri Lanka comes with the EPRLF. I have found it hard to credibly code the independent variable and dependent variable for this group in a way similar to the MCP in Malaya. EPRLF did hold its elite core together but suffered high levels of local autonomy and defiance. It was built out of some mix of student and lower-caste networks that I have too little data on to make credible statements. This shows that the measurement techniques in this thesis are insufficient for some of the cases I would like to explain. These cases remain stuck in a somewhat nebulous intermediate category that defies easy categorization.

Finally, while some of the early diasporic support was provided because of ideological and strategic sympathy for the LTTE”s policies, this aid was later institutionalized and augmented by the Tigers’ organization. The LTTE reached out into the diaspora, using its preexisting social and organizational power to target and manipulate the diaspora, and thus success to some extent led to further success abroad. The contrast between the sources of Indian state support and the sources of Tamil diasporic support suggests that state sponsors may be able to act more autonomously and strategically than diasporas.

In the Pakistani component of the Kashmir case, Lashkar-e-Taiba is not a clear failure but also not a clear success for the theory. Its support by the Pakistani state provided an exceptionally favorable political context that LeT used to endogenously create quite a bit of its underpinning networks. There was still some element of preexisting collective action that was leveraged to form these new networks, but this case shows just how important political context
can be. However, the counterexamples of Harkat-ul Mujahideen and Jaish-e-Mohammed show that political context alone is not determinative. The true story of Lashkar’s rise and evolution remains to be told and future historical research may reveal new data that would let us better examine its link to theoretical predictions. We especially need more research on the exogenous and endogenous networks that the LeT mobilized in the 1980s and early 1990s.

In Northern Ireland, the most important empirical problem is that some of the organizations emerged from others, pulling away certain networks but not others. This raises dangers of endogeneity because it is hard to code social bases independent of the splits of the Continuity and Real IRAs. This leads to a lack of independenc between our different cases. However, the Provisional IRA, Official IRA, and even INLA all started their insurgent activities fairly close to the onset of the war, allowing us to get at least a rough *ex ante* sense of the pre-onset social networks that would come to underpin their wars. Helpfully these three groups form the focus of the chapter. Moreover, even in the CIRA and RIRA cases we see the key mobilizers emerging from networks and factions that had a longer history: the old-school traditionalists of CIRA and S. Armagh hardliners of RIRA can be found operating collectively well before the respective splits.

Southeast Asia presents two major challenges to my theory. The most obvious is the Viet Minh/ICP, which built up communist networks over time even in the face of consistent state pressure. The forces of communist organizational ideology, nationalism, and individual leadership allowed intentional and endogenous network formation. As I note in Chapter 7, this was only possible over decades and with the help of exogenous changes in political context, but the overall outcome nevertheless presents a challenge to my arguments. The MCP in Malaya is a somewhat less serious but nonetheless important failure of my theory. Like the EPRLF it is hard
to clearly code the MCP for both empirical and conceptual reasons. There are elements of support for my theory: in particular, the socially-diffuse MCP leadership contributed to internal problems, despite significant grassroots Chinese support, and the lack of significant external support was highlighted even by MCP leaders as devastating. However, the difficulty of coding and the clear importance of British COIN policies (especially population resettlement) in breaking the MCP caution against claiming too much from this case for my arguments.

Thus there some cases in which my theory has serious problems. Clear failure is relatively rare (Viet Minh) but there are several cases in which the theory’s importance and/or empirical measurement are open to question. These outliers and ambiguous cases show the complexity of insurgent organization-building, which is heavily influenced by a wide variety of variables and processes. Tight, structured comparisons, detailed evidence, and a range of cases are the strategies I have used to deal with possible confounding variables and alternative explanations, but counterexamples and disconfirming evidence remain. We clearly have much more work to do.

C. Assessing Alternative Theories

I am nevertheless confident that the theoretical argument of this thesis performs much better than alternative explanations, especially across cases. In Chapter 2 I outlined a set of existing arguments and in the subsequent chapters I assessed their explanatory power within the various clusters of comparisons. Here I summarize their explanatory value across the different comparisons.

_Greed and Natural Resources._ I found little support for “greed” theories because external support tended to increase internal cohesion and control rather than undermining discipline. The existing conventional wisdom on resource-rich groups appears to suffer from serious selection
biases, based on case work focused on Africa and/or regressions interpreted through theoretical frames influenced by these African conflicts. The range of variation is much richer and broader, indicating a need for more sophisticated studies of how conflicts work. There certainly are groups studied in this thesis that resembled the undisciplined, loot-seeking organizations of the greed model, particularly INLA in Northern Ireland and PLOT and TELO in Sri Lanka. Yet some of these groups were resource-poor (INLA, PLOT). And alongside these organizations were resource-rich groups with comparatively high levels of internal control, especially PIRA, LTTE, Hizbul Mujahideen, the Viet Minh, and to a lesser extent GAM. Resource-poor groups varied in their cohesion, from JKLF on one end to MCP and Fretilin on the other.

Though more work is necessary on this question, as discussed below, the findings in this dissertation offer support to the “capacity” mechanisms that links resources to increased organizational capacity.¹ Scholars who have examined the effects of resources have underestimated their utility for military operations and organizational control, while tending to focus their research too much on the weak/failed state context. They have also linked violence to organization in narrow ways: cohesion and internal control are compatible with both rights-respecting restraint and with the strategic application of extreme violence against civilians and rivals (a la the LTTE). Patterns of violence are not a simple by-product of organizational form; instead, organizational form, caused in part by access to resources, may provide a menu for choice in the repertoire of tactics and strategies, from passive resistance to ethnic cleansing. Indeed, we may see the most extreme and calculated atrocities by the most disciplined and committed state and non-state forces, whether or not they have access to drug money and external sponsors. The far broader, richer variation outlined in this study shows the need for

more systematic, but still detailed, comparative studies across different regions and contexts. More cases, more comparisons, and new theories are likely to significantly alter our understanding of the relationship between resources, organization, and insurgency beyond the simple but underspecified contemporary conventional wisdom.

*Hearts and Minds.* Arguments linking mass popular support, whether of a class, ethnic, or religious character, to organizational cohesion did not have consistent support. Popular support is obviously important, but at the level of organization-building there was not a clear connection between having wide popular backing and being able to construct robust, enduring institutions. Instead, specific overlapping social networks were best able to create strong organizational structures that could then expand into mass mobilization. Groups that engaged in mass expansion without robust internal social integration and significant military power were actually harmed by the attempt to grow, even if they were spontaneously supported by the people, because of the internal fissures and indiscipline this encouraged. The collective action challenges of high-risk insurgency are severe and only certain social structures and resource flows could reliably surmount those. The JKLF, Huks, MNLF, and Official IRA, among others, all had a respectable level of popular support but could not convert that into robust institutionalization. Some of the most cohesive and disciplined groups provided essentially no discernible social services or goods to the population, which calls into question the centrality of these dynamics to organizations.²

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² This is in contrast to some of the arguments made in Eli Berman, *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism.* Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2009. Aspinall explicitly makes this point several times in his excellent study of GAM in Aceh, for instance. Edward Aspinall, *Islam and Nation: Separatist Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009). Even when groups did provide these services (Lashkar in Pakistan, LTTE in Sri Lanka) this often followed organization-building and success rather than preceding it, showing that there may be spurious correlations and reverse causality at work in existing studies.
This means that bonding network social bases are more valuable than diffuse mass popular support, at least in the capable/resolved state context. This calls into question some of the intuitive conventional wisdoms in the study of civil war. Insurgency is not a popularity contest and it should not be analogized to an election; the average citizen has agency to assist rebels or inform on them, but his or her options are nevertheless extremely tightly constrained by the ability of both governments and armed groups to impose lethal punishment. Appealing to a plurality or majority of popular sentiment is only effective so long as there are organizational receptacles for mass sentiment. In the absence of organizational structures, spontaneous support will wane, fissures and internal divisions will rise, and movements will falter in the face of state repression and co-optation. The cases studied, while focused on a particular context, suggest the primacy of social ties over mass politics in explaining which movements can survive as unified entities over time in the face of intense risk.

*State Policy and Political Context.* Most state policies were not a clear predictor of organizational outcomes. Within the same war, at the same time, fighting the same security forces, within the same electoral system and political economy, we nevertheless observed dramatic variation in insurgent cohesion. Static macro-level variables cannot explain micro- or meso-level variation. There was little evidence that specific state divide-and-rule or manipulation strategies systematically caused splintering and factionalism, since states seemed to often lack good intelligence or fine-grained capabilities to implement such strategies. In Malaya, there was an important role for British counterinsurgency in controlling and isolating the population, but this case was not representative of the other cases examined in the thesis. Fine-grained state policies may matter in specific cases, but this study does not reveal any systematic patterns in the effects of state COIN on insurgent fragmentation: some groups shattered in the face of relatively
unimpressive government efforts (Huks), while others at least roughly held themselves together despite sustained and highly resolved COIN (PIRA, Hizb, MILF, GAM, Fretilin). The most interesting theoretical puzzle is not why insurgents cohere in the face of weak, unimpressive, or uninterested governments, but instead when and why cohesion can endure when battling highly-motivated state security apparatuses.

Political context, however, did matter across and within cases: when states were weak and/or apathetic, insurgents could use a wider range of mechanisms for forging internal cohesion and control. Causal heterogeneity increased as political opportunities broadened: the Viet Minh, for instance, were able to take full advantage of the vacuum of power left by the collapse of French and then Vietnamese power in Vietnam. By contrast, the rapid hammer blow response by the Indian state to the Kashmiri insurgency created very different pressures on nascent armed groups. However, this finding is in line with the expectations I outlined in Chapter 3: the importance and effect of network and external support variables varies according to political context. Integrating broad variation in political opportunities structure was a way of trying to account for how the presence of state power influences barriers to collective action.

_Hawks and Doves._ Theories relying on distinctions between hawks and doves, or hardliners and moderates, were, first, difficult to actually test and, second, did not appear to play a central role in explaining organizational trajectories. Ex ante, ideology at the level of individual commanders proved enormously difficult to ascertain. Even when possible to plausibly measure, however, such ideologies appeared quite fluid and malleable to organizational and strategic interests: apparent hard-liners were able to come up with plausible rationales for joining the side of the state, and apparent doves often stayed in the fight despite possible opportunities to defect. Relying on theories of this sort may lead to an ambiguous and unproductive guessing-game of
insurgent Kremlinology. The building blocks of insurgent groups appear to center far more on social ties and loyalties than on simple alignment along a spectrum of ideological positions.

**Endogenous Mechanisms.** One argument that is not precisely an alternative explanation is the claim that there is so much endogeneity once wars begin that it is impossible to offer clear ex ante predictions based on pre-war or static variables. No explanations based on structural or pre-war variables can explain variation because identities and interests change once conflicts begin, new grievances are generated by the process of fighting, strategic interactions and adaptations cause changes in organizational structure, and shifts in power lead to shifts in group calculations. A simple variable-based approach, we are told, cannot handle this complexity. And there is much to this claim: war creates its own dynamics. Fighters are pulled into war through contingent events, organizations and states are locked in sophisticated competitions, and strategic calculations are changing according to context.

Yet an embrace of endogeneity has two serious costs. First, it elides over striking continuities between war and peace. While constructivism is the new norm among scholars of identity politics, there is extensive research suggesting that social networks and political identities can be extremely sticky even in the face of determined state efforts to change them. In Ireland, Kashmir, and Sri Lanka, pre-war social structures were undeniably the foundational base of insurgent groups, with major consequences for their consequent trajectories. GAM in Aceh, Fretilin in East Timor, and the MILF in the Philippines all explicitly called upon social loyalties and relations that had been formed (through a variety of pathways) prior to war onset. The correlations exist and the causal mechanisms can be traced out, suggesting that there is an

important role for social-structural variables in explanations of insurgent organization even deep into a war. The ability of groups to adapt to endogenous interactions is shaped in profound ways by their bases in pre-war social institutions. An exclusive focus on endogeneity leads us to ignore the dense layers of identity, mobilization, and social interaction, built up through human agency and structural changes over decades and generations, that constitute societies at war. History simply does not begin anew once the first shot is fired.

Second, a focus on endogeneity makes it difficult to explain variation within a tightly shared context. Many fighters experience endogenous processes unique to conflict: shared combat, time in prison, proximity to fighters, exposure to state repression, shifts in balances of power. Yet there are clear divergences even among group of fighters and organizations experiencing similar endogenous war-time pressures. Instead, we see endogenous processes being channeled into very different types of outcomes through variation in the prior lines of collective action through which new recruits and new incentives are channeled. There is change and adaptation but the preexisting social infrastructure structured whether or not endogenous processes contributed to cohesion or fragmentation.

Some aggrieved prisoners became committed militants, while others became common criminals; some revenge-seekers became loyal adherents of a central organization, while others acted as autonomous vigilantes; some calculating opportunists created their own new groups while their similarly calculating neighbors joined the organization of their friends and family. In Northern Ireland, for instance, people who were neighbors, went to the same prisons, and dealt with the same security forces and political context nevertheless formed very distinct types of armed groups. Endogeneity is so rife and pervasive in war that we need to find more systematic

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4 This reflects a historical institutionalist approach: the foundational circumstances of organizations’ formation has an enduring, though certainly not determinative, effect.

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explanations that can make sense of dramatic variation, even if these structural explanations are invariably incomplete and partial.

II. Surprises, New Questions, and Future Research

In addition to simply assessing the overall balance of support for the theory, the detailed case studies and comparisons in the previous chapters have revealed some interesting surprises that suggest possible lines of future research. Insurgency is a rich area for scholars to explore, integrating insights from comparative politics, international relations, and security studies. In-depth studies of militant groups reveal a whole array of unanswered questions that could underpin fruitful future work that would add significantly to our understanding of civil wars. This section outlines potentially valuable areas for the next generation of research on insurgent organizations.

First, there can be an important role for external sanctuary as a site for bolstering or building social ties, though the effect is not consistent across cases. Training in Libya and Malaysia was helpful in consolidating organizational control within GAM, the training camps of Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir were helpful for homogenization within the Hizbul Mujahideen, and time in Moscow and China provided an opportunity for the ICP to indoctrinate willing cadres in its organizational ideology. This was not a consistent effect, however, since the non-LTTE Tamil militants did not increase their social integration during their time in India and training camps of non-Hizb Kashmiri groups in Pakistan did not contribute to their cohesion. Nevertheless, this suggests a far broader and more diverse role of external support than simply providing guns, cash, and safety; it can also contribute to forging or consolidating the socialization and obedience of fighting cadres.
This is not isolated to simply these cases, as the experience of Iraq’s Shiite SCIRI in its Iranian exile suggests: time and sanctuary out of Saddam Hussein’s reach allowed the organization to build and bolster new generations of fighters and loyalists that then underpinned militia and party mobilization in post-2003 Iraq. The transnational diffusion of ideologies, organizational blueprints, and inspiration clearly played a role in both Muslim revolt in Kashmir and Communist rebellions in Southeast Asia. Future research should study the processes through which internationalization can influence numerous characteristics of insurgents beyond the purely military or diplomatic.

Second, the level of uncertainty and disagreement about future outcomes and strategies was extremely high throughout most of the course of most of these wars. Rather than engaging in well-informed and smoothly updated assessments of the balance of power and resolve, both states and their foes were driven by misperceptions, mistakes, and motivated biases that contributed to keeping up the fight even as organizations faltered, rebels grew more or less powerful, and policies proved counterproductive. Much of the recent literature in studies of political violence adopts a parsimonious, rationalist bargaining approach. This has its virtues, but they seem outweighed by the actual empirical processes of decision-making within armed groups, where factionalism, confusion, and myopia have slowed or even halted rationalist updating of beliefs (the LTTE being the clearest example). Getting inside insurgent and counterinsurgent policymaking will be essential for credible research on war duration, termination, and strategic change, rather than a reliance on “stylized facts” or aggregate large-N data. Assumptions about the origins of decisions need to be compared to the actual incentives of real insurgent actors. Field research and archival work can be complemented by other methods, but they cannot be fully replaced.
Third, the lines between “normal” and insurgent politics are often, though not always, quite blurry. In the Philippines, Indonesia, and Northern Ireland, we clearly see links between militants, politicians, and even, on some occasions, government officials. Aspects of this shadowy nexus can also be seen at times in Kashmir and Sri Lanka. Corruption, collusion, and the coordination of bullets and ballots were integral aspects of a number of these wars and this calls into question firm lines between legitimate and illicit political activity. More broadly, an intertwining of politics and insurgency can be seen in Pakistan (especially Karachi), the Indian Northeast, Iraq, and Afghanistan, among other cases.

An open question thus emerges about what the effect on insurgent movements and organizations of this dynamic is: it could make cohesion more difficult because of the more heterogeneous range of tasks and goals, or encouraged because of the broader and deeper political mobilization that such a strategy allows. Studying this topic also opens insights into bigger questions of ethnic politics, counterinsurgency, and conflict resolution. This kind of research would also have clear policy implications for societies trying to use elections and political representation to reduce political violence. The cases studied here at least tentatively suggest that as long as insurgents and counterinsurgents remain armed and active, electoral politics can become yoked to violence, coercion, and manipulation. Democracy does not appear to be a panacea for societies at war with themselves.

Fourth, there is clearly some role, under some circumstances, for ideologies to create deep organizational commitments and worldviews that mitigate against fragmentation. The Viet Minh case is the clearest example in the case of Marxism-Leninism, but an ideology of organization also lay at the root of the structure of the Jamaat-e-Islami (even as a non-violent party). More broadly, the organizational blueprint of the Muslim Brotherhood has been
influential in providing a means of political mobilization in the Muslim world. Ideologies that intertwine political worldviews with clear prescriptions for how the pursuit of this ideology should be organized deserve more attention. In particular, we need to explore where the organizational ideologies come from, why they are successfully adopted in some places rather than others, and whether they can be shaped or used as a tool of peace-building. This is potentially related to the international diffusion dynamics I mentioned above and will require detailed cross-regional tracing of how organizational ideologies rise, spread, and disappear.

Fifth, tentative evidence suggests that involvement in illicit economic activities may not lead to the predatory organizational decay that Weinstein and others suggest. The previous evidence should make it clear that external state sponsorship is not a sufficient nor necessary condition for organizational decay. This may also be true of other sources of materiel. The Provisional IRA was linked to extortion and smuggling and the LTTE to smuggling and criminal networks, yet neither seem to have suffered from internal problems of control that were in any clear way linked to these activities. They did not become greedy looters but instead maintained political focus and military discipline. Other cases suggest that this not an isolated pattern, including the Taliban in Afghanistan, FARC in Colombia, the NSCN factions in Nagaland, and ULFA in Assam. Some of these latter groups have had clear links to the drug trade as well. Yet while they have pursued a variety of agendas, they simply do not resemble African armed groups driven by natural resources like drugs and diamonds. This variation deserves much more detailed future investigation as we try to unpack the connection between economics and conflict more broadly, and between resources and insurgent organization more specifically.

Sixth, there are interesting comparisons worth exploring between insurgents and state militaries. The similarities are clearest when dealing with militaries in the developing world that
have been forced to construct new institutions in the wake of independence. In many cases, these armies actually emerged from insurgent movements and can be profitably studied as organizationally similar. Controlling internal factions and managing institution-building were challenges that faced militaries throughout post-colonial Asia and Africa. We can also find somewhat looser analogies to the literature on more professionalized, institutionalized armies in great powers. Studies of doctrine, decision-making, and organizational culture can be valuably applied to insurgent groups to understand why they adopt particular policies. There is unexplored space for a broad comparative politics of armed organization, drawing on insights from military sociology, organization theory, security studies, ethnic politics, and social network theory, among others.

Seventh, we need better understanding of change over time. The argument and findings presented here rely on path-dependence, foundational moments, and social-structural mechanisms that are not well suited to explaining the evolution of institutions. The social base of an organization is a “wasting asset” that structures the options available to insurgent entrepreneurs but that may diminish in importance over years and decades as strategic interactions and endogeneity eat into the trajectory of a group. In Chapter 3 I did outline a set of mechanisms that can cause shifts, from change in external sponsorship to COIN policies that shatter networks, but these mechanisms are not the focus of the thesis. Explaining endogenous change in a rigorous and systematic way is enormously difficult and I have not been up to the task of doing so here. Nevertheless, it is perhaps the most important next frontier for students of insurgency.

Eight, the study of social networks needs to be more clearly focused on violent organization. Most of models and theories that have been developed focus on labor markets and
economic exchange or primarily non-violent political protests, not the very different context of violent conflict. There is enormously promising research to be done on how armed groups (both states and their foes) try to develop social networks to gain intelligence without in turn becoming permeable: weak ties may be deployed outwards to suck in new information, but strong ties may determine actual membership in the organization to reduce infiltration. Similarly, brokerage may be used to construct new alliances but the core of the organization may be constituted by closure. Organizations must also assess whether redundant ties are good (to overcome attrition and maintain operations) or bad (become they provide more possible informants). Different groups may assess these trade-offs between information procurement and internal betrayal or attrition differently. This dissertation has largely focused on strong ties and only highly embedded forms of brokerage as the core of insurgent organizationa, but the broader realm of insurgent behavior surely involves far more intricate combinations of social structure and strategy and is an open area for future theorizing and research.5

Finally, there are methodological implications from the preceding study. I have found a medium-N approach valuable because it provides enough cases to mitigate severe selection biases (though many potential biases certainly remain) but does not sacrifice too much detail. The combination of different comparisons and of different types of comparisons (cross-national, sub-national, and within-conflict) allows for fairly tight controls that allow us to persuasively discount alternative explanations for the variation under study. By contrast, previous studies have been built around either a couple of case studies or extremely blunt quantitative studies that are too aggregated and thin to be compelling. Scholars could benefit from a mix of different kinds of comparisons, levels of analysis, and numbers of cases. There is a potentially important role for quantitative analyses that can account for prior social structures, political context, and the time-

5 I thank Jonathan Obert for his insights into this issue.
varying dynamics of external support. Productive steps in this direction have been done sub-
nationally. However, quantitative scholars should focus on getting concepts and measurement
right before they try to draw serious conclusions from cross-national data.

### III. Implications for Policy and Analysis

The arguments and findings in this dissertation have been focused on explaining variation
in insurgent outcomes within a comparative perspective. This study has important implications
for policymakers and analysts, though obviously any policies should be made with appreciation
of the details of a particular case. The basic argument I have offered is somewhat sympathetic to
the “French view” of COIN, but with a heavy sociological edge. Civil wars are competitions in
organized violence, in which competing groups of men with guns try to construct enduring
institutions that can both generate and control mass mobilization. One of the most important
determinants of who can successfully build those institutions is the social relationships and
structures within which insurgent entrepreneurs are embedded. This social infrastructure can
create the basis for winning hearts and minds and engaging in grassroots mobilization, but in the
context of a capable, resolved state it will be hard to use mass aspiration as a basis for disciplined
institutionalization. External material support fuels insurgent military power while also tending
to centralize internal control: indeed, external aid can be a more effective and helpful form of
support than grassroots mobilization.

*Conflict Prevention.* We can first consider whether this dissertation’s findings can
contribute to preventing wars. The argument here emphasizes the importance of the very early
days of an insurgency when recruitment and mobilization are fluid and tentative. Once networks

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begin to mobilize and entrepreneurs begin to solidify organizations, conflicts can take on a
dynamic of their own that is harder to end. Given this potential for rapid escalation,
policymakers and mediators should focus on trying to stop preexisting social structures from
flipping to militancy by offering compromises, controlling government forces and paramilitaries,
and trying to minimize miscommunications.

To this end, family structures, political parties, and religious organizations, among others,
may provide a point of entry for preventing the escalation of social mobilization and consequent
costly insurgency. The ability of key network members to coordinate and control collective
action offers advantages in tamping down wars early, though this will obviously depend on
whether these social structures are interested in cutting a deal. This process of early negotiation
and communication is likely to require significant commitments and bargains that can slow or
halt cascades of violence and organization-building. Such policies also will need fairly detailed
intelligence that pinpoints who is influential within societies, what their interests are, and how to
contact them. Early interventions of this sort can avoid escalation by identifying and working
with the key sources of social power on the ground. This argument loosely tracks arguments that
put their focus on civil society as a means of conflict management, but my sense is that the most
useful social partners are those who could also be the most effective insurgents. Third-party,
bien-pensant NGOs are helpful but likely to be less helpful than the street gangs, cadre parties,
and families that have the potential to “tip” into militant mobilization.

*International Involvement in Internal Conflicts.* International interventions and
manipulations are common in civil war. Yet the impact of interventions remains hazy. Some
scholars claim that international peacekeeping and third-monitoring works, while others don’t,
and some scholars argue that external intervention can end wars while others suggest that it
exacerbates problems. In the policy realm, this is often a highly political question: those who emphasize international dynamics are accused of ignoring underlying root causes and scapegoating external actors, while those who emphasize domestic processes are painted as too naïve or soft to recognize the power politics driving insurgencies. This thesis tries to strike a balance. It argues that external support, at least in the capable/resolved state context, can have powerful effects on organizational cohesion and control that allow armed groups to generate more military power relative to the incumbent state. However, without a dense, overlapping internal social network, such assistance cannot be efficiently deployed and thus may not provide sufficiently helpful to hold together a socially-divided and diffuse organization.

There are several relevant implications for policymakers and analysts. First, external actors do need serious attention. This obviously includes neighboring states and other possible sponsors, but also diasporas and transnational networks that can fuel armed groups. Civil wars can involve very high stakes for neighboring states and diasporas, so it should not be surprising to see intervention and manipulation. Policy responses to civil conflicts must take account of the international context because insurgents are likely to go looking for external support as they battle incumbent regimes.

Second, policymakers should focus on the specific mechanisms through which this support matters for sustaining organizations, and not waste time on other issues. Sanctuary, guns, money, and training are the crucial mechanisms that drive organizational dynamics, not diplomatic support and rhetoric. Beyond this, policymakers should also be able to discriminate between the insurgent groups receiving aid, studying social structures to assess which groups are likely to be the most cohesive and disciplined. There may be externally-supported groups that are state-reliant and thus not as dangerous as cohesive organizations. Not all externally-backed
insurgents are equally powerful and internally disciplined, which calls for more discrimination in how different groups are approached, whether for supporting them, opposing them, or trying to cut a deal with them. External support on its own is not determinative of anything and thus social and political context need to be combined with a focus on external backing.

Finally, I have hopefully shown that external states and, to a lesser degree, diasporas have their own strategic interests that may lead them to rapidly shift their support and loyalties. They usually do not blindly follow their client of the moment, instead supporting groups that advance similar goals. These goals may shift and therefore policymakers should not assume a tight constant connection between sponsors and insurgents: politics and strategy can lead to important divergences in interests. Developing ways of manipulating those divergences to the advantage of policymaking is therefore of central importance.

_Ideologies and Fanatics._ Sometimes policy discourses highlight the particular nature of insurgent ideologies as explaining why certain policies are likely or unlikely to succeed. At various point, communists, anti-colonial nationalists, and religious radicals have been singled out as being particularly fanatical, dedicated, or unwilling to bargain. Yet the conclusions of this dissertation show that these very different types of groups face similar challenges and overcome or fall prey to them this in broadly similar, though certainly not identical, mechanisms. The specific bases of support of these groups will vary, but we can comparatively analyze the social structure of that support, and the existence of international support for their agendas. Organizations do not appear to be fundamentally or qualitatively different depending on whether they are Islamists or separatists, though Communism during the anti-colonial period may have had some distinct dynamics.
More broadly but tentatively, we do not see clear differences in overall trajectories of the conflicts across types of rebels. The Islamist MNLF and MILF have been willing to repeatedly talk with the Philippine government, the Jamaat-e-Islami in Kashmir has backed away from open insurgency because of the costs imposed upon it, and many of the Islamists who fought against India (especially in Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen) ended up “flipping” to become pro-state paramilitaries. There do seem to be some irreconcilables among Pakistani armed groups, but they represent exceptions rather than the general rule. Among ethno-nationalists, GAM (also predominantly Muslim), PIRA, and several Tamil militant groups were willing to cut deals, while the LTTE was not. Many Communists in the MCP and Huks proved that they were open to amnesties, defection, or simply dropping out of the fight, while Ho Chi Minh’s ICP retained a cold-eyed dedication to the revolution. Given the marked variation within each category, these trajectories are clearly not the outcome of ideological worldviews or the types of armed groups.

Politics, Network, and Insurgency. Another implication of my argument for policymakers is that it may be unproductive to try to manipulate or control mass public opinion. It is unlikely that we actually know how to do this in the first place: scholarship on relevant topics, from public diplomacy to post-conflict state building, suggests that this task is enormously difficult and that there are no clear silver bullet policies. Moreover, winning over the hearts and minds of the masses may also be unnecessary for the purposes of influencing or undermining armed groups. Instead, policymakers (those opposing, supporting, or trying to mediate with armed groups) and analysts should focus on the specific social networks and infrastructures from which insurgents draw their support.

Counterinsurgent governments have often been able to blunt rebellions, even when not addressing mass grievances, by targeting networks, whether for co-optation and deal-making (as
with tribes and veterans’ networks in Sunni Iraq) or annihilation (the attrition of Jamaat networks in Kashmir). Put bluntly, this means that “hearts and minds” may not need to be won over to end a war, one way or another. Bribery and political deals can pull across insurgents to the side of the state or a position of neutrality, while targeted assassinations, population control, and intelligence penetration may be able to rip apart the social structures underlying the dominant armed groups regardless of whether root causes are addressed. We sometimes shy away from the hard fact that COIN is not a popularity contest, economic development with the help of guns, or a noble venture in political transformation; instead, it is a violent competition in coercion and institution-building that produces winners by creating losers.

Political grievances may continue to lie festering in the background without creating or sustaining insurgency as long as governments are willing to deploy sustained bribery and repression on areas of insurgent revolt. This, indeed, is the story of many of the rebellions in India, Pakistan, Burma, and Sri Lanka with which I am familiar, showing a certain degree of regional bias in my conclusions. State forces claim to have “provided security”7 to the population, won over hearts and minds, and instilled legitimacy, but actually tracing the processes through which insurgencies are broken tends to reveal high levels of coercion and control carried out via the targeting of social networks and institutions. The ability of organize and institutionalize the production of violence is not synonymous with the existence of mass grievances; the latter may, and often do, exist without the former.

The self-serving rhetoric of militants about popular support is often just as hollow as that of the regimes they fight. Analysts should not backward-infer that because an insurgency is doing well it must have widespread popular backing, just as they should not assume that if

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7 This is often, though not always, a delicate euphemism for imposing tight armed control on population movements, food distribution, and access to supposedly-public goods.
insurgencies falter it is necessarily because they lack that support. This is a recipe for post hoc, after-the-fact story telling that does not identify the central dynamics of insurgent mobilization. And indeed, we have seen several clear examples, including the Huks in the Philippines and JKLF in Kashmir, where groups that appear to have enjoyed high levels of popularity were shattered by government counterinsurgency, shifts in external support, and internal social divisions, just as we have seen relatively narrow but robustly embedded and highly institutionalized armed groups rising to dominance within their ethnic community.

In the latter situation, insurgents may be able to sweep aside mass sentiment by hurling disciplined coercion at a state apparatus and endogenously creating incentives for civilians to support them because they have guns and money. Overthrowing or replacing the incumbent may not be the result of having gained legitimacy and constructed good governance; instead it could be the result of tight social infrastructure and organization combined with large-scale external support, creating sustained violence that provides bloody leverage and bargaining power. Civilians have agency, but that agency is structured by their access to vessels of social mobilization and by internal divisions over the desirability and implementation of insurgency.

These are not uplifting findings from any perspective: both insurgency and counterinsurgency are fundamentally about coercion, control, and discipline, which may have nothing to do with good governance, human rights, or representation. Yet the findings of this dissertation should not lead either policymakers or insurgent leaders to ignore political grievances, for at least two reasons. First, bad governance can lead to future revolts or can undermine militant movements. Just because an insurgency has been repressed in the past is no guarantee of future stability, and quantitative studies have shown that the likelihood of a future civil war increases with the number of past conflicts. Crucially, the case of East Timor reveals
how state oppression can keep movements alive through endogenous mechanisms of revenge and fear, even if the relevant insurgent groups are unable to summon significant cohesion or military power. As political opportunities change, the core of militants sustained by state injustice may be able to turn discontent into violent revolt.

For militant leaders, their inferiority in power does leave them more reliant on the civilian population, or at least certain portions of it, than the state. Offering a coherent and accepted political goal may facilitate the process of creating new loyalties and allegiances beyond the social structures that initially underpinned the revolt. Moreover, internal feuding and fratricide can hurt insurgent movements by creating defectors willing to work with the counterinsurgent state. In Kashmir, the fratricidal rise of the Hizbul Mujahideen created waves of defectors who turned to the Indian state for protection, and were then integral in containing the Hizb’s network and organization in the Kashmir Valley. The LTTE’s onslaughts against its rivals were facilitated by their fragmentation and weakness, but this strategy led a number of the other Tamil groups to turn against the LTTE by becoming pro-state paramilitaries. A focus on discipline and coordinated violence can get an armed group quite far, but it can gain significant additional assistance on the margin by acting with restraint and far-sightedness within its own community. Both states and insurgents are at risk of overreaching in their application of violence.

Political deals can also satisfy the interests of insurgent leaders and state forces, even if they represent a clear compromise or incomplete change. The only outcomes are not victory or defeat, and genuine political bargaining can play an important role in shutting down wars. In Northern Ireland, the Provisional IRA was willing to settle short of its war aims, as was GAM in Aceh. We do not yet have a clear understanding of when groups come to the table beyond the
obvious (when they think it is better than fighting). Nevertheless, groups that have retained their organizational structure can be good partners for peace since the leadership is able to discipline and control its fighters, avoiding the spoiler problem in negotiations and implementation. High politics may be integral to persuading leaders to stand down their fighters. Therefore, policymakers should assess whether armed groups’ leaderships can successfully embark on a political bargain. This returns us to the issue of internal control and cohesion – the ability of an insurgent group to make war may offer insight into its ability to enforce peace.
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