

Competing for Control: Conflict Power Dynamics, Civilian Loyalties and Violence in Civil War

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ABSTRACT

Reed Morrison Wood: Competing for Control: Conflict Power Dynamics, Civilian Loyalties
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Rather than an arbitrary decision, civilian victimization represents a strategic choice made by armed actors. The theory presented herein argues that violence strategies are largely shaped by fluctuations in the power dynamics between armed political actors. Insurgents and states actively compete over civilian loyalties because loyalty and support shape war outcomes. Civilian loyalty is largely contingent on the population's expectations of the benefits provided by each side as well as the probability of its victory. Both the credible provision of benefits by a side and civilians' expectations regarding war outcomes are determined by the relative capabilities of the actors. As insurgents weaken, civilians' evaluation of the likelihood of the group's victory declines, as do their expectations of receiving sufficient benefits to offset the risk of supporting the group. Declining capabilities and weakening civilian loyalty encourage insurgents to escalate violence in order to deter defections. A similar dynamic applies to states. As the regime weakens in the face of rising insurgent threat and declining civilian loyalty, it is increasingly likely to resort to higher levels of violence against civilians in an attempt to reassert control and enforce loyalty among the population. The statistical results presented here provide support for the thesis that changes in actors' relative capabilities influence the frequency and types of violence they employ against civilians.

Dedicated to Sarah, whose support and encouragement have made this occasionally difficult experience infinitely more bearable, and Dirty Paws, the best paperweight I know.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

One morning in late December in Bapu, a village on the border of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda, an elderly woman watched several men in military uniforms approach her hut. She assumed (based on their uniforms) that they were Congolese soldiers, and she waved and greeted them. The men approached the hut and called back to her. The leader of the attachment asked where the local children studied, and if there was a school in the village. The old woman answered that the village school was not really functioning so there were no pupils in class that day. The man in uniform then asked if there was a church nearby where Christians might be praying, to which the woman replied that there were no services that day, so the church would be empty. The man in military uniform then asked for directions to the market or anywhere else nearby where many people might be gathering. To this, the woman responded that there was a market at Mabanga Ya Talo, not too far away, and she pointed in the direction of the small, bustling weekend fishing market. She later recounted to a human rights worker that at that moment she thought to herself that the questions seemed strange, and the men spoke Lingala (the local dialect) with a foreign accent.

After she answered their questions, the men in uniform pushed the elderly woman into her hut and began to ransack it. She realized then that these were not government soldiers, but fighters with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The LRA soldiers stole

everything of value among her meager possessions and then forced her to carry the looted goods as they pulled her along the dusty road. They marched her toward the water and in the direction of the fishermen's market.

When they reached the water she saw another group of LRA tying up villagers they had captured. She recalled that they were brandishing guns and shouting at the people. They tied cords around the waists of their captives; among them she noticed her son and several of her neighbors. The man giving the orders was tall and muscular and had one eye, she remembered, and he gave orders with gestures and sometimes punched the bound villagers. While the soldiers turned their attention to the crowd of scared villagers, the woman escaped into the forest. When she emerged days later, she discovered that the LRA had killed her son along with several other villagers.

The soldiers continued on to Mabanga Ya Talo. When they neared the market several men stayed behind to guard the bound peasants. The second group entered the busy market. According to survivors, the soldiers told them that they were Congolese soldiers and that they were there to protect them. The leader of the local fisherman's collective validated the story and told the merchants and shoppers not to be afraid. A few days before he had told people that the Congolese army would arrive and urged them to collect rations for the soldiers. The villagers were therefore not surprised when men in green fatigues and shouldering weapons arrived in the market. They did not realize at the time that the leader of the collective had been employed by the LRA.

The LRA soldiers surrounded the market, and began to capture and kill the shoppers and merchants. They abducted dozens of people, including 30 young women and 10 boys. A number of the villagers were killed, most hacked to death by machete. After the attack on

the market, the soldiers and their captives continued to the next village a few kilometers away. Along the way they killed many of the adults among the captured group as well as other peasants they passed on the road. Over the next several days villagers found dozens of bodies scattered along the roadside.

The contingent of soldiers repeated this scenario in the next village. Other LRA contingents conducted similarly brutal operations throughout the region. According to Human Rights Watch's figures, between December 14 and 17 the LRA killed more than 300 people in the Mokomo area and over the course of the next month massacred upwards of 1,000 peasants in the region, captured hundreds of children and women, and displaced as many as 30,000 persons. The violence and displacement rendered the region largely ungovernable and created a humanitarian catastrophe for the governments of Uganda and the DRC.¹

While the LRA are among the groups perhaps most notorious for their use of violence, they are far from the only insurgent organization to target civilians during a civil war. Moreover, both state forces and guerrilla movements kill thousands of civilians around the world each year. Much of the violence that befalls civilians is unintentional — for example, the "collateral damage" that U.S. forces inflict on civilians in Afghanistan when precision bombs miss their marks or when military intelligence mistakes wedding parties for insurgent encampments.

Other violence falls into a more nebulous category of unintentional yet largely negligent violence. This type of violence is nebulous in the sense that is hard to determine the motives behind the civilian deaths—that is, did the perpetrator explicitly target civilians,

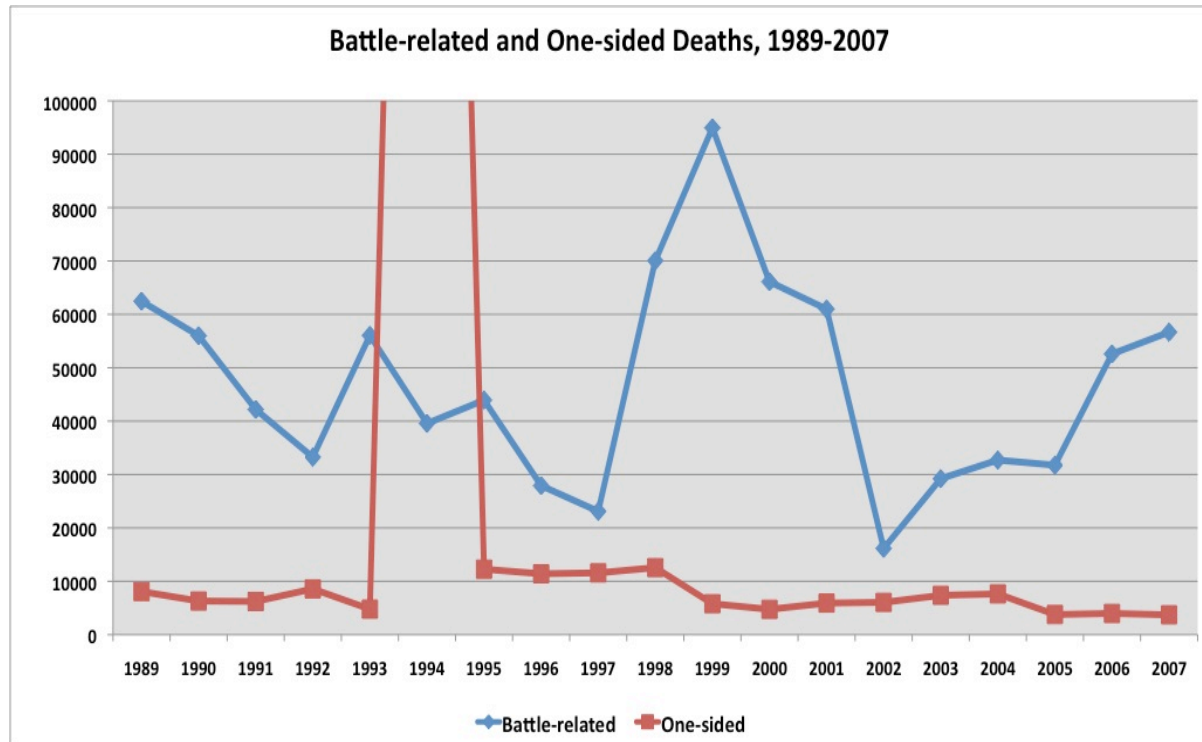
¹ This example is largely adapted from a recent Human Rights Watch report on the incident, which was compiled from interviews with a number of survivors of the LRA attacks (see Human Rights Watch, 2010).

or were they simply indifferent to the effect of the attack on the civilian population? The true motive is largely unknowable or would be extremely difficult to ascertain in most circumstances. What is clear, however, is that this type of violence occurs frequently, and a great many civilians are killed in such cases. The 2008-2009 Israeli offensive in Gaza, which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Palestinians, is replete with many examples of this type of anti-civilian violence. Israel has categorically denied that they explicitly targeted civilians; yet, the fact remains that artillery fire and missiles targeted densely populated areas and often with Israeli knowledge of the presence of schools, hospitals, or even United Nations facilities in very close proximity to the target sites. By some accounts, such facilities were the target of Israeli attacks because insurgents were had positioned themselves in those areas in the hope that the location would deter Israeli targeting. In any case, it did not, and civilians paid a heavy toll. Insurgent groups are often guilty of similar violence. For example, many of the suicide bombings committed by Taliban and Al-Qaeda insurgents in Afghanistan target explicitly military targets such as troop convoys, guard posts, barracks, etc. However, the blasts frequently kill and maim civilians in addition to the targeted troops — often leading to many times more civilian casualties than military ones.

The violence described in the LRA example detailed above represents a class of violence referred to in some literatures as one-sided violence (see Eck and Hultman, 2007). This violence is directed expressly at civilians with the intention of causing their death or injury. This violence often occurs outside of combat situations and the victims are typically unarmed. This is perhaps the most egregious type of civil war violence. As with other types of violence, one-sided violence is employed frequently in civil wars. While victims of one-sided violence represent a relatively small proportion of the overall casualties that accrue

during a civil war, they represent an unquestionably large human cost associated with intrastate conflict. Figure 1.1 compares the number of total battle-related deaths with the number of one-sided deaths occurring annually in the global sample of civil conflicts for which relevant data is available.

Figure 1.1 Battle-related Deaths & One-Sided Deaths, 1989-2007

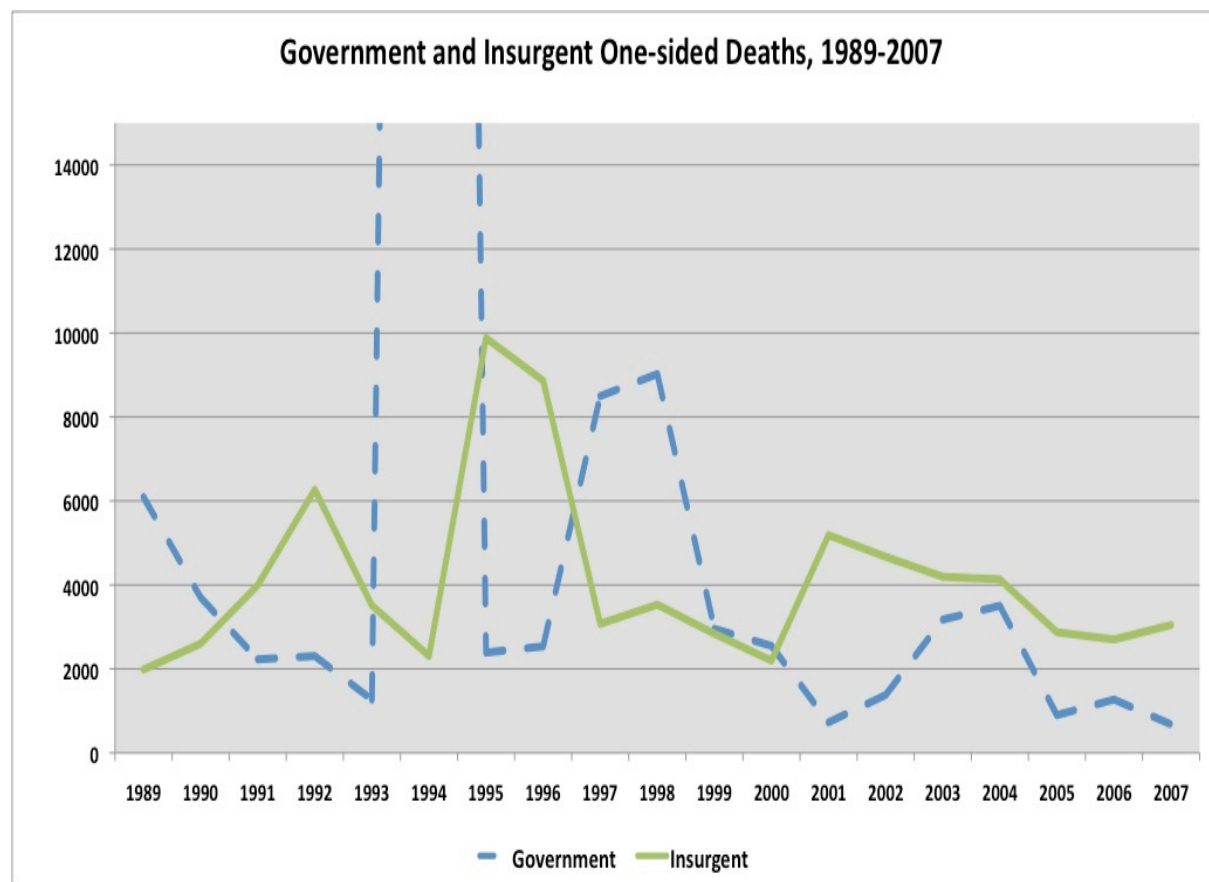


Battle-deaths data are taken from Lacina and Gleditsch (2005). One-sided violence data are from UCDP (2009).

Also like other types of violence, both states and insurgent forces make frequent use of one-sided violence. Worldwide, with the exception of the 1994 Rwanda genocide, rebel groups and states were responsible for similar numbers of intentional civilian killings over

the past two decades.² Figure 1.2 compares annual state-sponsored and insurgent one-sided violence for civil conflicts between the 1989 and 2007.

Figure 1.2: Government & Insurgent One-sided Deaths, 1989-2007



Data from UCDP (2009).

The relative frequency of intentional violence against civilians during war (and the much more frequent negligent violence) begs the obvious question of why armed actors resort to the intentional killing of civilians during civil conflicts. It would be easy to assume that a few bad apples commit violence or that it arises from bloodlust piqued in the heat of

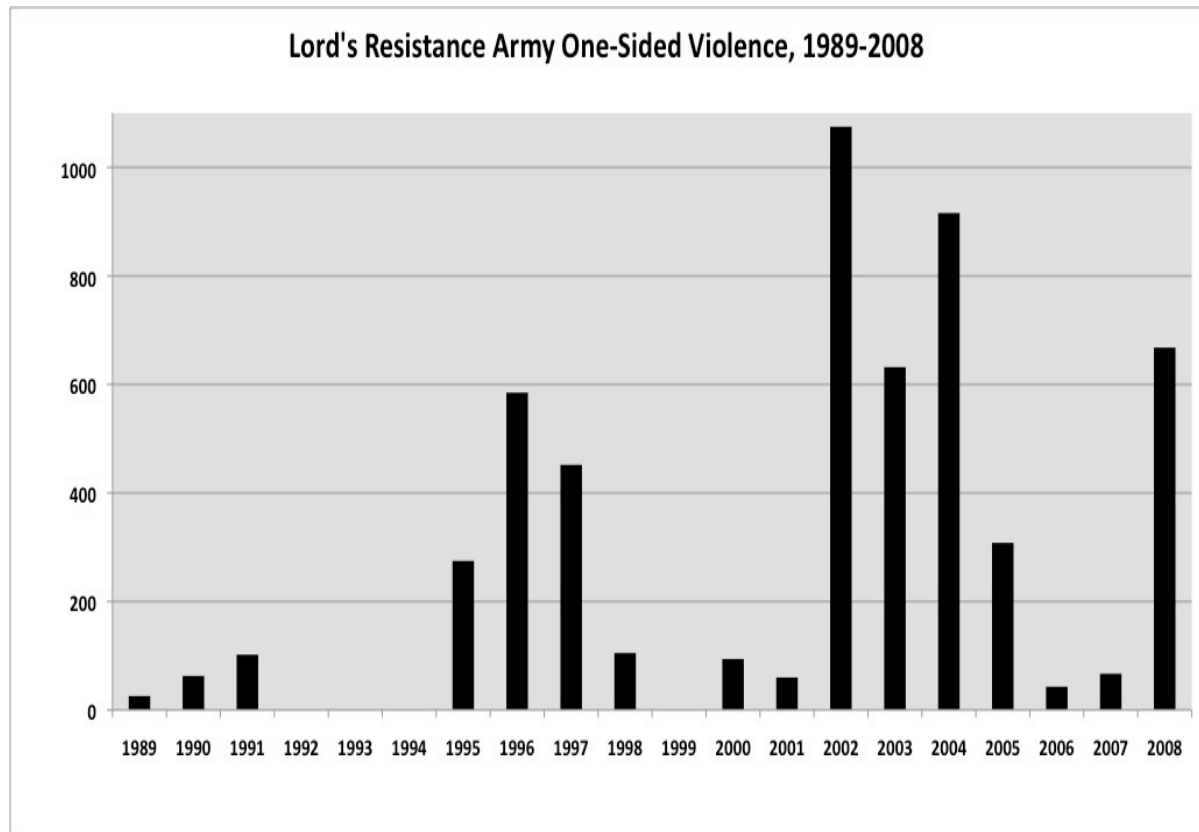
² The value for 1994 far exceeds the values for other years because of the more than half a million intentional deaths resulting from the Rwandan genocide. As such, the y-axis is condensed in order to show the more general trend.

battle. Indeed, a number of historical accounts of civil wars suggest that the frustrations and stress of combat and the sometimes-daily experience of watching comrades fall in battle leads troops to "snap" and target civilians. This stress is compounded in guerrilla conflicts because combatants often cannot accurately judge the loyalties and sympathies of an often-fickle civilian population. While this reasoning probably explains some portion of violence against civilians during civil wars, it is a largely unsatisfactory answer. Numerous analyses conducted in recent decades strongly suggest that rather than "madness" or temporary, combat-induced rage, violence and terror are calculated, well-planned actions. The narrative of the LRA presented above, for example, shows quite plainly that the violence was premeditated — the LRA combatants sought out populated areas in which they could efficiently abduct and kill, even asking for directions to schools and markets, they entered villages under the guise of being protective government soldiers, and they repeated the process in one village after another.

More than just intentional, violence perpetrated against civilians by states and insurgents alike demonstrates a certain perverse logic. While theories differ regarding the specific motivations for such violence, recent studies such as Kalyvas' (2006) "Logic of Violence" research agenda, Pape's (2005) analysis of the logic of suicide terrorism, and Valentino's (2004) threat-based theory of state-sponsored mass killing articulate arguments that strongly suggest that violence is a strategic choice. These works therefore echo Arendt's (1970) assertions about the rationale of violence — it is rational to the extent that it achieves given objectives. The core objective of violence in civil war, according to much of the extant literature on insurgency and counterinsurgency, is the alteration of the behaviors of a target group. States and rebels use violence and terror to control the population, force it into

compliance, scare it into flight, or breakdown the social and political relationships between civilians and the perpetrator's adversary. Given these objectives, the violence illustrated in the LRA case is perhaps not as surprising as it is an appalling example of this rationale. Lacking resources, support and territorial control the group resorted to mass killing and abduction to feed its resource needs and terrorize the population into submission. Indeed, many recent analyses of the LRA strongly suggest that the group employs this kind of perverse logic — violence allows the group to acquire resources and the instability violence creates allows the groups to survive (see Branch, 2005; Bevan, 2007; Vinci, 2006).

Figure 1.3: LRA One-sided Deaths, 1989-2008



Includes only direct, intentional killings. Data from UCDP (2009).

What is surprising — but has so far been largely overlooked by most analyses — is the timing of the killings. During the previous three years the group had killed only a few dozen civilians. While even this comparatively low number reflects the unabated willingness of the LRA to employ terror against civilians, the period between roughly early 2006 and late 2008 marked a notable lull in the violence inflicted by the group. The number of persons killed by the LRA fell from nearly 1000 in 2004 to 300 in 2005 and then to only a few dozen each year between 2006 and the end of 2008. The group then rapidly escalated the number of killings to almost 1000 in the final weeks of 2008 and early 2009. A survey of the history of LRA violence shows that the group has markedly varied its level of killing at different periods. Figure 1.3 shows the variation in LRA violence over the past two decades.

The notable variation in LRA violence illustrated by Figure 1.3 provokes a key question, which is not so much why the LRA — or any guerrilla group — chooses violence, but rather, why do they at certain times resort to violence against the population while at other times de-emphasize violence as a war strategy? To frame the question in terms more specific to the case: Why did the LRA choose to return to mass violence in the final months of 2008 and the beginning of 2009 when it had acted with relative restraint for the previous three years? Existing theories of civil war violence have largely ignored its temporal aspects and have instead focused on the explanations for why one group is more disposed to violence than another.³ Hence, they focus on initial conditions, patronage networks, resource endowments, ideology, ethno-political cleavages or other largely static factors to explain a group's general disposition to violence against civilians. Such works, while useful, ignore the often-sizable variation in the any given group's use of violence over time.

³ Though see Bevan (2007), Hultman (2007), and Kalyas (2006).

This manuscript begins to provide an explanation for this variation. It departs from theories focused largely on static factors and instead examines the dynamics factors within the conflict environment that contribute to the formation of strategies among the relevant actors. It also acknowledges the interdependence of actor strategies within this environment and attempts to integrate this aspect of conflicts into the theory of violence. I argue herein that violence is largely a function of changes in the power dynamics between the state and insurgent groups. As power asymmetries and resource disparities fluctuate over the course of the conflict, the levels and types of violence adopted by armed groups change as well. More specifically, I model the conflict as a competition over the nominal loyalty of the civilian population. Both the state and the insurgent group attempt to entice civilian loyalty by providing a mixture of benefits and sanctions. The outcome of this competition largely structures the strategies of violence the group adopts. Put simply, when civilians respond positively to insurgent demands, collaborating with insurgents and/or providing them with resources, insurgents have little incentive to target the population. By contrast, when civilians withhold loyalty, collaborate with regime forces, or otherwise support the government and resist insurgent demands, the group has an incentive to use violence to restore deterrence and enforce loyalty.

Civilian loyalty, however, fluctuates over the course of the conflict, and therefore leads to changes in the strategies of violence the armed group employs over time. All else equal, civilian loyalty is predicated on the ability of the insurgents to provide material and non-material benefits to supporters in order to offset the risk of collaboration with or participation in the rebellion. Consequently, the side that provides civilians with the largest credible level of goods compels the loyalty of the target population. Civilians' subjective

assessment of the likely outcome of the conflict represents an additional factor in determining loyalty and support. Civilians prefer to "back a winner," largely because of the fear of retribution should they support the loser and because with victory comes the credible promise of benefits.

The ability of the insurgents to provide sufficient benefits to the target population depends on the capabilities of the group relative to the regime. Civilians' beliefs in the likelihood of insurgent victory are likewise largely determined by the extant balance of power between the insurgents and the government. In addition, changes in the in the power dynamics of the conflict contribute to changes in the level and depth of civilian loyalty to the insurgents. Civilians are sensitive to shifts in the balance of power in the conflict and update their strategies in response to changes in them. This occurs because such shifts signal likely changes in the credible delivery of resources and the likelihood of a given conflict outcome. As such, when insurgents face battlefield setbacks, when foreign powers intervene on the behalf of the government, or when other factors cause a decline in the insurgents' relative capabilities, civilians become more likely to defect and support the government. The increased threat of defections and a general decline in civilian loyalty creates an incentive for insurgents to use violence against the population as means to deter collaboration with the government and to enforce civilian loyalty. Consequently, the incentive for violence is driven by the shifting loyalties of the civilian population, which are in turn responsive to fluctuations in the relative capabilities of the conflict actors. The general prediction, then, is that when a group is declining in power it becomes more likely to escalate violence as a means to enforce loyalty among civilians and prevent them from defecting to the adversary.

The actions of the LRA again provide a useful, brief example of these dynamics. When the group first emerged in the late 1980s it attempted to market itself as the defender of the Acholi ethnic group against the abuses and discrimination of the Ugandan government. During its first years the group committed relatively few abuses and enjoyed the nominal support of at least some portions of the population (Bevan, 2007: 348). However, in the early 1990s the government launched a major counterinsurgency offensive against the group, which severely weakened the LRA's strength. During this period the group also saw a steep decline in its level of popular support (Bevan, 2007: 439), which further reduced its resource base. In response to the group's declining power and its perceived betrayal by the Acholi people, the LRA's leader, Joseph Kony, made a significant shift in the group's war strategy, resorting to mass violence against the population (Branch, 2005; Gersony, 1997).

Following a lull in the fighting, during which time the LRA was able to recoup its losses and slowly rebuild its military capabilities, the LRA resumed its campaign of violence in 1995, including large-scale massacres of civilians. Military gains on the part of the government as well as Kony's perception of betrayal by the local population — they largely supported the peace process and had grown closer to the regime — once again contributed to this shift in violence strategy (UCDP, 2009). In the late 1990s the government of Sudan provided a major boost to the capabilities of the LRA by supplying them with military aid as well secure strongholds from which it could launch attacks against the government and expand its control in the region (Bevan, 2007: 351). During this period (1998-2001), LRA violence declined relative to the previous period.

The de-escalation of violence reversed in a dramatic way in 2002, however, as the group killed more than 1000 persons that year. This was the same year that the Sudanese

government (who had agreed to stop supplying aid to the group the previous year) gave the Ugandan government permission to launch a major offensive against the LRA's bases in Southern Sudan (UCDP, 2009). Operation "Iron Fist" left the LRA battered but was unable to completely dislodge them from Southern Sudan and Northern Uganda, and in the several months that followed the group committed some of the worst atrocities of the conflict. The scene depicted in the example above follows very closely to a situation that occurred in late 2002 following operation "Iron Fist." Following the collapse of mid-year peace talks, the combined forces of Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) launched operation "Lightning Thunder" against the LRA. Much like the earlier offensive, the campaign dealt a forceful blow to the group, nearly destroying it. However, the surviving remnants of the guerrillas then undertook a campaign of mass violence against peasant villages along the Uganda-DRC border, killing as many as a 1000 people and abducting hundreds or thousands in an attempt to rebuild the battered rebellion.

The brief example presented here is not intended to elucidate the causal mechanisms driving insurgent motivations for violence against civilians. Rather, it simply shows that violence fluctuates over the course of a conflict and, more importantly, that changes in violence strategy correspond to changes in the strategic environment in which armed political actors compete for control and loyalty. In the following chapters I tease out these relationships in greater detail. Chapter 2 outlines the assumptions about the civil war environment and actor preferences that underlie the theory. Principally, it asserts that civil wars take place in dynamic environments, which are subject to rapid shifts to which actors must respond by updating their short-term strategies. As a result, while initial conditions may impose some constraints upon the strategies available to groups, static factors can only

go so far in explaining insurgent and state behaviors. Accounting for variations in war strategy over time requires the incorporation of the more dynamics aspects of the conflict environment. Thus, the chapter sketches the competitive model that forms the base of the theory. As mentioned briefly above, a group's success in competing for loyalty largely structures its incentives for violence.

Chapter 3 looks more closely at this theoretical model by examining the behavior of civilians during civil war. Specifically, it looks at the factors that contribute to the provision of civilian loyalty to one group or another during the conflict. It argues that civilian loyalty is conditioned by the ability of insurgents to provide significant resources that offset the risk of state sanctions as well as on the population's expectation regarding the likely outcome of the conflict. Thus, more capable insurgent organizations attract greater levels of civilian loyalty as proxied by the incidence of insurgents within the conflict populations. In addition, when the power dynamics shift toward the insurgency, greater numbers of civilians are willing to support the insurgents.

Chapter 4 explicitly engages insurgent violence against civilians. In line with the theoretical model presented in Chapter 2, it argues that when insurgents face declining capabilities they are increasingly likely to escalate violence against the population. Building from the propositions and results presented in Chapter 3, I argue that the increase in violence is driven largely by the negative effect that waning military capabilities exert on civilian loyalties. I further argue that declining capabilities and waning support lead insurgents to broaden their application of violence as well as to increase its frequency. That is, as the conflict power dynamics increasingly shift against the insurgents, they become more likely to apply violence more frequently and in a more indiscriminate manner.

Chapter 5 turns the focus to the causes of state violence during civil war. This chapter incorporates existing arguments about the role of regime threat perception into the theoretical model outlined in Chapter 2. It argues that as rebel strength increases, deterring civilian collaboration with the group becomes both more difficult and more costly, making civilian victimization a more appealing option. It further asserts that indiscriminate repression is more effective than commonly asserted in the literature; put simply, scorched earth and mass killing strategies sometimes work. Thus, depending on the costs associated with buying off civilians through resource provisions, reform, or selective counterinsurgency policies, political elites may view mass violence as a reasonable gamble under certain conditions. Rising insurgent capabilities increase the demands imposed by insurgents and their civilian supporters, thereby increasing the cost of the benefits or concession that must be provided by the regime. As the expected costs associated with "buying them off" exceeds the expected effectiveness of mass violence, regimes are more likely to adopt killing as a strategy. The final chapter reviews the theoretical arguments and recounts the empirical findings of the previous chapters. It also offers some remarks about the applicability of these findings to policy formation and efforts to protect civilians during civil war.

CHAPTER 2

Making War in a Dynamic Environment

Violence committed intentionally against civilians during civil war is often as brutal as it is frequent. Journalists often focus on the seemingly "irrational" acts of ultra-graphic violence committed by insurgents and government security forces during their campaigns — mass rapes, mutilations, and the murder of Bosnian children and the elderly by Serb paramilitaries received tremendous attention in the 1990s. More recently, news reports have broadcast graphic images of the grisly aftermath of suicide bombings in Baghdad markets or the crumbled housing blocks and corpses following Israeli air strikes on Gaza. Intentional civilian deaths and violence directed against non-combatants occur in all wars; yet, as such reports illustrate, some wars are simply more brutal than others and some warriors more willing to use extreme acts to accomplish their goals.

Explaining such violence has become a popular endeavor among social scientists, historians, and anthropologists who have offered a wealth of theories to account for what often seem to be inexplicable acts. Notwithstanding a handful of theorists and the seemingly popular belief that violence is the product of irrational ethnic hatred or simmering bloodlust, recent theories of mass violence and the intentional killing of civilians during conflicts converge on the notion that such acts are chosen strategically. As Hannah Arendt (1970) asserted and later scholars have provided disturbing evidence, violence — even mass killings and terrorism — is rational to the extent that it achieves a desired outcome (e.g., Kalyvas,

2004; 2005; Pape, 2005; Valentino, 2004). If violence is rational, actors are expected to choose it over other strategies when it appears more advantageous given the specific context at a given time. The challenge that remains for scholars of violence is to determine the factors that preference violence against civilians over other war strategies at a given time. The critical component in this process is accounting for the contextual features relevant to insurgent or state decision-making in the context of civil war and what role civilians play in the processes of civil war. A complicating, though critical, factor in explaining violence is that violence varies, often significantly, over the course of a conflict. While some conflicts are most likely just more brutal, the level of violence in all conflicts rises and falls at various time points. Hence, if scholars are interested in explaining the dynamics of violence during wars, it is important to directly engage the causes of changes in violence from one moment of a conflict to another.

Civil wars are complex; rather than single events they are dynamic processes (e.g., Balch-Lindsay & Enterline, 2000; Balch-Lindsay, Enterline & Joyce, 2008). Within this dynamic system, insurgents face the difficult tasks of mobilizing popular support, recruiting volunteers willing to risk death for the cause (whether profit or politics), acquiring resources, launching offensives against government forces, and defending from government reprisal. Similarly, states recruit or conscript citizens to fill the ranks of its security force, devise policies to deter civilians from collaborating with insurgents, and mobilize resources that can be transformed into wartime capabilities. The most effective strategies for accomplishing these tasks often vary over the course of the conflict. The conflict environment is in a state of constant flux: states employ and then adapt counterinsurgency policies, incumbents undertake political reforms, foreign states intervene and depart, and resources are depleted

and new streams of resources found and exploited. In order to accomplish their goals in this dynamic environment, insurgents (and states) update and revise their war strategies given different contexts (Goodwin, 2005; Pape, 2005; Price, 1977) and alter their strategies in response to changes in the conflict environment (see Bapat, 2005; Bennett, 2008; Byman, 2008). This logic also extends to the use of violence against civilians (Bevan 2007; Hultman, 2007; Kalyvas, 1999; 2006). Violence against non-combatants — a more or less constant feature of many conflicts — varies depending on the conditions created within the conflict environment.

This chapter begins to explain the causes for the variations in anti-civilian violence committed by insurgents over the course of conflicts. To do so, it outlines the basic assumption of the theory discussed in the following chapters and presents a basic model of insurgent-state competition in the dynamic conflict environment that helps unpack the motivations for resorting to violence against civilians. It likewise identifies the factors that contribute to changes in the violence strategies adopted by the insurgents. In brief, changes in the conflict environment lead insurgents to update the strategies they employ to achieve their intermediate-term goal of population and territorial control. Insurgents compete with states in a zero-sum game over civilian loyalty and they construct, implement, and update strategies that help attain it. Changes in the dynamic environment — namely shifts in the power dynamics — affect the feasibility of employing some strategies and likewise affect the willingness of civilians to provide loyalty and support to insurgents. As the ability of non-violent strategies to maintain or gain control diminish, insurgents are likely to substitute more violent strategies. Consequently, conflict power dynamics, particularly shifts within the relative capabilities of the actors, lead insurgents to employ more or less violent strategies of

control. As the power balance favors insurgents they are expected to reduce their reliance on violence; however, when power shifts away from them they are more likely to resort to more frequent and more indiscriminate attacks on civilians as a means to deter collaboration with the regime and enforce their control over the population.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, I review two broad sets of theories regarding insurgent violence in civil wars and argue that theories that root violence in initial condition or group "type" are inadequate for explaining violence dynamics. Rather, explanations of changes in violence require more dynamic theories that treat civil wars as processes and actors as responsive to changes in their conflict environments. I then present some underlying assumptions regarding the motivations of insurgent groups. Principally, I argue that insurgents (as well as states) desire to control populations and territory during civil wars. Civilian loyalty and support, however, are closely related to the ability of actors to achieve these objectives. Moreover, civilian support and loyalty for insurgents have implications for the willingness of the group to employ violence against it. This is the subject of the third section. The final section provides a brief introduction to the model of insurgent-state competition, which is elaborated more fully in later chapters.

"Type" versus Strategic Response

What factors explain the manner in which insurgents conduct war, particularly with respect to their treatment of civilians? On the one hand, some theorists have argued that some conflicts are simply more brutal and some insurgent groups more predisposed to violence towards non-combatants. Such arguments typically organize insurgent groups into "types" based on the nature of the conflict, the structure of the group, or their stated goals. Thus,

terrorism or brutality is symptomatic of the type of insurgent that emerges in the conflict and not strategically chosen by the group at some points and eschewed at others. A set of alternative theories suggests that civilian victimization results not from any latent or inherent quality of the insurgency but instead represent a strategic logic. Insurgents, regardless of their organizational structures, cultural values, or political aspirations, modify their strategies (including treatment of civilians) in line with changes in the conflict environment. Shultz (1978: 84-85), in analyzing the rationale of National Liberation Front (NLF) violence in South Vietnam, asserts that the degree and extent of terror and coercive repression depended heavily on the nature of the political environment. Consequently, depending on multiple contextual factors insurgents may at times conduct terrorist-style campaigns that result in significant numbers of civilian deaths while at other times adopt more conventional combat strategies that intentionally kill few civilians. Not surprisingly, these two approaches produce quite different theories of the motivations for insurgent war-making and different predictions regarding when insurgents are likely to use violence against civilians.

Typecasting

Journalistic accounts of insurgent movements frequent classify insurgent groups according to basic typologies, breaking them into distinct categories such as "warlords," "revolutionaries," "secessionists," or "extremists." These "types" are often intended to convey information about not only the aspirations of the group but also the behaviors it adopts. The assumption they make is that the nature of the group defines the war tactics and the strategies that the group pursues are inextricably linked to the nature of the group and to its overall goals. According to this logic, warlords in Liberia and Afghanistan and groups like Revolutionary

Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) that engage in drug or diamond trafficking are likely to use more violence because they are motivated by profit rather than ideology (e.g., Kaldor, 1997). Alternatively, ethnic militants like the Serb paramilitaries in Bosnia are likely to engage in violence and terror against civilians from rival ethnic groups because of long simmering hatreds and ancient enmities (Huntington, 1996; Kaplan, 1993; Kaufmann, 1998). In a similar manner, religious extremists like Jemaah Islamiyah rely on indiscriminate terror because they believe that their traditional structures are threatened by the rise or existence of antithetical belief systems or cultures (e.g., Jurgensmeyer, 2000). By contrast, freedom fighters, "true believers," and other classical political revolutionaries like the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador or the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in Ethiopia refrain from using violence that intentionally or unintentionally harms peasants (even though they may target members of the political elite, landed gentry, or other class enemies for violence) because they view themselves as champions of the people.

More recent analyses have focused less on ideology as the motivation for either restraint or violence toward civilians and have instead sought to explain insurgent behaviors by categorizing groups based on their methods of organization and resource acquisition (Beardsley & McQuinn, 2009; Weinstein, 2005; 2007). Weinstein (2007), for example, asserts that many (if not most) insurgent organizations portray themselves as on the side of the people and articulate some political ideology that included arguments about the insurgency's goal of bettering the lives of citizens. Ideology is therefore not likely to predict a group's war strategies or its treatment of civilians because the group's true commitment to "the people" would only be observed *ex post*. Yet, while downplaying the role of ideology in

informing the strategies of armed groups, these analyses assert that group type still plays a fundamental role in determining the behaviors of groups. Such theories do not necessarily assume that the type of the group is given or is ascribed from the outset of the conflict, yet they often treat the group's type as static — at least once the operating procedures and institutional arrangements of the group have become established. Hence, while various initial conditions may contribute to a group's type, that type becomes more or less fixed once basic organizational structures are conceived and implemented.

In this view, insurgent behavior is more the result of the organizational structures adopted by the insurgent leadership early in the conflict than reactions to the dynamics of the conflict or changes in the strategic environment (Weinstein, 2007:21). Weinstein (2007), for instance, argues that insurgents with access to lootable resources or foreign patronage are more likely to use violence against civilians because they are more likely to recruit profit-oriented and more brutal war entrepreneurs than supporters vested in the cause. In a similar manner, Hovil and Werker (2005) assert that anti-civilian violence is often rooted in the relationships between insurgents and foreign financiers. Specifically, the contracting relationship and insurgent dependence on foreign support encourage them to use violence as a means to signal their loyalty to their patrons.

While such theories reflect a strategic logic, they fail to account for any meaningful temporal variation in the strategies of violence used by insurgents. According to such theories, changes in insurgent strategy are likely only brought about major exogenous shocks and are not generally responses to more routine shifts in the strategic environment. Beardsley and McQuinn (2009), for instance, argue that the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami led Free Aceh Movement (GAM) rebels to restart negotiations with the Indonesian government

while it led the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to escalate violence in Sri Lanka, including terror against civilians. According to their argument, the effect of the natural disaster on the strategic calculus of the group was largely determined by the group's type. Because the GAM was, based on their typology, a predatory "community champion" organization whose method of resource extraction focused on the local community, they were responsive to their constituency. The group therefore used the arrival of foreign disaster aid as a public good and the media exposure surrounding the event as an opportunity to achieve a more favorable settlement from the government and to provide resources to their constituents. By contrast, the Tamil Tigers were "war entrepreneurs" whose primary resource base was a large Tamil Diaspora. Because the LTTE were less reliant on the local community, the arrival of foreign assistance represented a potential threat to the insurgents who sought to co-opt and control aid flows. Moreover, because of their limited reliance on the local population, the tsunami and ensuing aid provisions did not create an incentive to negotiate or alter strategies but instead led to a renewal of the conflict and an escalation of terror. Between the renewal of the conflict and the collapse of the insurgency the group was responsible for the intentional deaths of more than 400 civilians (see UCDP, 2009).

While these arguments do not deny that groups alter strategies during a conflict, they make the strong (and I argue incorrect) assumption that the type of group that emerges early in the conflict defines the strategy sets available to the group. With respect to violence against civilians, these types of arguments largely ignore variations in behavior over time or simply assume that such variation is unrelated to the specific choices made by the insurgent group. Yet this argument seems odd given the often-significant variation in the levels of violence employed by groups from one time point to the next. Violence is not a binary

outcome; rather, the frequency of its use and its targets vary significantly over time.

Accounting for this change requires a more dynamic explanation and attention to the theoretical relationship between insurgents and changes in the conflict environment.

Conflict Dynamics

A second, more dynamic set of literature acknowledges that civil wars take place in constantly evolving environments and that conflict actors respond to changes in their strategic environments by updating their war strategies. The strategies adopted by dissident and armed groups change from one time period to the next based on changes in the strategies imposed by adversaries or other shifts in the strategic environment (McAdam, 1983; Moore, 1998; 2000; White, 1989; Ron, 2001; Tarrow, 1998). For example, Hizballah (the Party of God) and the LTTE began as small bands of terrorists but over time took on the trappings of guerrilla armies (Byman, 2008: 166). The Chechen resistance to Russia underwent significant changes over its lifespan as well, moving from one coherent organization in its early stages to three loosely affiliated factions in its later stages (Findley, 2008: 23). This observation is consistent with the evolutionary theories of guerrilla warfare put forth by Che Guevara (1969) and Mao Zedong (1961). According to these theorists, insurgencies move through distinct stages from hit-and-run tactics launched from remote areas to the construction and expansion of base areas to more conventional styles of warfare. Indeed, General Vo Nguyen Giap's Vietminh insurgency against the French in Indochina followed this model of insurgency very closely. The later NLF insurgency against the GVN and its US allies in the 1960s and 1970s initially followed the same model. However, the dramatic changes in the conflict arena wrought by the influence of North Vietnam and its allies as well

as the massive US intervention beginning in 1965-1966 led the leaders of the insurgency to revise their strategies rather than follow the patterns established by earlier Asian Communist insurgencies (Pike, 1969: 121-126). While the NLF fought a traditional guerrilla insurgency in the early and mid-1960s, by the end of the decade, with the growth of NVA forces, they had moved toward more conventional combat strategies. By the 1970s, however, they had again returned to more traditional guerrilla warfare strategies (Clodfelter, 1995: 153-154).

A dynamic model of insurgent behavior incorporates various factors of the dynamic conflict environment in which insurgents exist and fight. Capturing the dynamic nature of the conflict and evolution of insurgent decision-making necessitates the inclusion of other strategic actors, principally government forces, intervening foreign powers, and civilians. The decisions made by these actors affect the conflict environment and help to shape the strategies adopted by rebels. As such, these strategies are largely interdependent. Moore (1998) argues that dissident groups alter their strategies depending on the types of repression employed by the government. When incumbents apply violence against peaceful dissent, groups substitute violent strategies; when regimes respond violently to violent group behaviors, these groups are more likely to substitute violent tactics with more peaceful behaviors. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) escalated terror tactics and guerrilla war shortly following the brutal British suppression of peaceful dissent (White, 1989). Past studies have shown that insurgents reciprocate state violence by escalating their own levels of violence (Bohara, Mitchell & Nepal, 2006; Heger & Salehyan, 2007; Holmes, de Piñeres & Curtin, 2007). Furthermore, other less violent changes in regime strategies (both political and military) can also prompt insurgents to adopt new strategies in order to achieve their goals. Sendero Luminoso, for example, launched its insurgency immediately following the

political liberalization of Peru in 1980; moreover, it escalated violence against its leftist competitors and other civilians during the same period (mid-1980s) in which the military was beginning to adopt more selective counterinsurgency tactics (Ron, 2001).

Strategic interactions with the civilian population likewise structure insurgent behavior. For instance, a high level of latent support from the population should ease recruitment for the insurgents and reduce the need to apply coercive violence against civilians while resistance from the population may increase the reliance on violence (see Chapter 4). Similarly, high levels of passive support from civilians should also facilitate the conduct of guerrilla war against the government since insurgents will likely find a ready support base and easy cover from a sympathetic population. Indeed, the behaviors of the civilian population toward the insurgents may even structure the organization of the insurgency. As organizational theories suggest, the extent to which insurgents are reliant on the population largely determines the strategies the group adopts (Beardsley & McQuinn, 2009; Weinstein, 2007). However, the level of reliance, and therefore the structures adopted, are also largely the result of the level of sympathy and support that civilians give to the group during its formative stages. For example, it is likely that insurgents turn to looting and rely on mercenaries *because* other strategies failed to mobilize popular support (Bevan, 2007; Regan & Norton, 2005). Consequently, there is likely to be significant endogeneity between the behaviors of insurgents and the strategies adopted by civilians.

Moreover, insurgent treatment of civilians is likely to vary over the course of the conflict. At some points insurgents may find it useful to incorporate civilians into their movement, to protect them from government violence, or to implement policies that benefit civilians (e.g., land tenure, social welfare, etc.). At other times, however, they may ignore

civilians or attempt to expel them from conflict areas. Under some conditions insurgents may actively target civilians for violence as a means to punish perceived disloyalty, create instability, or send a strong signal to other segments of the population. A cursory review of most conflicts suggests that insurgents vary their relationships with civilians over the course of the war. For instance, in Uganda Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA) altered its relations with civilians repeatedly during its 5-year conflict with the Obote regime (Kasfir, 2005). During the early days of the conflict the resource-deprived group engaged primarily in hit-and-run guerrilla activities. In order to signal its intentions to the regime and to peasants it targeted local political leaders and used violence against civilians suspected of collaborating with the government (see for example Bevan, 2007; Kasfir, 2005).⁴ As its capacity grew relative to the regime the NRA actively encouraged civilian participation by establishing governmental institutions and rudimentary services in "safe zones" liberated from government control. However, the escalation of the conflict and collapse of its safe zones led the rebels to largely abandon civilians and expel them from the conflict zone in order to divert resources to combat. During the last phase of the conflict the insurgents' military capabilities grew and they were able to re-establish a large safe zone and resume their commitment to civilian participation (Kasfir, 2005).

As this example suggests, changes in behavior are at least partly related to the dynamic processes that go on within the conflict environment. Factors such as the intervention of foreign forces, technological evolution by one side, changes in leadership, or other factors lead to changes in the dynamics of the conflict, the probability of victory, and

⁴ The extent of NRA violence against civilians is contested. Former NRA members insist that the rebels avoided violence while former Uganda People's Congress (UPC) politicians and supporters contend that the NRA engaged in massacres of UPC activists, politicians, and other collaborators (see Kasfir 2005, especially fn. 18).

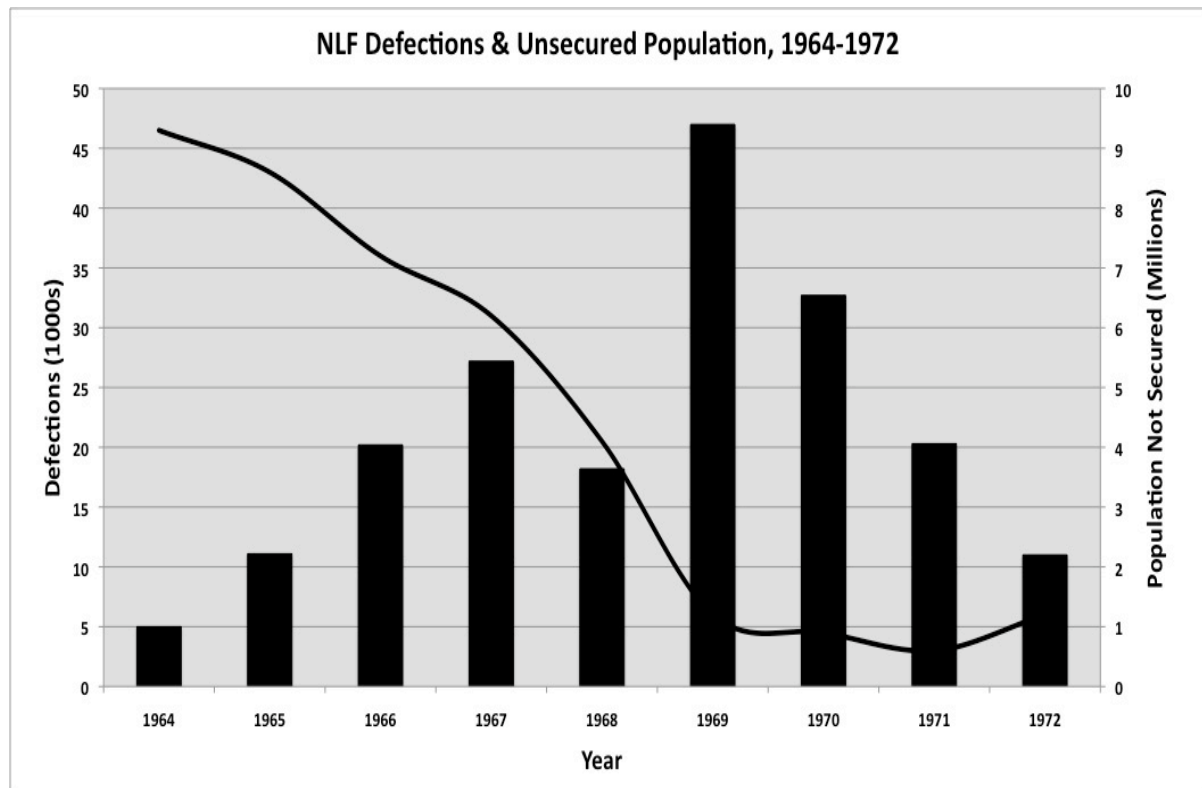
facilitating or impeding insurgent ability to hold territory and compel loyalty from the civilian population. Figure 2.1 gives an indication of the dynamic nature of conflict environments and the sometimes-significant shifts that occur therein. The figure illustrates changes in the NLF's control over the population as well as changes in the number of Communist troops and political cadres that defected to the government per year. As the figure demonstrates, control and allegiance fluctuated notably over the course of the conflict. As the conflict progressed and US involvement increased (particularly after 1966), the NLF's control of the population consistently slipped.⁵ During the late 1960s Communist casualties mounted as the previously weakening and ineffectual Government of Vietnam troops were supplemented by increasingly large numbers of better-trained and -equipped US forces. The rate of Communist defections generally increased through the end of the decade, particularly in 1969 as a result of increased US military success (Thayer, 1985: 198). However, the rate of defections began to decline as US troops began to withdraw in large numbers in the early 1970s. Such changes should correspond to changes in the strategies employed by insurgents, both with respect to combat engagements and their relations with civilians.

During insurgencies rebels attempt to mobilize civilian support through political campaigning and other types of propaganda works; they likewise undertake acts of violence that are intended to punish civilians for disloyalty as well as to terrorize the target population into supporting them (or at least into withholding support from the government). Insurgent groups typically mix both tactics during a conflict, but, as seen in Figure 2.2, the balance of these tactics often shifts from year to year. The NLF acted with comparative restraint toward the population earlier in the conflict, using propaganda activities such as the distribution of

⁵ There is some notable criticism of the reliability of data produced by US forces with respect to control and casualties during the war. See Shultz (1985) for a discussion of the data connected to the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES).

party literature, political meeting and rallies, and other demonstrations as a means to recruit support in villages. However, as the war dragged on and public sympathy fell, the Front increasingly substituted coercive violence and terrorism against the population for political activities. Indeed, the rate of civilian killings escalated dramatically in the mid- and late-1960s, particularly following the US intervention and major deployment of US troops in 1966-1967.⁶ Moreover, during this period the use of propaganda activities plummeted.

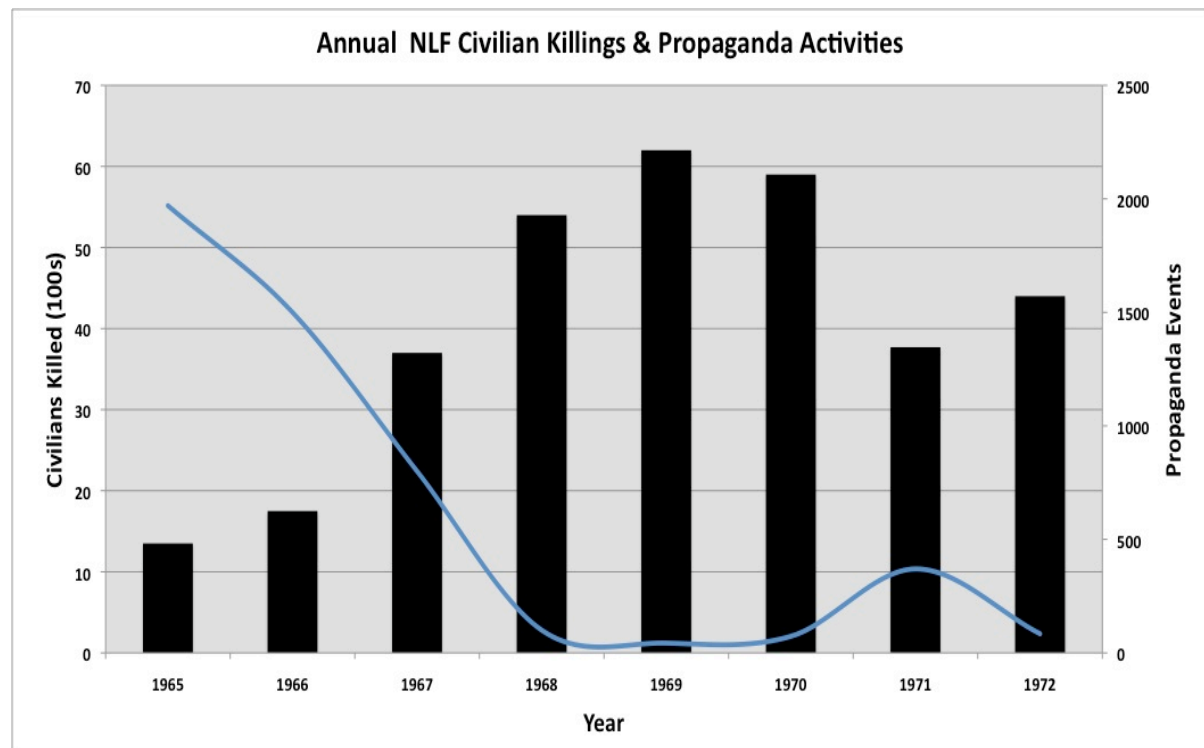
Figure 2.1: NLF Defections & Unsecured Population, 1964-1972



Bars represent annual estimates of defections from Communist insurgents to GVN (includes both political and military defections). The line represents annual estimates of the number of persons in either Communist-controlled or contested hamlets (as identified by the Strategic Hamlet Program and Hamlet Evaluation System coding rules). Data are taken from Thayer (1985).

⁶ Earlier data from different source suggests that levels of violence were much lower for the period 1961-1964. According to Pike's (1967) tabulations, NLF killing increased from approximately 1300 in 1961 to over 2000 in 1963 before declining to approximately 1000 in 1964. If these figures are accurate they suggest an even steeper escalation of violence during the later period and show a more radical shift in the strategies employed by the Front.

Figure 2.2: Annual NLF Civilian Killings & Propaganda Activities



Bars represent the annual number of civilians intentionally killed by NLF insurgents. The line represents the number of propaganda activities conducted by the Party. Killings include civilian administrators, petty officials, and other civilians. Propaganda activities pertain to meetings, political activities conducted in villages, parades, etc. Propaganda data are taken from Thayer (1985). Annual killing data are median values taken from multiple sources: Fall (1966), Hillsman (1967), Pike (1967), Thayer (1985).

While these graphs provide only a superficial accounting of variations in insurgent strategies over the course of the war, the information suggests that complex changes in the conflict environment are likely to relate to changes in insurgent behavior toward civilians. But why do changes in various factors within this environment contribute to changes in civilian-insurgent relations? In order to explain this relationship it is necessary first to unpack insurgent objectives, which often directly involve interaction with or manipulation of the civilian population. Civilian-insurgent relationships figure prominently in civil wars; moreover, they vary in some predictable ways. In short, control of the population and the acquisition and maintenance of civilian loyalty is a central goal of insurgents (Scott et al.,

1970: 74). Thus, to the extent that changes in the environment either facilitate or impede insurgent control and civilian loyalty, they are likely to affect the levels of violence the insurgents choose to employ. In the following section I discuss control and loyalty as insurgent war objectives as well as the methods insurgents employ to compel loyalty and enforce control.

Objectives in War

While secession or revolution maybe the ultimate goals of most insurgencies, imbedded within civil wars are series of immediate and intermediate objectives. Insurgents seek to overcome state forces and realize their long-term goals, but doing so typically requires the accumulation of smaller victories such as the expulsion of government troops and civilian loyalists from specific areas and the establishment and maintenance of control over both the physical territory as well as the population residing within it. In the traditional model of insurgency, victory is eventually attained through the establishment, maintenance, and expansion of zones of control (Guevara, 1969; Zedong, 1961). These often begin as base areas in remote swamps, jungles, or mountains from which insurgents launch clandestine "terror" attacks or stage guerrilla campaigns, but over time the expectation is that insurgents will attempt to extend their control over significant portion of territory and command the nominal allegiance (or at least the acquiescence) of substantial swaths of the population. In Vietnam, for instance, the "liberated areas" in which the Viet Cong enjoyed almost exclusive control were a major source of recruitment for the insurgents, both for their military and civil-political apparatus (Pike, 1969: 113-114). In this sense, civil wars and insurgencies are

in reality as much about the building of control and loyalty as the military defeat of government forces (see Kalyvas, 2006).

Control in civil wars is often premised on the presence of a largely sympathetic or at least neutral population (Hunt, 1981: 31). To that end, theorists of revolution and insurgency have often argued that insurgents succeed by establishing parallel ideological and political structures and attempting to destroy existing ones. The goal of these institutions is to increasingly separate peasants from extant social and political systems — insurgents win by creating and then exploiting the alienation of the population from the regime (Shultz, 1978: 74-75; 1981: 53). Often, they accomplish this goal by succeeding in out-administering the regime, or providing (or creating the illusion of) superior alternatives. The NLF, for instance, sought to enmesh the population in an overlapping network of social movements, organizations, and administration that would develop support for the revolution and keep dissenters in line (Pike, 1970: 6-7). Violence is employed at times exert a similar effect, alienating the population, and separating it physically and psychologically from the state. Terror can be used quite effectively to detach and isolate peasants from the structures of government, thereby opening an avenue through which insurgents can begin to build control (Pike, 1970: 8, 28; Thayer, 1985: 49). Thus, insurgents employ both constructive and destructive strategies to undermine regime authority and build up their own support and control over the population.

Scholars often connect the viability of an insurgency to the depth of civilian support (Leites & Wolfe, 1970; Mason, 1989: 467; 1996; Scott et al., 1970: 95-97; Valentino, Huth & Balch-Lindsay, 2004). Bernard Fall (1964: 371), following his experiences in Vietnam during both the insurgencies against the French and South Vietnamese governments,

postulated "no revolutionary war can be won without a measure of popular support."

Surprisingly, however, there has been relatively little systematic empirical investigation of the conditions that shape civilian-insurgent relations, how this relationship varies over time or how this variation affects violence. As Kalyvas notes (2004: 121-122), while it is reasonable to assume that insurgents care about civilians because they rely on civilian collaborators, the strength of the ties between rebels and civilians may be overestimated. Not all insurgents necessarily depend on positive relations with civilians as a means of acquiring resources. Warlords, for instance, often show little interest in establishing positive relationships with civilians while liberation movements explicitly attempt to integrate them (Kasfir, 2005: 272). Yet, revolutions are ultimately fought over and often decided by the support of non-elites (Mason, 1989: 467). Thus, the strategic goal of insurgency is the control of and influence over the population (Thompson, 1966: 29).

Control over the civilian population is a central goal of both insurgents and states because the distribution of civilian loyalty potentially shapes war outcomes (Hultman, 2007: 207; Scott et al., 1970: 95-97; also Kalyvas, 2004; 2006). The importance of civilian loyalty is three-fold. First, to at least some non-trivial degree, the distribution of civilian loyalty shapes war outcomes: the greater the degree of control over a greater amount of both territory and population the more likely it is for a side to emerge from the conflict victorious. Second, and related, insurgents rely on civilians to provide resources, recruits, and cover from typically more powerful government forces. And third, the maintenance of control (and therefore resource extraction and policing) is facilitated by the support of the civilian population. That is, when civilians actively support the insurgents they are more easily able to acquire necessary resources and to identify and punish potential and actual collaborators.

Much of the literature assumes that civilians are either largely indifferent to or, just as often, nominally supportive of the insurgents' efforts. Indeed, classical theories of insurgencies suggest that rebellion is born of underlying dissatisfaction with and resentment for the incumbent regime based on oppression, inequality, and deprivation (e.g., Davies, 1962; Gurr, 1970; Midlarsky, 1988). In such cases, it follows that the population would be largely sympathetic to the insurgents as they represent a possible avenue for the redress of grievances. Similarly, insurgent "bandits" have traditionally been idolized in developing societies. Peasant bandits have been seen as champions, avengers, and defenders of the lower classes who fight for justice and liberation of the common peasant from an oppressive or disconnected ruling class (Desai & Eckstein, 1990: 451-453; Hobsbawm, 1969). Moreover, "banditry" often forms something of precursor to the later development of rival orders and systems of government as "stationary bandits" adopt the trappings of states and seek to extract loyalty and resources from the local population (Mampilly, 2007).

In these models, the rebel movement acts to at least some degree as the proponent and protector of peasants. In their writings on insurgent strategy Mao (1961) and Guevara (1969) even advise revolutionaries to maintain positive relationships with civilians. As such, there exists a symbiotic relationship between insurgents and local populations, the former receiving resources, intelligence, and camouflage from the latter while providing them with some credible promise of future payoffs. Overtime, this relationship may evolve and strengthen. As insurgents gain ground relative to the government, they in turn are better able to provide benefits to the community such as internal security, protection from government violence, social welfare structures, and parallel political and judicial systems. In this sense,

classical insurgents reinvest in the community with the expectation that doing so improves their ability to extract loyalty over time.

However, the greed-based model of insurgency posits that rebels essentially function as war entrepreneurs and warlords who give little consideration to the general plight of peasants (see Collier, 2000; Collier & Hoeffler, 1998; Kaldor, 1999). The logic that flows from this model of insurgency therefore predicts that loot-seeking rebels are more likely to use violence against civilians because they are less likely to rely on civilians for resource extraction (see Weinstein, 2007). Rather, they attract violent, mercenary entrepreneurs who are likely to behave badly toward civilians. This argument, though, ignores the likely order of events that lead rebels to turn to looting rather than community organization as means to sustain the rebellion. Rather, it is likely that rebellions turn to looting and the recruitment of mercenaries when peasants fail to respond to their appeals for support or offer some resistance to their rebellion (Regan & Norton, 2005). As a result, the distinction between greed- and grievance-based insurgencies is hardly clear-cut, and modern civil wars rarely (if ever) fit the dichotomy (Sanin, 2004: 258). Yet even if some rebellions are primarily focused on loot-seeking rather than political reform or the redress of grievances, this does not exclude them from the necessity of attracting civilian loyalty or controlling territory and populations. Even insurgents who seek to exploit natural resources must recruit troops to wage war, gather information about the activities of government forces, control territory (from which to extract resources), and mobilize peasants (to extract resources). As a result, their demand for loyalty and their desire for control are likely to parallel that found in more "traditional" grievance-based wars.

Given this relationship, while insurgents may at times eschew civilian involvement, rational rebels should desire and seek some level of support from the local population if they are to achieve their goals.⁷ This proposition suggests the potential for civilians to determine (in some nominal way) certain aspects of their relationship with rebels (Kalyvas, 2004; Zahar, 2001: 117; Schafer, 2001: 231). The previous literature on insurgent mobilization and civilian support suggests that something of a bargaining relationship exists between insurgents and non-combatants (Mason, 1996; Tullock, 1971). Civilians place pressures on rebels to provide them certain benefits in exchange for remaining nominally loyal (Mampilly, 2007: 21). Thus, insurgents offer some basket of public goods and selective benefits as well as the threat of sanction in exchange for extracting a certain level of loyalty of support (taxes) from the population. The level of "loyalty" that insurgents can extract from the population is, in the simplest terms, based on the civilian population's expected level of benefits plus their belief in the probability of being targeted by insurgent sanctions (Mason, 1996). As such, the extraction (or provision) of loyalty is fundamentally related to two features of the conflict: the ability of insurgents (and the state) to provide goods to potential supporters and the level of credible violence they can impose on that population.

In a more complex manner this observation suggests that insurgents must in some way *compete* for the loyalty of the civilian population. Because governments seek to deter civilian support for the insurgency, they also offer a set of incentives and threatened punishments for disloyalty. This creates a competitive environment in which incumbent regimes and insurgents both attempt to capture the nominal loyalty of the civilian population.

⁷ The level of civilian support necessary to achieve insurgent goals is related to the goal itself. Successful secessionist conflicts would arguably require comparatively less civilian support than would insurgencies aimed at toppling the regime. Buhaug (2006) offers a largely state-centered theory of the relationship between relative capability and insurgent objectives during civil war.

Yet the willingness of civilians to support one side or the other (or either) varies over the course of the conflict. Civilians are notoriously fickle (Kalyvas, 2006: 101-102). They respond to changes in the relative resource flows provided by either side, to the threat of death or injury, to the likelihood of one side's victory over the other, to the incentives provided at refugee camps or other designated "safe areas," to the level of control exerted by belligerents in the specific geographic area, and they adjust their strategies accordingly. These factors are not static over the course of the conflict and, as a result, both the level of civilian support as well as the strategies employed by states and insurgents to compel loyalty are likely to vary during the course of the war. The following sections address the relationship between the provision of benefits or the imposition of sanctions and civilian loyalty. I then return to the competitive model in the last section.

Loyalty, Control, and Violence

Before addressing the strategies of support employed by insurgents it is useful to begin to unpack the relationship between civilian loyalty and insurgent violence. There exists a basic tension between civilian loyalty and insurgent violence — insurgents are unlikely to act violently toward communities that support them and more likely to use violence where and when they find little support. Regardless of the insurgency's motivations, rebels seek some nominal form of loyalty from the civilian population — at the least their acquiesce but preferably their outright support. Yet the population is not always supportive of the insurgents' goals and, even where broad sympathy from the population exists, civilians may be reluctant to provide loyalty and support to the insurgents for fear of punitive response from the government (e.g., Mason, 1989; 1996).

The level of support or resistance on the part of civilians has important implications for the strategies adopted by the insurgents, particularly with respect to violence. In simple terms, there is an intuitive relationship between support and violence: insurgents are less likely to act violently toward a population that willingly provides support. The reasons for this are two-fold. First, the level of latent support in the community and the ex ante willingness of civilians to offer loyalty means that insurgents need to offer comparatively fewer benefits to civilians. By contrast, when civilians are either resistant or indifferent insurgents must compel loyalty by providing higher levels of benefits or more severe sanctions. Second, loyalty influences control, and control is significant in predicting levels of violence (Kalyvas, 2006). While the relationship between control and loyalty is complex, it is reasonable to suggest that higher levels of loyalty from the population facilitate control by the insurgents. Consequently, loyalty, control and violence interact in important ways.

Loyalty

An interdependent relationship exists between civilian behaviors and the strategies of violence adopted by insurgents. Principally, insurgents desire the support or acquiescence of the civilian population, at least to the extent that they collaborate with insurgent forces rather than defecting to the government. The extent of civilian loyalty and the ease with which insurgents can compel support has implications for insurgent strategies of violence against civilians. Strong community ties or close networks between potential supporters and insurgents facilitate loyalty and increase civilians' willingness to support the insurgents (Denton, 1968: x; Humphrey & Weinstein, 2008; Wood, 2003). Moreover, when insurgents can rely on these existing structures and latent loyalties to draw support, they are less likely

to resort to violence against the population compared to insurgent groups that must use pecuniary benefits or coercion to attract support (Weinstein, 2007; see also Humphreys & Weinstein, 2006). The intuition here is that when insurgents enjoy the loyalty of the population they are relatively unlikely to direct violence against it because doing so would simply be counterproductive, accomplishing little but driving away their support base.

However, when civilians resist insurgents, perhaps by challenging the rebels directly, joining self-defense groups, or otherwise offer support to the government, insurgents are more likely to use violence liberally as a means to deter cooperation with the regime's forces. For instance, many urban-based, African insurgencies turned to violence against the civilian population when rural peasants failed to support the rebellion (Mkandawire, 2002). The LRA's failure to mobilize popular support among the Acholi contributed to its leader's (Joseph Kony) use of collective punishment against the population (Bevan, 2007; Branch, 2005). Faced with dwindling recruits and declining popular support to carry on the insurgency and a population unwilling to support the continuation of the conflict, Kony's LRA turned violence back upon the community from which it had expected support (Bevan, 2007: 348-349). Thus, the "LRA's anger at its perceived betrayal" contributed to its wanton violence (Gersony, 1997). Similarly, Anderson (2004: 164) reports that in Afghanistan, when a segment of the population opposed the Mujahadeen the guerrillas used coercion and terrorism against them.

Often, overt support for the government is not a precondition for insurgent violence. Targets may be "selected" based on actions that insurgents perceive as tacitly supporting the status quo or as "disloyal" to the insurgency. Other key examples are insurgent attacks on government-run (or at least non-insurgent-run) public services such as medical and

educational facilities. During the conflict in South Vietnam the NLF occasionally targeted students who attended GVN schools. Pike (1970: 21) recounts an instance in which the Viet Cong stopped a government school bus, removed a young girl, and cut off her fingers. The message was quite clear: if parents send their children to government schools they may become targets of violence. In Afghanistan and Pakistan the Taliban and allied militias have increasingly killed and maimed pupils and teachers in acid attacks, bombings, assassinations, and public beatings (especially against female students) to terrorize the public out of utilizing state-run schools (Coughlan, 2010). The Front likewise deemed peasants who complied (often involuntarily) with government relocation into its strategic hamlets as guilty of collaboration and targeted them indiscriminately (Hosmer, 1970: 28). Similarly, during the Algerian rebellion against the French, many peasants refused to use government schools or clinics for fear of insurgent punishment (cited in Leites and Wolfe, 1970: 128-129).

The intuition herein is that there is an inverse relationship between insurgent violence and civilian loyalty. However, the level of loyalty necessary to reduce the risk of being targeted by insurgents is often above simply remaining "neutral". Indeed, past analyses suggest that both sides often use violence as a means to undermine the option of neutrality in a conflict environment (Kalyvas & Kocher, 2007a). Rather, attaining the level of loyalty needed to avoid insurgent violence may entail civilians actively avoiding government services, abstaining from the (government controlled) political processes, or, perhaps, actively partaking in the insurgents' resistance effort. Yet, for civilians, the option to voice active support is contingent on the ability of the insurgent group to provide alternatives. At the least, it would require that insurgents provide some nominal level of security for active supporters and sympathetic civilians. Consequently, civilian loyalty to insurgents is created

by the joint process of punishing civilians for betrayal and providing alternatives to government systems and resources. Importantly, the provision of high levels of the latter is likely to preclude or reduce the need for the former.

Control

Control is a central objective of insurgents, and variations in loyalty and control are linked to strategies of violence. However, loyalty and control are endogenous to the conflict environment. Kalyvas (2006: 119-121) argues that loyalty *follows* control. That is, all else equal, civilians obey whichever side exerts dominance in a given area. This implies that control is the better part of support. However, even if collaboration generally follows both temporal and spatial variations of control, the ability of an insurgent group to achieve and sustain control over the population should be, in some substantial part, based on the willingness of the population to support the armed group. Conflict environments are inherently competitive (Tullock, 1971; Mason, 1989; 1996). Moreover, recruitment occurs not just in areas of control but also in areas apart from the center of insurgent command and control (Gates, 2002). These factors suggest that while loyalty and collaboration are facilitated by control, insurgents attempt to both maintain the support of the civilians within the areas they already control as well as expand control and support into contested areas. In this case, the level of benefits necessary to accrue new and sustain existing supporters may not necessarily be the same (see Gates, 2002). However, both the expansion and maintenance of control and loyalty should be related to the resource streams (as well as coercion) insurgents devote to civilians. Put simply, even if insurgents can exert military control over an area, the provision of benefits should enhance the level of loyalty they

receive from the population, allowing them to devote military resources to other areas of the conflict. Similarly, while insurgents may be able to force control upon an area, the level of latent support within an area could either complicate or facilitate that effort.

Given this relationship, the power dynamics of a conflict not only determine the ability of an insurgent group to exert military control over territory but also influence the perceptions and behaviors of civilians with respect to the level of support and loyalty they offer to the insurgents. As such, unpacking strategies of insurgent violence requires the explicit incorporation of civilian strategizing — that is, identifying the conditions under which civilian loyalty for insurgents is likely to increase. These strategies are specifically linked to the sets of recruitment strategies employed by insurgents (as well as states) in the competitive environment in which they operate.

Competing for Loyalty

A recurrent wisdom within both the academic and policy literature is that insurgents often rely (some times extensively) on civilians to survive (Leites and Wolfe, 1970; Mason, 1989: 467; 1996; Scott et al., 1970: 95-97; Valentino, Huth & Balch-Lindsay, 2004). Moreover, counterinsurgency is often in part formulated with an eye to "hearts and minds," suggesting that winning the nominal support of the non-combatant population is somehow fundamental to the success or failure of government efforts to thwart revolution. Without trivializing the complexity or gravity of domestic conflict, the theory constructed here assumes civil conflicts generally, and revolutions specifically, resemble the competition over market share between opposing firms (DeNardo, 1984; Leites & Wolf, 1970; Mason, 1996; Tullock,

1971). Insurgents (and governments) thus have an incentive to entice civilian loyalty and to employ sanctions to prevent and punish collaboration with the enemy.

Insurgents have multiple potential strategies for compelling or enforcing loyalty among the population. The use of one strategy does not necessarily preclude the use of other and insurgents frequently mix among various mobilization techniques. The NLF in Vietnam, for example, adeptly combined terrorism, coercive violence, ideology, organization, and substantive policies and programs in various combinations throughout their conflict with the GVN (Shultz, 1978; see also Pike, 1967). The mixture of strategies chosen by the group is determined by a number of factors, a point I return to in more detail in Chapter 4. Moreover, this balance is subject to revision and change over time as the context of the conflict changes. Thus, a strategy set deemed prudent and effective at one time point may be rejected and replaced at another point.

Insurgents may also vary the strategies they employ for enticing support over the course of the conflict. Violence against civilians represents one of the possible strategies and its use varies depending on the specific context at a specific time. Indeed, the process of rebellion entails both constructive and destructive components to achieve their goals. Above I argued that violence is likely to be employed when civilians are reluctant to support insurgents or when they actively withhold loyalty, attempt to remain neutral or remain loyal to the government (actions that are often viewed by insurgents as synonymous). Hence, violence should vary with fluctuations in civilian loyalty and with the ability of insurgents to exert control over territory.

If violence is contingent on the level of civilian loyalty, it is necessary to explain when and why civilians chose to become or remain loyal to insurgents as opposed to

remaining uninvolved or collaborating with the government. A partial answer is located in ability of insurgents to employ non-violent strategies in an attempt to compel civilian loyalty. In the competitive conflict environment, both sides attempt to woo civilians with a mixture of benefits and sanctions. Civilians then support the side that can credibly provide them with the largest balance of benefits relative to the likelihood of being punished by the opposing side (Mason, 1989; 1996). Consequently, insurgents are likely to resort to violence when they are unable to provide a sufficient level of positive incentives to offset the benefits provided by the state as well as the threat of government sanctions. For the rational peasant it simply makes more sense to withhold support from the insurgents when there is a low likelihood of insurgent victory or when they are presented with few credible benefits. In turn insurgents may adopt violence, compelling loyalty and cooperation and gunpoint because they are simply unable to compete with governments over the support of civilians. That is, lacking other options, they turn violent.

A second question, then, is why do insurgents fail to provide civilians with a competitive offer with which to counter the government? The answer to this question, and therefore an explanation for why insurgents use violence, is that they are often unable to compete with governments in terms of positive incentives because of their limited material and organizational capabilities. Put simply, weak insurgents simply cannot muster sufficient resources to compel civilian loyalty voluntarily. As such, the level of violence against civilians that insurgents employ is likely to be closely related to the disparity in the degree of capability between the insurgent forces and the government. The larger the capability gap, the greater the extent to which insurgents are likely to rely on violence as opposed to positive

incentives as a means to enforce civilian loyalty and deter collaboration with government forces.

This observation, however, is not fully satisfactory because it only partly accounts for the dynamic nature of the conflict environment. As such, it is necessary to explicitly account for the manner in which changes in the disparity of capabilities between belligerents affect changes in the comparative levels of resources the groups can provide and how, in turn, these changes in relative resource provision alter civilian decision-making. As the streams of resources provided by both sides fluctuate over the course of the conflict, civilians should update their strategies of support and loyalty. As insurgents are able to provide greater, more competitive levels of benefits to civilians, civilians should be increasingly likely to offer their nominal support to the insurgency. In turn, the increase in civilian support should allow insurgents to reduce their reliance on violence because they are able to effectively substitute non-violent recruitment tools for coercive violence.

Conclusion

This chapter has detailed some of the core assumption regarding civil war dynamics, insurgent motivations and objectives, and civilian behaviors from which the theory follows. It begins by demonstrating the limitations of static explanations of civil war violence or those that seek to explain insurgent behavior as a produce of initial conditions, pre-existing cleavages, or other factors that inform group "types". While the conditions, structures, or relationships that pre-date the conflict or emerge during its early days likely inform the strategic options and trajectory of an insurgency, they cannot explain variation in the strategies adopted by groups at different points in the conflict. Some groups are likely

predisposed to greater levels of violence, but as the example of the LRA provided in the introduction points out, even the most notorious of insurgent organizations vary their use of violence over the course of the conflict. As this example suggests and the model sketched above predicts, violence varies as a result of shifts within the strategic environment. Changes in power dynamics and civilians loyalties alter the incentives for insurgents (as well as states) to use violence against civilians as a strategy of population control.

The model presented in this chapter assumes that civil wars are dynamic processes in which armed political actors attempt to maximize their level of control over populations and territory. In order to achieve their intermediate-term goal of control, belligerents require a nominal level of loyalty from the population. This is especially true of insurgents who, as much of guerilla warfare and revolutionary theory argues, are dependent on civilian for resource mobilization and cover from numerically and technologically superior government forces. However, government forces also desire the loyalty of the civilian population, at least to the extent that they can prevent them from collaborating with insurgents and can rely on them to provide information regarding insurgent activities.

Civilian loyalty is closely related to the levels of violence adopted by the actors, particularly insurgents. When popular loyalty is forthcoming there is little incentive for armed political actors to target civilians; however, if civilians continue to support the regime or resist insurgent requests or demands for resources, the group may use violence to compel their loyalty by force or terror to cow civilians into collaboration. The level of civilian loyalty is not typically predetermined in a conflict; nor is it necessarily static over time. Consequently, violence and loyalty should fluctuate in relationship to one another over the course of a conflict. All else equal, during periods in which civilians support the rebels,

violence should decline; by contrast, it should escalate when civilians resist the insurgents or support the regime.

Civil wars are a competitive environment in which both sides offer both the promise of benefits and the threat of violence as a means to elicit the support or nominal loyalty of the population. The mixture of benefits and sanctions is largely determined by the balance of power in the conflict such that weaker groups, because they are less able to provide positive incentives in exchange for loyalty, are more likely to use violence against the population as a means to secure control. However, the power balance within the conflict is not static and shifts in the power dynamics alter the relative ability of the groups to provide benefits to supporters. Consequently, shifts in the power dynamics lead to changes in levels and types of violence. More specifically, declining capabilities reduce flows of resources to civilians and reduce their expectations of insurgent victory. This in turn reduces their willingness to support the insurgents. Facing declining capabilities and declining civilian support, insurgents have a greater incentive to substitute violence as a means to either undermine government control or to enforce loyalty among the civilian population.

These dynamics require examining in greater detail the decision-making processes of civilians within the context of active conflict as well as an evaluation of the effect of changes in conflict power dynamics on the willingness of civilians to remain loyal to one side or the other as such dynamics impact the perceived utility for violence on the part of the insurgents. To that end, I address them more explicitly in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 3

Defection & Loyalty: Non-Combatant Strategies in Civil War

As the last chapter discussed, civilians play a critical role in the process of insurgency. The distribution of their loyalty and support can be critical to the outcome of the conflict; as such, insurgents and states both compete to compel their nominal loyalty and prevent them from collaborating with the enemy. Despite their apparent centrality to conflict, the strategic interaction between armed actors and civilians has been ignored in models of violence. This omission is especially surprising given the wealth of literature focused on insurgent collective action and mobilization (e.g., DeNardo, 1985; Mason, 1989; Popkin, 1979; Wood, 2003). Much of the earlier work on collective action focused expressly on the process of getting the insurgency started. These analyses and theories frequently conclude after a core group of peasants or political activists manage to overcome the collective action problem and take up arms against the regime. They stop short of explaining how the insurgency sustains itself or what strategies it adopts to expand beyond a core group of highly motivated individuals. Civilians provide the fuel by which an insurgency grows, survives, and can present a meaningful challenge to the state. As such, any discussion of civil war dynamics should consider the role of civilian actors and how they devise strategies of survival and profit during conflict.

During civil conflict civilians face a number of possible options. For example, they may take up arms with one of the belligerents, provide subtler types of assistance short of

armed participation, become refugees or internally displaced persons, or simply do nothing and remain neutral. While civilians are strategic and play an important role in conflicts, few studies have specifically addressed the interactions between insurgents and civilians in any systematic manner (though see Mampilly, 2007; Wood, 2003). Rather, most have assumed that civilians are simply pliable, neutral entities who follow whichever side exerts control (Kalyvas, 2006) or who play no significant role other than as victims (Hultman, 2007; Valentino et al, 2004; Weinstein, 2007). However, as established in the previous section, insurgents and states both desire the loyalty of significant portions of the civilian population because commanding that loyalty facilitates the control of territory and increases the probability of victory.

This relationship suggests that to some degree civilians do have the capacity to negotiate their relationship with insurgents (Schafer, 2001: 231; Zahar, 2000: 117). Recent research has shown that insurgents do at times respond to "pressures from below" in a manner not altogether different from states (Mampilly, 2007). This intuition is key to the theory presented herein. If the assumption that insurgents desire civilian support holds, then identifying the factors that predict civilian support and loyalty are central to explaining the dynamics of violence in civil wars. This chapter therefore focuses on the determinants of civilian support for the insurgency. Civilian decision-making is closely connected to civilian perception of the relative capabilities of the group because this perception influences their expectations regarding both the long-term and immediate benefits for remaining loyal to the group. In brief, civilians are likely to support the side that can credibly offer them security and other benefits and whom they believe is most likely to emerge victorious in the conflict. Civilians' beliefs regarding resource streams and the probability of victory are largely

informed by power dynamics within the conflict. Consequently, they are likely to support insurgents when the power dynamics favor the group and reduce that support when power is shifting against them.

Competition & Strategic Choice in Civil War

As discussed in the previous chapter, the conflict environment is competitive, and both sides compete for the nominal loyalty of civilian by offering various goods and services as well as the threat of sanctions. All else equal, civilians are more likely to support whichever side offers the more competitive "deal." While some analyses have asserted that civilian loyalties and behaviors are more likely a function of the threat of violence (Leites, 1969; Pike, 1970) or simply follow patterns of control (Kalyvas, 2006), the empirical record suggests that the balance of benefits provided by the group can motivate public support. Shultz (1978: 80), for example, argues that despite assertions by his contemporaries, the success of the NLF in mobilizing support was its combination of social-political and economic strategies, not its use of terrorism. Similarly, Race (1972: 184) observed that in Long An province, the high incentives offered by the Front led to a large influx of people to the movement in spite of the heavy risk it posed. In this case, the great strength of the Party and its success in acquiring and maintaining civilian support was its ability to enmesh civilians in dense, well-organized network of control that included social, political, and economic components (Pike, 1969: 147). Support was therefore crafted to a large extent by the interactions between insurgents and civilians and not simply by the threat of violence, though this threat was constant (Berman, 1974: 198).

As also discussed in the previous chapter civilian-insurgent relationships vary over time. Civilian preferences with respect to loyalty are not necessarily stable over time. The dynamics of the conflict play a large part in determining the willingness of uncommitted civilians to join a revolution (Kuran, 1989; Van Belle, 1996). Moreover, within the context of an active conflict both the depth and direction of civilian commitment to a side can vary (at times significantly) over its course (Kalyvas, 2006: 100-101). As an extension of the basic capabilities-support argument mentioned above, I posit here that variations in the relative capabilities of insurgents over the course of the conflict contribute to the changes in the aggregate level of support and loyalty provided by the population in the conflict zone. In turn, as will be discussed in the subsequent chapter, this change in relative capabilities structures the level of violence employed by the insurgents.

Civilians evaluate the "offers" proposed by insurgents and states and decide on a level of "loyalty" they are willing to extend to the insurgents. Insurgents rely on a variety of factors in an attempt to compel loyalty from civilians: ideology, communal ties, loot and physical resources, protection, and the promise of a better life after the cessation of the conflict. The specific factors that motivate individuals in conflict environments may be idiosyncratic or related to the nuances of the conflict. However, the extant literature and anecdotal evidence provides some general trends in the factors and strategies that succeed in mobilizing civilian support.

Material Benefits

Much of the research on insurgent collective action and insurgent support has focused on selective incentives in the form of tangible benefits (e.g., Mason, 1989; Lichbach, 1995).

According to this logic, in a competitive conflict environment civilians are more likely to support the side that offers them the best set of resources. Thus, for insurgents, access to loot or other forms of combat wages are among the most common selective incentives. Recent literature on the economic motivations of "new wars" suggests that greed and profit may be the primary motivations for individuals to rebel against their governments (Collier, 2000; Collier & Hoeffler, 1998; Kaldor, 1999). Weinstein (2007), for examples, argues that loot or other types of resources are effective tools for attracting mercenary-minded individuals when social and political appeals fail to motivate the population. Similarly, media reports have given much attention to the use of looting in modern insurgencies, especially by African warlords such as Charles Taylor in Liberia and Foday Sankoh in Sierra Leone who largely paid their armies with goods plundered from civilian populations. Historically organizers of insurrection have often paid participants with cash, food and drink, drugs, or pillaged goods.⁸ Warlords in early 20th century China even developed extensive patronage systems for the distribution of goods acquired in raids and sieges (Skocpol, 1979: 237).

Yet, the real motivational properties of cash and loot seem questionable and vary depending on group and context. While few scientific studies of combatant motivations exist, those that have been conducted find loot's effectiveness in motivating combatants somewhat inconsistent or at least suggest that other motivations are at least equally important. RAND Corporation interviewers conducted hundreds of interviews with prisoners and defectors from the Communist insurgency in Vietnam in an attempt to systematically evaluate the motivations for participation in the rebellion. The data suggest a variety of motivations for an individual to join the revolution, yet the acquisition of loot or the

⁸ Lichbach (1995, chapter 6) provides a wealth of historical examples.

expectation of payment is not among the reasons supplied by former guerrillas (Denton, 1969: 10-12). Interestingly, while former insurgents cited a belief in limited economic opportunities under the GVN as a reason for joining, the economic situation of the insurgents prior to their mobilization did not seem to predict recruitment. Volunteers were evenly distributed across social classes and volunteers clustered around both the lowest and highest categories of land ownership. While this does not explicitly address the economic motivations for recruitment it suggests that loot-seeking was not a primary motivator for the majority of NLF recruits.

On the other hand, Humphreys and Weinstein's (2008) survey of ex-combatants in Sierra Leone found a marginally significant relationship between an individual's decision to (voluntarily) join the RUF and the promise or expectation of diamonds or cash. In contrast to the NLF case, they found that wages were a significant factor in the decision of persons who joined the Civil Defense Forces (CDF), a pro-government tribal militia. Recruitment in the Colombian conflict shows a similar trend. While approximately 20% of demobilized National Liberation Army (ELN) and FARC combatants reported that the promise of payment or other material benefits was a major factor in their recruitment, 46% of collectively demobilized former paramilitaries reported that such rewards motivated their decision to join the pro-government groups (Arjona & Kalyvas, 2006: 33).

While material benefits are sometimes a motivator for individuals to join a rebellion, it appears that pro-government groups are better able to attract supporters using such benefits. Arguably, this relationship is driven by the superior financial capabilities of most states over insurgent forces. It could also suggest that other factors are just as likely to resonate with individuals considering whom to support in a conflict. As these and other

analyses of predictors of mobilization and support suggest, individual motivations are varied and not mutually exclusive, and many supporters may seek to exploit both political as well as economic opportunities. Indeed, the two are not necessarily incompatible. In "liberated areas" or other zones of insurgent control rebels may couple political ideology and material benefits in a mutually reinforcing manner designed to promote popular support.

Identity & Ideology

Insurgents may also appeal to the political sympathies of the population or tap into social or cultural networks as a means to rally support. Ideological strategies have been commonly employed among Leftist insurgents who have attempted to transform apolitical peasants into active supporters of the revolution. For example, the NLF in Vietnam conducted propaganda activities in rural villages, which often included parades, political classes, social events, and the distribution of communist literature (Berman, 1974; Leites, 1969; Pike, 1967). FMLN insurgents in El Salvador employed similar tactics with nominal success (Anderson, 1992: Ch. 2). More recently, Maoist insurgents in Nepal skillfully used political propaganda campaigns as a low-cost recruitment tactic. The guerillas staged mass gatherings in which they conducted skits that publicized the guerillas' victories over the state and taught songs and dances to villagers that narrated war stories and illustrated the courage and sacrifices of the insurgents (Eck, 2009a: 16-17). Such strategies were reportedly quite effective in mobilizing for the Maoists among the peasantry. Similarly, appeals to civilians' identity or communal affiliation also work to mobilize support and promote loyalty to the rebellion. Eck (2009b) argues that mobilization strategies focused on group identity can be effective in

growing and expanding an insurgency and her results suggest that insurgents who mobilize along these lines grow more rapidly than insurgents who rely on other types of mobilization.

While such efforts may attract some true believers, in general the record suggests that ideology and political sympathies are poor predictors of support. While civilians may hold preferences for one side or other, these seldom translate into active support (Leites & Wolfe, 1970: 8-16; Kalyvas, 2006: 101-102). Indeed, conflicts create incentives for preference falsification — few peasants have ideological or political preferences profound enough to become martyrs for the cause. Rather, ideology appears to only play a notable role in support behaviors *ex post*. That is, ideological identification and its role in spurring peasants to action typically result from wartime socialization and indoctrination (Kalyvas, 2006: 45-46). Thus, ideology is frequently endogenous to the conflict as rebels and states both seek to raise the consciousness of the populations or educate them about political ideologies that may be quite foreign. Eck's (2009a) discussion of Maoist propaganda efforts is a case in point; similarly, the Viet Cong made extensive use of this sort socialization process (see Berman, 1974: 75; Pike, 1969: 121-132). The same can often be said for ethnicity as well. While identity is often taken as permanent or ascribed, ethnic defection is fairly common in war and the depth of ethnic identification is often directly related to the processes of civil war violence (Kalyvas & Kocher, 2007b; Fearon & Laitin, 2000). The process of ideology construction and indoctrination are often closely associated with and improved upon by other recruitment strategies conducted by rebels, namely the construction of local institutions and the provision of benefits.

Institutions & Non-pecuniary Resources

To the extent they are capable, insurgents often construct parallel political and social institutions that compete with or supersede those controlled by the state (Shultz, 1978: 74-75). These institutions serve multiple functions in the process of mobilizing civilian support and promoting recruitment. On the one hand, the establishment of quasi-states in liberated areas or other rebel-held territories is designed to construct a belief in the legitimacy of the movement and to demonstrate that insurgents are not simply bandits but take active interest in governance, stability, and the well-being of the population (at least those who support them) (Mampilly, 2007: 20; Wickham-Crowley, 1987: 482-483). Guevara (1969: 81-83) asserted that a functioning system of law and the assurance of stability were important features of authority in rebel-controlled areas as they helped allow civilians to normalize and accommodate themselves to life under insurgent rule. For example, within their zone of control the TPLF implemented land reform, constructed judicial and political systems, and in 1978 established the Relief Society of Tigray, which coordinated relief programs and humanitarian assistance to peasants (Young, 1998). Such institutions mimicked or improved upon state services and provided a level of normalcy to civilians.

On the other hand, the development of institutions and the implementation of policies that alter the economic or political status quo are often important components in the insurgents' political agenda. Popular education programs, land redistribution and reform policies, elections, and systems of justice serve both as benefits extended to supporters as well as tools to promote and reinforce the political ideology of the insurgents. For example, land reform employed by the NLF in their liberated zones helped both to attract support by literally providing land to poor peasants, but it also tangibly demonstrated to them the goals

of the Communist political agenda (Davison, 1968: 17, 95, 161; Leites, 1969: 172-173). It also used its freedom and power in these areas to establish educational systems that helped educate the population about the struggle as well as providing them basic literacy and other skills (Pike, 1967: 281-283). Similarly, the FMLN's rural education cooperatives provided the benefit of teaching peasants basic literacy and other skills, but these programs also included the use of leftist political literature and exposure to Catholic Liberation Theology (Hammond, 1999). Both of these were intended to help transform the political consciousness of the peasants as well as feed their basic desire for education, land, political access, and other benefits denied to them by the state against which the insurgents rebelled. Because ideology and political sympathies are not often predetermined but rather endogenous to the conflict, as mentioned above, rebels have incentives to socialize peasants to their political views by imbedding politics within the resources they offer to peasants.

Where insurgents have the organizational capacity and material capabilities, the establishment of quasi-state institutions and the implementation of policies that collectively benefit civilians often prove successful in mobilizing popular support. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), for example, established a judicial system, provided education and medical services, and carried out land reform in order to encourage civilian support (Poole, 2001: 105-130). The FMLN's ability to organize community government, educational programs, and civic cooperatives in their "liberated zones" appeared to garner support from peasants (Binford, 1997; Hammond, 1996). In areas held by the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) in southern Sudan and, particularly among the non-Dinka inhabitants within its zones of control, the construction of civil administration and the provision of benefits through insurgent institutions helped to construct a feeling among

peasants that the "movement was their movement," thereby increasing their loyalty to the rebels (Johnson, 2003: 108).

The provision of these goods and services often influences the level of loyalty provided by the population. For instance, the TPLF had to credibly demonstrate their commitment to making positive contributions to the lives of the Afar through the provision of these benefits before the skeptical peasantry was willing to engage in the risky business of providing sustained support (Young, 1998: 149-151). Similarly, in Vietnam, the provision of alternative institutions and pro-peasant political reforms in areas liberated from the government significantly improved relations between the NLF and the peasants. Race (1972: 123-128) reports that under areas of NLF control in Long An province, there was a rapid shift in land ownership. As a result, large numbers of peasants rallied behind the NLF in areas in which they implemented these policies (Davison, 1968: 94-95). Moreover, those peasants that received land from these programs became the most enthusiastic supporters because they saw themselves as "vested" in the NLF's success (96). The programs and institutions constructed by SPLM/A served the purpose of "endearing" the population to the group's broader political goals (Mampilly, 2007: 150).

Security

Beyond the provision of material benefits, civilians appear to respond most effectively to the provision of security. Indeed, the existing evidence suggests that for the average peasant, avoiding violence and limiting damage is the foremost concern (Leites & Wolfe, 1970: 127; Mason, 1989; Migdal, 1974; see also Goodwin, 2001). As a result, support for the insurgents increases when the group can provide them credible security guarantees and a reduced risk of

exposure to government reprisals (Kalyvas, 2006: 114-116). Without some form of credible security degree from the rebels, there is likely insufficient incentive for a civilian to risk supporting the insurgents. The "better deal" offered by the insurgents in the context of civil war competition only needs to be a nominally better probability of survival than they could expect from remaining neutral. Thus, the rebels can overturn any increase in support for the government prompted by rising state coercion by providing some measure of protection to civilians (Mason, 1989: 477). During the Chinese revolution one of the primary factors contributing to the mobilization success of Mao's rebellion was its ability to protect civilians from the indiscriminate violence committed by Japanese forces (DeNardo, 1984: 26).

Anecdotal reports and survey data largely bear out this relationship. Humphrey's & Weinstein (2008), for example, report that security was a prime motivator for civilians to join either the RUF or the CDF during the civil war in Sierra Leone. In Vietnam, Communist forces (particularly the regular forces) acquired respect and support when they could provide security for rural hamlets (Gurtov, 1967: 24). Moreover, changes in security provision correlate to changes in the levels of civilian support. Interviewees in Rand studies in Vietnam repeatedly "made it clear" that security and control largely determined peasant attitudes and support (Goure, 1965: 18). Indeed, these surveys suggest that while material benefits helped gain the NLF a measure of popularity among peasants, support and perceptions of "good and bad" ultimately boiled down to which side could better protect them (Leites, 1969: xi) It follows then that support for the Communist forces in many

hamlets began to waver in 1965-1966 because the Front was not longer able to provide the security it once had (Gurtov, 1967: 24).⁹

Expected Outcomes

While short-term benefits and security concerns have a significant impact on civilian decision-making, civilians also develop strategies of support or defection based on intermediate and longer-term evaluations of likely war outcomes. Principally, civilian support is correlated with civilian expectations about the likelihood of a conflict or the probability of insurgent survival. When civilians gauge a high likelihood of insurgent victory or perceive that the group has the ability to survive and effectively challenge government control they become more likely to offer the group their loyalty. Wood (2003: 237-238, 272-273), for example, shows that peasants were more likely to support the FMLN guerrillas once the group was able to demonstrate its capabilities relative to the government. In a similar manner, the NLF insurgents in South Vietnam enjoyed broad public support in the 1960s largely because the population viewed their victory as inevitable (Herrington, 1997: 29; Leites, 1969: ix-x). This suggests that mobilizing support and maintaining loyalty is closely tied to the ability to demonstrate capabilities to the pool of potential recruits (Gates, 2002: 123).

⁹ This change is largely based on the increased capabilities of the anti-Communist forces (US and GVN). It is also largely a function of increased US air power, which to some significant degree negated the ability of the NLF to provide security to the villages they controlled. I discuss this in more detail in the next chapter.

Control

As discussed in the previous chapter, civilian loyalty is often closely related to the ability of insurgents to exert effective control over territory. Indeed, control is the progenitor of loyalty (Kalyvas, 2006: 124-125). Control is critical in developing civilian support because it both informs beliefs about likely outcomes as well as functions as an initial condition for the provision of benefits such as material resources and protection. Control over territory is indicative of strength and should be a strong signal that insurgents can provide promised benefits to supporters. Moreover, it is a precursor to the provision of other resources — parallel institutions and services often only materialize following the liberation of territory from government control.

Territorial control also allows insurgents to shield supporters from government violence and to provide them a nominal level of stability (Mason, 1996: 74; Kalyvas, 2006: 124). For example, in the early 1960s the Viet Cong were able to attract an influx of civilian supporters to the areas they controlled because they had significantly eliminated the GVN's presence and thus improved civilian security (Race, 1973: 116). Similarly, the Chinese Communists were able to increase their level of civilian support because they were often better able to control territory and provide security for civilians than the Kuomintang during the Japanese occupation (Migdal, 1974: 254). Territorial control likewise facilitates the provision of tangible benefits, which further reduces the barriers to attracting and maintaining civilian loyalty. Consequently, territorial control should further promote civilian loyalty. As noted above, when insurgents are capable of providing these goods and services and when civilians' beliefs about the likelihood of insurgent success increase, civilians are increasingly likely to be more supportive of insurgents. However, negative

changes in these conditions are likely to lead to deleterious changes in civilians' willingness to remain loyal. As control collapses, insurgents are less able to provide goods and services to civilians, reducing and further weakening their loyalty to the insurgents. As such, if military power shifts against insurgents to the extent that they lose territory, they are likely to face the double blow of military defeat and declining civilian loyalty.

Violence

Insurgents may also rely on coercive violence to elicit support and prevent collaboration with the government. Violence against civilians helps insurgents overcome their collective action problem in two ways. First, it compels cooperation — quite literally — at gunpoint. Second, violence alters civilians' expected returns for loyalty to the government or for remaining neutral (Kalyvas, 1999; Kalyvas & Kocher, 2007a; Mason, 1996; Restrepo & Spagat 2004). In this sense, violence — or, more specifically, the opportunity to escape violence — is used as a selective incentive. Marks (1994: 219-220), for instance, asserts that Sendero Lumino used terror against civilians and assassinations of leftist leaders as a recruitment tool and a means to expand its infrastructure. Civilians may collaborate with insurgents when compelled by violence because there is no practical benefit to resistance and because doing so helps them avoid insurgent violence.

In a related manner, violence directed against civilians underscores the government's inability (or unwillingness) to protect vulnerable civilians and may increase civilians' perception of the likelihood of insurgent victory (Lichbach, 1995: 58). In this sense violence may — in a perverse manner — create the conditions necessary for insurgents to acquire civilian support because it breaks down the expected relationship between the state and the

masses. NLF violence in the early 1960s severed the relationship between the people and the government by effectively eliminating the GVN's presence in many rural areas. The Party therefore became the de facto ruler and provider for the people (Race, 1872: 116). Insurgents also benefit from creating a Hobbesian environment from the Weberian state (Millen, 2006/2007; Vinci, 2006). The Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO), for example, initially shelled villages and used other violence against civilians to demonstrate that the Portuguese forces could not protect civilians (Henriksen, 1983: 77, 121). Pike (1970: 28) states that terror is intended to disorient and increase insecurity, thereby undermining the control of the regime. If civilians perceive that their government either lacks the capacity or the will to prevent guerrilla attacks or if they perceive that the insurgents might just pull off the rebellion, their expected utility for resistance against the insurgents declines. In Vietnam, while NLF violence did not endear the Front to civilians, it created a deep-seated apathy to the Saigon regime (Hunt, 1981: 38). This apathy is often sufficient for insurgents to expand their control and put in place institutions and programs that further drive a wedge between the people and the regime.

Capabilities & Strategic Options

While appeals to political, communal or ideological preference may gain some support for the insurgency, such approaches often fail to garner sufficient loyalty for the insurgents.

Two principal factors undermine this strategy. First, the average civilian, at least in terms of political behavior, is largely apolitical and driven by more immediate survival and security concerns (Migdal, 1974). Even when civilians are sympathetic to the goals of the insurgency, popular appeals and promises of political change and social justice often fail to

mobilize support because the risk to an individual for supporting a rebellion typically outweighs the probability of attaining the goods promised by the rebels (Mason, 1989; Tullock, 1971). Second, even politically motivated civilians are likely to weigh the risks of participating versus the credibility of the promise of change. Weak insurgencies are unlikely to convince peasants that they can actually provide the goods that they promise. As a result, few civilians will risk joining an insurgency if they perceive *ex ante* a low probability of insurgent victory.¹⁰ Rebels must therefore typically rely on other strategies to encourage civilian support.

The extant literature on the impetus for insurgent recruitment and popular mobilization¹¹, as well as anecdotal accounts of civilian decision-making in civil war, suggests that in general apolitical civilians are principally concerned with three things: tangible benefits, security, and conflict outcomes (see for example Humphrey & Weinstein, 2008; Lichbach, 1995; Migdal, 1974; Mason, 1996).¹² With the notable exception of loot-oriented rebels, the material and non-pecuniary benefits mentioned above require significant outlays of resources on the part of the rebels. Not only is the provision of state-like

¹⁰ There are, of course, also the joint issues of civilians' beliefs about the insurgents' will to make good on their promises even if they do succeed in ousting the regime. In addition, the basic inexcludability of the public goods generated from a successful revolution leads many would-be dissidents to let someone else do the work. See Mason (1989; 1996), Lichbach (1995), and Tullock (1971) among others.

¹¹ Herein I focus on voluntarily recruitment rather than coerced mobilization. Indeed, it is often difficult to assess *ex post* the dynamics of individual decision-making with respect to joining or supporting an insurgency. In many cases, individuals have an incentive to reconstruct history in a way that paints their decision as more politically or socially justifiable. For example, many former RUF soldiers claimed they were forcibly conscripted or abducted but this may simply be an attempt to distance themselves from the violence committed by the group. Furthermore, insurgents (as well as states) frequently employ a mix of carrots and sticks, making it difficult to distinguish those who joined voluntarily from those who joined because they had no other choice (Denton, 1968: 6-7; Humphreys & Weinstein, 2008: 448).

¹² This does negate the individual-level importance of norms, ideological preferences, family connections, etc. Rather, this simple model assumes risk-aversion and generally weak preferences among civilians in the aggregate, which is consistent with most literature on the subject. The items listed herein reflect those that recur frequently in the academic literature, the journalistic accounts, and survey data.

institutions and services costly, but it also requires significant material capabilities and, as discussed above, often necessitates the effective control of territory. The same is true with respect to the credible provision of security and stability. Civilians are only willing to offer their loyalty when the insurgents have been able to amass sufficient power to exert control over territory, thereby credibly signaling their ability to provide desired benefits as well as the likelihood of their eventual victory.

This suggests that the relative capabilities enjoyed by the insurgent organization underlay the provision of these resources and therefore the ability of insurgents to recruit supporters and command the loyalty of civilians. Specifically, stronger insurgent organizations should be able to provide larger collections of resources. Moreover, shifts in the relative balance of capabilities should change civilians' beliefs about the credibility of promised resource streams as well as their expectations about the outcome of the conflict. In turn, civilians are more likely to support the insurgency when insurgents can signal robust capabilities relative to the government and/or when they perceive that the balance of power in the conflict is shifting toward the insurgents and away from the incumbent regime.

Relative Capabilities

In order to credibly and consistently deliver sufficient incentives to encourage and maintain large-scale civilian support insurgents must possess some extant ability to control land, markets, or resources. Strong rebel organizations may be able to provide parallel political systems, public services, and similar incentives, but such goods exceed the capabilities of most rebel organizations. As stated above, for the provision of many of these goods — namely security and non-pecuniary resources — insurgents must first control territory, which

itself often requires substantial material resources and the organizational capability to administer the territory and distribute resources among civilian supporters.

For this reason, weak insurgents are likely to be outbid by the government. Even in the context of high repression and low state capacity, incumbent regimes are likely able to offer a more competitive deal than are insurgents. The limited social welfare provisions offered by the state and the basic resources it can provide are likely to outmatch those provided by weak insurgents. In addition, the threat of punishment by state security forces is likely to deter collaboration unless the insurgents can promise a reasonable degree of protection from government reprisals. As a result, it should be more difficult for weaker groups to muster civilian support, recruit fighters, and otherwise maintain the loyalty of the population. By contrast, relatively strong insurgents who can provide political institutions, social services, security, and other benefits mentioned above, should more easily attract and maintain civilian loyalty.

Strength in and of itself is not necessarily predictive of the provision of benefits. Some large insurgent organizations with significant military power may choose to divert their material capabilities to strictly military needs and largely neglect the demands of the civilian population. The RUF along with the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), for example, grew powerful enough to overtake the government in 1997. However, they failed to provide substantial resources to the population (even during their brief period in power). Yet, military capabilities are often a precursor to the provision of other benefits. Rebels must be able to defend territory in order to provide security to civilians, to establish quasi-state institutions, or otherwise take on the trappings of government. Not all insurgent groups are capable of undertaking such endeavors; however, those that do need to establish significant

military capabilities prior to doing so. Small bands of guerrillas may successfully harry and frustrate government forces, but it is unlikely that they can successfully build institutions or provide significant social services to peasants in the areas in which they operate. Such groups should find it more difficult to attract support from peasants because the benefits they can provide (redress of grievances, participation, adventure, etc.) may not be sufficient to offset the risk of capture or death at the hands of the government. However, once the group has been able to establish liberated zones or other areas nominally free from government interference it should be able to provide the streams of resources necessary to attract civilian support on a broader scale.

This discussion leads to the first hypothesis:

H1: The greater the capabilities of the insurgent organization relative to the government the greater the level of support and loyalty they are likely to receive from the population.

Power Dynamics

The discussion and related hypothesis above address the relationship between the relative capabilities of insurgents and their ability to muster support among the population. Civilians' assessments of the balance of power should inform their decision-making with respect to loyalty because it signals both the likely benefits the group is able to provide to them (relative to the state) but also the likely outcome of the conflict. It therefore influences expectations regarding future benefits. However, because conflicts are dynamic processes, the changes observed in the conflict environment should likewise structure insurgent decisions.

Civilian decision-making is heavily influenced by the balance of power in a conflict environment. In a competitive, zero-sum environment in which all gains (power, territory,

resources, etc.) for one actor represent a loss for the adversary, changes in the balance of power are important signals of expected changes in the streams of resources flowing to civilians and of the direction in which the conflict is moving. For example, when insurgents suffer a major military defeat, losing troops, territory, and exhausting resources, civilians (even those not in the immediate vicinity of the losses) are likely to judge that the flows of benefits they are currently receiving from the insurgents are likely to diminish as the insurgents redirect resources to other areas. Moreover, if such losses are large enough or occur repeatedly, civilians' faith in eventual insurgent victory is likely to decline as well. Civilians are often acutely aware of changes in the power dynamics of a conflict; as a result they are likely to update their support strategies when new information is uncovered (see for example, Wood, 2003: 270-273).¹³

As the power balance in a conflict shifts against insurgents, maintaining the nominal loyalty of the population becomes increasingly difficult. As insurgents become less capable of distributing resources to civilian supporters and as they appear less likely to successfully oust the regime or more likely to be quashed by it, civilian loyalty and support are likely to decline (Mason, 1989; 1996; Tullock, 1971). Conversely, the rapid expansion of the insurgent organization and successes on the battlefield, particularly if they occur in proximity to the community targeted for recruitment, encourages participation (Wood, 2003: 272; see also Race, 1973: 40). Rebellions therefore undergo what Wood (2003: 238-239) refers to as a recursive process in that as the group grows, survives, and demonstrates capacity relative to the regime, a greater portion of the population is willing to support it. During periods of rising insurgent power or if insurgents have been able to credibly demonstrate a high

¹³ It is for this reason that insurgents often devote so much energy to propaganda and information control.

probability of defeating the government, civilians are more likely to support them in hopes of ending up on the "right" side of the war. Thus, as relative military power shifts in the direction of insurgents, they are likely to attract greater levels of loyalty from the population because peasants revise upward their beliefs about the streams of resources they are likely to receive as well as their subjective assessment of insurgent victory.

The expected relationship between changes in insurgents' capabilities relative to the state and the process of strategic updating involved in civilian decision-making provide the second hypothesis in this chapter:

H2: Shifts in material capabilities that benefit the insurgents relative to the government contribute to greater levels of insurgent support and loyalty from the population.

Research Design

The theory presented above illustrates a dynamic relationship between the capabilities of the insurgent group and ability of the group to garner the loyalty of the population. In the models presented below, the dependent variable is the loyalty or support of the population is proxied by calculating the *incidence* of insurgent among the conflict population. *Insurgent incidence* is a continuous variable reflecting the number of insurgents per 10,000 persons within the conflict area (see below). While the ratio of insurgents to the local population is not a perfect measure of recruitment or popularity it is one of the few cross-national proxy measures that exist or can be easily constructed which capture the general support that a population has for an insurgency. The limitation of the variable is that it only counts active fighters while it says nothing specifically about the latent support of non-combatants in the conflict region. However, it is reasonable to believe that active and latent support correlate

quite highly even if the latter is significantly more common than the former. That is, the greater the latent support for insurgents within the community, the greater the likelihood that more civilians convert to active participants. The theory also assumes that recruitment is closely related to support. Indeed, active participation is simply one point on the spectrum of loyalty and collaboration. As such, the variable, as constructed, is likely to reflect the underlying level of loyalty among the population of the conflict area.

The variable is constructed by dividing the estimated number of combatants in the insurgency in a given year by the number of persons (in 10,000s) living in the conflict area. The estimated number of insurgent troops is taken from the UCDP database (UCDP, 2009). The conflict area population is constructed from two sources. First, the conflict area is measured in square kilometers and is constructed from geo-referenced conflict site data available from the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO) (Raleigh et al., 2006).¹⁴ Population data for the conflict area is constructed using gridded population data available from Columbia University's Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN, 2005).¹⁵ I then divide the number of insurgent troops by the total population (in tens of thousands) within the conflict area to produce a measure reflecting the "incidence" of recruitment.

Because *insurgent incidence* is constructed as a continuous variable, linear regression is a suitable estimation technique. However, the dynamic nature of the theory indicates that consideration should be given to temporal processes. Additionally, in analyses of data

¹⁴ The area variable is constructed from PRIO estimates of the maximum radius from the center of the conflict. Radii are cropped at international boundaries and the area of the remaining polygons is summed to produce the area in square kilometers.

¹⁵ The population measure is constructed by summing rasterized country population data for the area within the conflict zone.

structures that include observations over various time points, statistical models must also account for temporal dependence in the predictors. Given these considerations, I first estimate a time-series cross-sectional analysis including correction for first order autocorrelation (AR1) to test the relationship hypothesized above.¹⁶

. I rely on the UCDP *Dyadic Dataset* (Harbom, Melander & Wallensteen, 2008) to define the relevant dyads. The temporal range for this analysis includes the years 1997-2006. This sample used here includes 323 dyad-year observations containing 73 insurgent groups involved in 49 conflicts in 35 countries.¹⁷ The main independent predictors in the statistical models are the relative military capabilities of the insurgents as well as the change in the power balance from the previous year to the current. The measure of relative capabilities is taken from Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan's (2009) recent dataset. They provide a 5-point categorical measure that captures the aggregate level of insurgent capabilities relative to the regime. In order to account more directly for the dynamics of the conflict I also construct a variable (ΔRC_i) capturing the change in the relative capabilities of the insurgent group over time. This measure is constructed by first generating a simple ratio of insurgent to government troops (RC_i) in a given year using the troop levels reported in the UCDP database (UCDP, 2009). I then construct a change variable by simply subtracting the value

¹⁶ The inclusion of a lagged dependent variable is also useful and appropriate alternative to correcting for AR1 disturbances. One important difference, however, is that the inclusion of a lagged dependent variable explicitly models the *change* in the dependent variable from $t-1$ to t ; thus the results reflect the expected change in the value of the dependent variable rather than the expected level of the dependent variable. In order to capture this effect, I also test models using a one-year lag of the dependent variable (see below).

¹⁷ The temporal range is constrained by two of the independent predictors used in the analysis: the frequency of state and rebel violence against civilians. These variables are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. In addition, a number of observations are lost due to missing data on one or more of the key variables.

of RC_i at $t-1$ from the value of RC_i at time t .¹⁸ Thus, positive values reflect a growth in the insurgents' capabilities relative to the state while negative values reflect a loss of relative military strength.

The control variables included in the regression analyses represent relevant state, conflict, and group level factors that should influence civilians' decisions regarding loyalty and recruitment during a civil war. Summary statistics for the variables included in the regression analyses are presented in Table 3.1.

Previous studies have argued that high levels of regime repression lead to a perception among civilians that there is "no other way out" save for taking up arms (Goodwin, 2001; see also DeNardo, 1985; Klayvas & Kocher, 2007a). In line with this argument, greater levels of regime violence should result in broader support for the insurgency. Yet, as Moore (1995) has pointed out, massive regime violence does not necessarily make civilians more supportive of the insurgents but should rather simply make them indifferent between support for the insurgents or neutrality (or perhaps even supporting the regime). While regime violence may provide a push factor for survival-minded civilians, mass repression and violence in conflict areas are likely to signal to uncommitted civilians that insurgents are not able to provide security to their supporters. This dynamic may in turn reduce the willingness of civilians to remain loyal to insurgents. As a result, the relationship between regime violence and popular support for the insurgency is not fully established.

However, given the weight of previous research, I anticipate a positive relationship.

¹⁸ I employ the Cunningham et al. (2009) measure in this analysis because it is further removed from the dependent variable than the alternative RC_i measure. Both RC_i and the dependent variable use the rebel troop level variable as their numerator, and as such could present issues of collinearity. The change variable presents fewer problems since it is differenced. In fact, the correlation between the two variables is only 0.11. Ideally, a separate measure would be employed as with the capabilities measures. However, few alternative measures of rebel capabilities exist and to my knowledge RC_i is the only measure taken on an annual basis, and therefore the only one suitable for testing the relationship between annual changes in the power dynamics and insurgent support.

Table 3.1 Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Insurgent Incidence	13.67	31.857	0.050	177.271
Δ Insurgent Capability	0.004	0.099	-0.693	1.063
Military Strength	0.517	0.588	0	4
Govt. Range_(t-1)	2.216	0.551	1	3
Insurgent Range_(t-1)	2.220	0.823	1	3
Ethnic Mobilization	0.738	0.44	0	1
Conflict Severity_(ln)	5.719	1.981	0	10.779
Age	12.92	1.141	0	57
Democracy_(t-1)	0.398	12.528	0	1
GDPpc_{(ln)(t-1)}	0.864	1.0318	-1.243	3.567
Lootable Resources	0.581	0.494	0	1

The theory likewise suggests that insurgents may use violence as a means of cowing the population, undermining social and political order, or enforcing loyalty at gunpoint. As such, it anticipates a positive relationship between insurgent violence and the level of popular support. That said, it is also plausible that insurgent violence and indiscriminate terror against the population may unify the population against the rebels. This is particularly likely if the government responds in a manner that signals willingness and ability to protect the population from insurgent violence. Consequently, just as in the case of state-sponsored violence there is likely a complex relationship between insurgent use of violence and civilian responses. That said, it is still important to control for both state and insurgent violence perpetrated against civilians. The overall severity of the conflict should influence support for the insurgency. As conflicts intensify and violence spreads civilians are likely to find their options increasingly constrained. The spread of conflict-related violence reduces the viability of remaining neutral and forces previously uncommitted civilians to pick a side in

the conflict or to flee the combat zone, becoming either an internally displaced persons (IDP) or foreign refugees.

The primary data source for violence against civilians is the *Political Actor Violence Index* (PAVI), which captures the range as well as frequency of both insurgent and state violence. In order to limit the number of variables included in the regression, I only employ the *range* variable, which captures the targets of violence as opposed to simply the frequency of violence. Theories that argue regime violence can motivate civilian support generally focus on the most extreme and indiscriminate forms of violence as the motivator for support; as such, this measure better captures this proposed dynamic.¹⁹ Violence measures are lagged by one year because of the likelihood of endogeneity between violence and support.²⁰

In addition to the dynamics of violence, structural components of the state are likely to influence the decision-making of civilians. For instance, insurgent groups are likely to experience more difficulty in mobilizing popular support in democratic states because the state provides alternative avenues for the redress of grievances. Past research has demonstrated that democratic institutions and high levels of popular participation reduce the likelihood of the onset of insurgency (Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Hegre et al., 2001). Consequently, democracy is likely to impede the recruitment efforts of insurgents and limit their ability to attain popular support. Similarly, wealthier states are likely to deter insurgent mobilization and dampen popular support. Wealthier states have the capability to provide incentives to civilians to retain their loyalty. For instance, more developed, wealthier states

¹⁹ Substituting the frequency variables for range variables does not alter the results

²⁰ As a check on the robustness of the regression using the PAVI scores I also test a model utilizing the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's (UCDP) *One-sided Violence* dataset (OSV) (Eck & Hultman, 2007; Kreutz, 2008). The results for the variables of interest remain unchanged.

are more likely to provide social services and other benefits that help retain the loyalty of the civilian population. As a result, insurgents fighting wealthier governments should face greater difficulty recruiting supporters because of the high levels of resources and services they must provide to match those offered by the state. Thus, I expect a negative relationship between both state wealth and the presence of democratic institutions and the incidence of insurgent recruitment. The measure of state wealth is the log-transformed value of GDP per capita taken from Penn World Tables (Heston, Summers, and Aten, 2009). The measure of democratic institutions is a binary adaptation of the 21-point Polity2 indicator from the Polity IV dataset (Marshall & Jaggar, 2006). The measure is coded as 1 if the state received a score of 7 or higher and 0 otherwise. Both measures are lagged one year because the ongoing processes of civil war are likely to adversely affect both democracy and economic development.

The social structures and resources within the conflict area as well as the techniques adopted by the group may also influence the level of popular support and recruitment ability enjoyed by the group.²¹ Two factors commonly cited in the literature are pre-existing social and identity networks to mobilize support and the presence of loot such as gems and drugs that can be used to pay supporters. With respect to the former, Eck (2009b) shows that ethnically motivated insurgencies escalate more rapidly from "conflicts" to "wars." The theoretical justification for this argument is that ethnically-based insurgencies facilitate recruitment because ethnicity reduces the coordination costs among members of the group, produces more credible movements, and attracts more ideologically-committed rebels (373). Hence, mobilizing along ethnic lines should lower the cost of recruitment and control on the part of the insurgents. Data on ethnic mobilization is taken from (Eck, 2009b). The variable

²¹ As noted in the previous chapter, these factors are likely endogenously related.

is dichotomous and takes a value of 1 if the insurgents used ethnicity as a recruitment mechanism and 0 otherwise.

As discussed above, loot and war profits are also motivators for many civilians to support or join the insurgency (Arjona & Kalyvas, 2006; Weinstein & Humphreys, 2008). However, as Weinstein (2007) suggest, insurgents may turn to loot specifically because communal ties and other appeals fail to induce mobilization and support. It is therefore likely that, all else equal, insurgencies that rely on loot and other sources of revenue to pay supporters and fighters do so because they lack popular support. This suggests that while groups who rely on communal ties as a motivator are likely to enjoy broader support while those that rely on loot as a recruitment mechanism likely receive less popular support. Unfortunately, no dataset exists that explicitly accounts for the use of loot or war wages among insurgents. I therefore use a variable that accounts for the presence of lootable resources in the conflict area as a proxy for this strategy. The variable is coded 1 if any gems (diamonds, rubies, jade, etc.) or drugs (cannabis, opium, or coca) are located within the conflict zone and 0 otherwise. Geo-spatial data on the location of gems is from Lujala (2009) and Gilmore et al. (2005) while drug data is from Lujala (2003).

Finally, I control for the age of the insurgency. The duration of an insurgency may contribute to civilian decision regarding support, yet the direction of effect is unclear. On the one hand, as insurgencies survive they signal their strength. As the insurgency endures this demonstrates that the rebels are not likely to be defeated; moreover, the longer the group survives the more imbedded its institutions can become, allowing it to deliver greater levels of benefits to civilian supporters. As such, longer insurgencies may promote greater civilian support — indeed, high levels of civilian support may be necessary for the group to survive.

On the other hand, as the insurgency drags on civilians' belief in the likely success of the group may begin to waver. I am therefore agnostic about the relationship between the duration of the insurgency and civilian support. To account for the age of the insurgency I include the count of years since the first battle-related death associated with the group. This count is taken from UCDP *Dyadic Dataset*.

Results & Discussion

The results from the regression analyses are presented in Table 3.2. While some differences exist across the various specifications, the results provide significant support for the hypotheses presented above.²² Specifically, according to the results shown here, greater levels of relative material capabilities as well as power shifts that benefit the insurgents relative to the government increase the incidence of rebel recruitment. In line with the first hypothesis, the results below suggest that as insurgent strength increases relative to the government, insurgents are able to draw greater levels of support from the population. In each of the models the variables that account for the relative material capabilities of the insurgent group is positive and statistically significant. According to the results presented in Models 1 and 3, a one-category increase in the relative capabilities scale leads to an increase in the insurgent incidence of approximately 10 insurgents per 10,000 persons. Similarly, consistent with the second hypothesis, the results show that as insurgencies gain strength from one time period to the next they are better capable of recruiting supporters. In Models 2 and 3 the variable accounting for the change in relative capabilities from the previous to the

²² Results for models using a one-year lag of the dependent variable rather than AR1 correction techniques are largely similar. Across these models the variables accounting for insurgent capabilities and change in relative capabilities were both positive and significant ($p \leq 0.1$), thus suggesting that stronger and strengthening insurgent groups enjoy both broader support from the conflict population and their support increases from one time point to the next

current period is both positive and statistically significant in each model. This supports the argument that support is more forthcoming when the insurgency has already achieved significant capabilities or when the power dynamics of the conflict increasingly support it. Thus, as Wood (2003) argued, peasant participation in civil wars is largely recursive, building upon itself as the movement grows and survives.

As the theory argues, this relationship is due to comparatively stronger rebels' ability to provide a more attractive package of benefits to potential supporters in order to acquire and maintain their loyalty. Relatively weak insurgents are unable to offer competitive benefits to their supporters; as such, they likely face greater difficulty attracting support. In addition, fluctuations in the balance of capabilities over time both leads to changes in the resource streams provided by belligerents and causes civilians to update their assessment of likely war outcomes. Such reassessments contribute to changes in civilian decisions regarding loyalty. When insurgents are perceived as strengthening and more likely to win, civilians are more likely to choose to support them; yet when insurgent power declines, civilians may defect out of fear of ending up on the losing side. For instance, in Vietnam the NLF experienced increasing difficulties soliciting and maintaining the support of the peasants after the US intervention began to rapidly deplete its resources and civilians became less confident of Communist victory (Gurtov, 1967: xi, 9; Kellen, 1969: 8). Even in those areas where the NLF remained strong and firmly in control peasant enthusiasm and support for the revolution declined (Gurtov, 1967: 28). By contrast, when insurgents enjoy military gains and their odds of victory appear to improve, popular support is likely to increase as well. Such was case in Afghanistan as well. Taliban recruitment and support increased as their victory over the Northern Alliance looked increasingly certain (Filkins & Gall, 2001:

B2). Yet, intervention by international forces in late 2001 and the subsequent change in power dynamics between the belligerents again shifted support away from the Taliban (Kennedy, 2001: 6). By the end of 2001 the Taliban had moved to block an outflow of refugees from areas it held and began forcibly recruiting men and boys into its militias (Mackenzie & Greenaway, 2001: A3).

Table 3.2: Regression Results: Incidence of Insurgents in Conflict Population

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Δ Insurgent Capability		35.389 (6.466)***	34.206 (6.486)***
Military Capability	10.759 (3.092)***		10.147 (3.081)***
Insurgent Range_{t-1}	-0.287 (1.311)	-0.286 (1.246)	-0.349 (1.254)
Government. Range_{t-1}	1.377 (2.130)	1.589 (1.978)	1.337 (2.011)
Conflict Intensity_(ln)	1.574 (0.572)***	1.466 (0.528)***	1.458 (0.539)***
GDPpc_{(ln)t-1}	0.334 (2.226)	-0.268 (2.163)	0.088 (2.168)
Democracy_{t-1}	-6.311 (4.130)	-8.017 (3.880)**	-6.029 (3.971)
Lootable Resources	-5.358 (4.842)	-3.847 (4.130)	-5.450 (4.882)
Ethnic Mobilization	8.103 (5.383)	12.472 (5.019)**	8.305 (4.432)
Age	-0.039 (0.194)	-0.043 (0.191)	-0.021 (0.197)
Constant	-4.701 (9.635)	-0.791 (8.889)	-2.729 (9.549)
R2 Within	0.07	0.11	0.11
R2 Between	0.27	0.17	0.24
R2 Overall	0.23	0.17	0.24
Rho AR	0.46	0.52	0.52
Wald X2	40.40	56.80	67.30
Prob. > X2	0.000	0.000	0.000
Observations	308	319	308
Dyads	70	78	70

Coefficients and standard errors from Generalized Least Squares models with AR(1) error corrections.

***=P<0.01 **=P< 0.05 *=P< 0.10 Two-tailed test.

Examining the results for the control variables, the models suggest that power dynamics may play the most significant role in determining civilian support. The only variable other than those accounting for capabilities that remains significant across specifications is the overall intensity of the conflict, which is also likely to be closely correlated to military capabilities. As the war intensifies, the incidence of insurgents within the population increases. However, turning first to the role of violence directed against civilians, the results suggest that neither state nor rebel violence is a significant predictor of the incidence of insurgents within the population. Across the specifications presented here, state violence is positively correlated with increased insurgent recruitment, but it fails to achieve significance. Rebel violence has the opposite relationship but it, too, fails to reach significance in the models. Interestingly, in robustness checks using the UCDP *One-sided Violence* dataset (Eck & Hultman, 2007) (model not shown here), the variable accounting for the prior year's government-sponsored violence is statistically significant, though the effect is quite small. The result suggests an increase of one insurgent per 10,000 persons for every 250 civilians killed.

In some ways these results would seem to contradict the assertion made above that insurgents might use violence as a means to compel civilian loyalty. Rebel violence alone might be insufficient to mobilize support; however, it is likely that insurgent violence interacts with other contextual variables to enforce loyalty. It is also possible that rebel terror has an indirect effect on mobilization and support. Given the positive relationship between state violence and support, it is likely — as discussed above — that insurgent terror is intended more to goad the state into unleashing even more egregious acts of violence on the population. Moreover, insurgent terror may simply be an effective tool to destabilize the

state, breakdown social and political order, and thereby open breathing room for insurgencies struggling to compete with the state. I return to these issues in the following chapters.

The coefficient for the variable accounting for the conflict state's recent level of economic development is inconsistent and switches signs between specifications. The theory proposes that civil conflict is a competition between belligerents over loyalty and control; moreover, the side that can provide greater resources is more likely to acquire civilian loyalty. Because wealthier states would presumably be better able to provide for their citizens and easily compete with insurgents, the theory indirectly predicts a negative relationship between support for the insurgency and state wealth. However, the insignificant results suggest comparatively wealthy states do not necessarily deter the mobilization of insurgent support among the population of the conflict area. This result seems surprising since past research has shown that higher levels of development deter insurgency (Fearon & Latin, 2003) and result in shorter insurgencies when they do occur (Collier, Hoeffler & Söderbom, 2004; Cunningham, Gleditsch & Salehyan, 2009). A plausible answer to this is that given the high barrier to entry for would-be insurgents in richer states those that do emerge are comparatively stronger to insurgents in other states. This is simply speculation, however, and deserves future scrutiny.

The variable accounting for the presence of democratic institutions is both negative and statistically significant in one model, and nearly achieves significance in the others. This provides some support for the dampening effect of democracy on civilian mobilization. In states in which the population has an active and effective outlet for the redress of grievances insurgents are likely to experience more difficulty in mobilizing support and loyalty. The lootable resources variable has a consistently negative relationship with the incidence of

rebel recruitment. However, it fails to achieve statistical significance in any of the models. Regardless, the absence of a positive relationship does suggest that rebellions located in areas of abundant lootable resources are no more likely to attract support than other types of rebellions. This generates a number of questions about the real recruitment power of loot and war profits in civil wars. While pecuniary benefits may motivate some greedy rebels they do not seem to produce a groundswell of popular support — at least not any more than other relevant motivators.

In contrast to loot's ability to mobilize civilian loyalty, communal and identity-based mobilization strategies seem to have some significant purchase among civilians. In model 2 the variable is positive and achieves statistical significance. While the variable is only significant in one of the models presented here, it provides some support for the role of communal ties as a source of recruitment. The result is largely consistent with recent research that suggests that insurgencies mobilized along ethnic lines escalate to "wars" more rapidly than conflicts in which rebels use other mobilization techniques (Eck, 2009b). This result may also shed light on the greed-grievance debate. In the absence of strong communal ties or shared group characteristics that could help facilitate mobilization, insurgents may turn to profit as a means to attract greedy rebels rather than true believers. Thus, loot may be a secondary mobilization tool used only when other appeals and offers fail. This is consistent with some of the arguments Weinstein (2007) makes in his explanation of insurgent violence against civilians.

Lastly, the duration of the insurgency seems to have no significant statistical relationship to the level of civilian support for the insurgency. Arguably, the duration variable is simply a proxy for the strength of the insurgency. However, the relationship

between duration and strength is not completely clear. Bapat (2005) suggests that stronger insurgents are better able to survive government counterinsurgency efforts and demonstrate strength; they are therefore less likely to negotiate with regimes once they have existed past the first few years. Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan (2009) argue that stronger insurgencies (particularly those at parity with or stronger than the government)²³ fight shorter wars because they have the military capabilities to fight the government to a standstill and thus force a negotiated settlement or to simply win outright. These models neither confirm nor contradict either of these competing theories.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that civilians respond to the provision of benefits, security and stability, future conflict expectations, and control in deciding the level of support to provide to (or withhold from) insurgents. In the competitive civil war environment, the ability of the rebels to provide these goods and service is determined in large part by the balance of power between themselves and the state with which they vie for civilian loyalty and control. The greater the relative resources and material capabilities available to the insurgents the more goods and services they can provide to civilians, thereby increasing the depth and breadth of civilian support. Moreover, as I discussed in the previous chapter, conflicts are dynamic processes and civilian often fickle — the conflict environment changes and with it change the relationships between civilians and insurgents. Specifically, as the balance of power between the conflict actors shifts, civilians update their strategies of support, reducing their loyalty to

²³ This would admittedly be a very small proportion of insurgencies overall.

insurgents when their level of resources declines or when they perceive a declining probability of insurgent victory.

The statistical analysis provides support for this argument. Principally, the results suggests that rebel groups with greater relative material and military capabilities are more like to induce a greater incidence of recruitment from the population. Similarly, changes in the ratio of insurgent-government military capabilities from one year to the next lead to a greater incidence of insurgents among the population of the conflict area. While, the ratio of insurgent fighters to the local population is not necessarily a clear proxy for the level of latent civilian support, it should reflect the overall support and loyalty for the insurgents among civilians.

The argument and results presented and discussed in this chapter suggest a deeply endogenous relationship between capabilities and support. That is, civilians are often unwilling to openly support insurgents when they appear weak, yet it is often difficult for insurgents to gain capabilities when civilian loyalty remains elusive. This is consistent with Wood's (2003) assertion of a recursive relationship between civilian support and the insurgency's ability to signal survivability and success. A key question, then, is how do insurgents break from this recursive or endogenous relationship? That is, how would weak rebels or rebels facing a serious negative shift in their relative capabilities because of the intervention of a regime's allies, major battlefield losses, or the collapse of liberated areas manage to gain a foothold or stem their losses? As the next chapter argues, violence and terror may be the best possible strategy, at least in the immediate sense. Terrorism and violence can produce immediate gains but their effects are likely to rapidly diminish and even produce a boomerang-effect on the user (Davison, 1968: 28; Pike, 1969: 117). Facing

the choice between abandoning the rebellion and using violence to break the government's control or cow civilians into support or neutrality, insurgents may resort to terror when they lack other means of rallying support.

CHAPTER 4

Rebel Capabilities & the Use of Violence against Civilians

Previous chapters argued that insurgent strategies, including their use of violence explicitly against civilians, vary over the course of a conflict. The explanation for such variation presented in Chapter 1 was that the conflict environment is dynamic, and changes in this dynamic environment lead to changes in the types and levels of violence employed by combatants. Specifically, the incentives for violence are heavily influenced by the loyalty provided by the civilian population. Combatants desire to achieve the nominal loyalty of the population (if not its support), and construct strategies to enforce loyalty and deter defections to the adversary. As such, they exist in what is essentially a zero-sum competitive environment; they adopt (and evolve) strategies that seek to maximize the level of loyalty from and control over the civilian population while diminishing it for their enemy. Chapter 3 built upon this basic logic by focusing on civilian strategies of survival and profit during war. Therein, I argued that both the relative organizational and resource capabilities of insurgents played a fundamental role in civilian decisions regarding support and collaboration.

This chapter incorporates the logic outlined in those earlier chapters to propose a dynamic theory of insurgent violence. I argue that insurgents' violence strategies result from power shifts that occur within the conflict environment. Changes in the conflict's power dynamics directly impact insurgent strategies of violence because they alter the willingness of civilians to support or collaborate with the insurgents. As insurgent power declines,

civilians become increasingly reluctant to provide them with the loyalty they need to continue and expand their rebellion. Facing declining resources with which to "buy off" civilians, insurgents turn to violence as a means to compel loyalty and acquire resources. In addition, weak or weakening insurgents are also more likely to increasingly randomize violence as a means to deter collaboration with the regime or to undercut the streams of resources it provides. This occurs because insurgents are forced to divert resources from the provision of benefits used to purchase the loyalty of civilians to more immediate combat needs, reducing both civilian loyalty and their ability to police the population. Steep declines in insurgent capabilities or severe resource asymmetries also encourage insurgents to randomize violence as a means to undermine the resource provision of the state. When insurgents are unable compete with the state in terms of resource provision, insurgents tend to use terrorism and other indiscriminate forms of violence to destroy these goods, punish civilians for using them, create instability and fear, thereby balancing the playing field.

The chapter proceeds as follows: I first review existing literature on the motivations for and causes of violence against civilians in civil war, but point out the need to address the dynamic factors within the conflict that lead to changes in actor violence strategies. The following section presents a theory of actor violence based on the competitive model outlined in the previous chapters. The third section furthers this argument by explaining the *type* of violence adopted by conflict actors. The fourth section presents the data and research design, while the fifth section presents the results and offers some discussion. The results generally support the theory presented in the paper: when power dynamics shift against insurgents they experience more difficulty compelling loyalty from the population; as such, they are more likely to employ violence more frequently and to apply it in a more indiscriminate manner.

In the subsequent section I provide a short case analysis using the conflict in Vietnam between 1956 and 1972 to illustrate these dynamics. The final section offers some concluding remarks.

Incentives to Target Civilians

Previous studies of the causes of violence directed against civilians have largely focused on the static environmental conditions that structure the war strategies of insurgents. Popular accounts of civil wars, for example, have often argued that ethnic conflicts are bloodier and more brutal than other wars (e.g., Kaufman, 2001; Huntington, 1996). More systematic analyses have focused on factors such as pre-existing political cleavages (Balcells, 2010), foreign financial support (Hovil & Werker, 2005; Weinstein, 2007), the presence of lootable resources, (Kaldor, 1997; Weinstein, 2007), and various social and economic factors (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2006) as explanations for the types of warfare that insurgents adopt with respect to civilians. While such analyses help identify the environmental factors or the fixed characteristics of groups that make violence more likely or more severe, they have limited purchase in explaining escalations or de-escalations of violence from one period to another. This chapter addresses this shortcoming in the literature by offering a more dynamic theory of insurgent violence.

As discussed in Chapter 4, a group's violence strategy is intimately connected to the broader dynamics of the conflict; consequently, any explanation of the dynamics of violence should address the manner in which changes in the conflict environment affect insurgent as well as civilian decision-making. Violence is applied strategically when certain sets of condition make its application more or less effective in acquiring those goals (Arendt, 1970;

Kalyvas, 1999; 2004). Thus, the utility of a given strategy of violence changes as the conditions of the conflict environment change. Shifts in the strategic landscape are critical to explaining violence dynamics because they lead insurgents (as well as states) to alter their war strategies in order to maximize their likelihood of survival or victory.

Recent, more dynamic explanations for violence suggest that insurgents may adopt violence against civilians as a war strategy when they face major military setbacks or troop losses because it sends a costly signal to both the government and civilians of the group's intention to continue the fight in spite of mounting costs (Hultman, 2007). Kalyvas (2006) suggests that changes in the level of control exerted by an actor frame the incentives for the type of violence applied. When insurgents effectively control territory they are more likely to apply violence selectively (in that locale) because they can gather sufficient intelligence to differentiate those persons guilty of collaborating with the government from those who support the insurgency. By contrast, where they lack control they apply violence in a more indiscriminate manner. Changes in the level of control are therefore expected to correlate to changes in the chosen strategies of violence at the local level. This theory provides an explanation for the geographic distribution of violence types but says little about violence levels or types in the aggregate. Moreover, it says little about how broader changes in the conflict affect control and therefore violence. A group's ability to control territory is largely a function of the broader power dynamics of the conflict—that is, increased recruitment, major battlefield losses, defections, the intervention of foreign actors, or other changes in the conflict environment alter a group's ability to control territory and population. In the aggregate, increases in insurgents' relative capabilities should increase their ability to control territory and thus reduce their incentives to use indiscriminate violence. Conversely, loss of

territory, especially in significant amounts, is indicative of larger shifts in the power dynamics of the conflict and therefore likely to have consequences for civilian loyalty. As argued in the previous chapter, power shifts matter to civilians because they alter perspectives regarding immediate and future payoffs. Consequently, while the violence is in part spatially dependent on local levels of control (Kalyvas, 2006), it is also likely to be related to broader fluctuations in insurgent power relative to the government.

Shifts in these power dynamics help explain variation in the frequency of insurgent violence over time. Violence is intended as a short-term strategy used to break down government control, create uncertainty and chaos among the population, or enforce loyalty. As Pike (1969: 117) asserts, terror produces immediate but quickly diminishing benefits. A consistent emphasis on violence over other types of recruitment techniques is likely insufficient to gain control over the population. Just as the case with regime violence, too great a reliance on terror presumably forces civilians back toward the government (see Goodwin, 2001; Kalyvas & Kocher, 2007a). However, given that insurgents face significant power and resource asymmetries, they may (at least temporarily) rely on terror to help compensate for these structural weaknesses (see Crenshaw, 1981). For example, Mao, despite his general aversion to terrorism and violence against civilians articulated its utility, arguing that "it is necessary to create terror for a while in every rural area" in order to drive out counter-revolutionary agents and undermine state control (quoted in Shultz, 1978: 75). Similarly, Race (1972: 115) relates that the Party NLF used violence to help eliminate the asymmetry between itself and the government in rural areas of Vietnam. Moreover, shifts in conflict dynamics that intensify or reify this power imbalance incentivize insurgent use of violence as a means to (at least temporarily) re-coup losses and re-establish control.

Subsequent sections address the effect of change in conflict power dynamics on both the frequency and type of insurgent violence.

Power Dynamics & Violence

As the previous chapter demonstrated, civilian decision-making is heavily influenced by the balance of power in a conflict environment. In a competitive, zero-sum environment in which all gains (power, territory, resources, etc.) for one actor represent a loss for the adversary, changes in the balance of power are important signals of expected changes in the streams of resources flowing to civilians and of the direction in which the conflict is moving. For example, when insurgents suffer a major military defeat, troops are killed or defect, lose territorial control, or exhaust resources, civilians (even those not in the immediate vicinity of the losses) are likely to judge that the flows of benefits they are currently receiving are likely to diminish as the insurgents redirect resource to other areas. Moreover, if such losses are large enough or occur repeatedly, civilians' faith in eventual insurgent victory is likely to decline as well. Civilians are often acutely aware of changes in the power dynamics of conflict; as a result they are likely to update their support strategies when new information is uncovered.²⁴ As the power balance in a conflict shifts against the insurgents, maintaining the nominal loyalty of the population becomes increasingly difficult. As insurgents become less capable of distributing resources to civilian supporters and as they appear less likely to successfully oust the regime or more likely to collapse, civilian loyalty and support are likely to decline (Mason, 1989; 1996; Tullock, 1971). Studies conducted by the Rand Corporation, for example, found that civilian support for the NLF fell as their casualty rate increased and

²⁴ It is for this reason that insurgents often devote so much energy to propaganda and information control.

as civilians became less confident of their chances for victory (Davison, 1968: ix; Gurtov, 1967: 9).

The willingness of the population to provide a nominal level of loyalty to the insurgents largely shapes the incentives for insurgents to employ violence against them (see Chapter 4). Thus, to the extent that shifts in the balance of power influence civilian support, they also should affect change in the strategies of violence used by insurgents. Violence increases as relative resources streams, security guarantees, civilian expectations, and control, and therefore loyalty, decline. For instance, as discussed in the introduction, as the LRA weakened in the early 1990s it lost much of its popular support base; in response, it turned to mass violence and large-scale abductions as a means to buoy the insurgency and continue its war with the regime (Bevan, 2007: 348-351).²⁵ In El Salvador, the FMLN proved that it could be quite ruthless when its political control in the countryside was threatened (Anderson, 2004: 136). In the recent Afghan conflict, Taliban forces escalated violence against civilians as their power diminished, loyalty plummeted and defections increased (Alcorn & Perry, 2001: 10; Kennedy, 2001: 6). Similarly, US intervention in Vietnam in the mid-1960s fundamentally altered the power dynamics of the conflict, drastically undercutting the power of the NLF. In response, Communist insurgents adopted more coercive strategies of resource mobilization, including forced conscription and violence (Berman, 1974: 50; Joiner, 1974: 247, 250-251; see also below).

Changes in territorial control are particularly relevant to production of violence (Kalyvas, 1999; 2006). The loss of territory undermines the group's ability to provide essential resources to its civilian supporters. As safe zones diminish or collapse entirely, the

²⁵ The LRA have used violence extensively in their war against the government. However, this violence escalated significantly in the early 1990s (see Bevan, 2007; UCDP, 2009).

provision of resources to civilians becomes increasingly difficult. This is particularly true of quasi-governmental services such as social welfare, political institutions, and security. As a result, the loss of control is likely to induce rapid declines in the loyalty of the population. Yet, control is not the only factor affecting the provision of goods to supporters or their willingness to support the insurgents. Given that control is correlated with (and often an aspect of) relative material and organizational capabilities, its decline often reflects a more general decline in insurgent capabilities. Despite his explicit emphasis on local-level power dynamics, Kalyvas (2006: 257-258) alludes to macro-level power shifts affecting violence in his analysis of violence in the Agrolid region of Greece between 1943 and 1944. Italian capitulation in the fall of 1943 shifted the trajectory of the war, weakening Germany's position in the Eastern Mediterranean and forcing it to redistribute troops in the region. This was a major boost to Greek partisans and allowed them to rapidly expand and consolidate control over territory. The change in the power dynamics in turn resulted in a shift in the strategies of violence used by the belligerents, leading them to diminish their reliance on indiscriminate violence and increase their reliance on more selective forms. Similarly, as the Soviet forces advanced in the Balkans in the summer of 1944, the Germans began to extricate themselves from Greece, giving over territory they had regained during the previous year. This shift in power again led to changes in the application of violence to non-combatants in the region (264-256). The expulsion of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) from Jordan created a similar dynamic: lacking any territorial control — or even ground to fight on — the resistance turned from more traditional insurgent tactics to international terrorism, bombings, and murders (Anderson, 2004: 30). Consequently, while the extent of control at the local level structures the strategies of violence employed by the actors, the shifts in levels

of control are driven — at least in some significant part — by changes in macro-level power dynamics.

Given this relationship, weakening insurgent capabilities — with or without changes in effective territorial control — reduce the flow of resources to supporters. In turn, it also diminishes the nominal loyalty of the population. As established in earlier chapters, declining loyalty contributes to an increase in the willingness of insurgents to use violence against civilians. This observation provides the first set of hypothesis.

H1: The lower the incidence of insurgents in a conflict area the greater the frequency of violence insurgents are expected to employ.

H2: The greater the decline in relative capabilities the greater the level violence insurgents are expected to employ.

Randomizing Violence

The above section argued that shifts in conflict power dynamics are likely to contribute to a general increase in the frequency of insurgent violence against civilians. However, power shifts also contribute to changes in the types of violence the group employs. The combination of declining support and diminished control increases the likelihood that insurgents resort to more indiscriminate types of attacks (randomized violence) as well as more violence overall. This occurs for two reasons. First, as strength declines so does the ability to control and police territory and accurately identify collaborators and likely defectors. This argument is broadly consistent with the theory articulated by Kaylvas (2006); however, the argument introduced here moves beyond his specifically spatial predictions and suggests that in general insurgents become more likely to use random or indiscriminate violence when they face declines in their aggregate capabilities. Second, as the state's

capabilities and control expand (or those of insurgents decline or contract) insurgents have incentives to employ random violence or "terror" in an attempt to reduce or eliminate the superior resources provided by the government. Put simply, when insurgents cannot compete in any meaningful way with the resources provided by the state and when they face major government gains in this area, they become more likely to adopt indiscriminate violence as means to undo those gains, destroying the resources provided by the regime, punishing peasants that benefit from them, and attempting to maximize fear, insecurity, and instability in the environment.

As suggested above, control is often directly related to the power dynamics of the conflict. As insurgents weaken relative to the regime, through the loss of troops in battle or the intervention of foreign forces on the government's behalf, their maintenance of control over territory and the population declines. The decline in effective control is often the direct result of the advancement of government forces, for example when they physically expel insurgent forces from an area. Yet control also diminishes because insurgent forces become spread too thin, adversely affecting their ability to police the population they seek to control. Similarly, as discussed in earlier chapters, maintenance of control is more difficult when the loyalty of the civilian population declines. As insurgent strength declines relative to the government and insurgents' ability to provide resources to the population falls civilian loyalty weakens, opening the window for competitors, rival political organizations, or those civilians sympathetic to the state to advance their agendas and challenge insurgents. Declining loyalty, increased pressure from civilians, and the emergence or strengthening of competitors increases the perception of threat to the insurgency and provides an additional motivation for violence.

This situation is compounded by the declining policing capacity of insurgents. As the balance of military power shifts against insurgents and toward the government, rebels are likely to redistribute resources from non-military resource provisions to combat capabilities. When faced with the existential threat of increasing government power and mounting military defeats insurgents divert resources from what are often considered non-essential services such as benefits provided to civilians and local security to more immediate needs, namely the movement of people and supplies to the battlefield.

The diversion of resources from those services designed to compel civilian support to more pressing battle needs creates two related problems. First, it intensifies the problems of declining civilian loyalty. Second, and critical for explaining the *type* of violence, the redistribution of resources reduces the policing capacity of insurgent forces. Insurgent leadership is likely to shift guard units and other reserve forces from local policing duties to combat service. Hastily prepared local militias, militant youth groups, or other poorly-trained and -organized militants often replace these more competent forces. The redistribution of forces lowers the ratio of insurgents to the civilian population and increases the difficulty that these forces have in maintaining local order, gathering information on government collaborators, and otherwise policing the population and deterring threats. In this increasingly information-poor environment in which insurgents face declining loyalty among the population and declining resources with which to police that population, insurgents become less selective in their targeting and increasingly employ highly visible and often random violence as low-cost signals of the price of defection. For instance, in areas where the NLF's control weakened during the late 1960s, the insurgents increasingly carried

assassinations out in ways designed to have a major psychological impact on the civilians (Davison, 1968: 25).

The second explanation for the turn to more randomized violence is that insurgents have an incentive to destroy the provision of government resources that they themselves are unable to provide to civilian populations. As insurgents lose power and loyalty declines they may (at least temporarily) substitute low-cost, destructive strategies for higher-cost constructive strategies, especially when they lack any real chance of competing with the government in terms of providing goods and services. The logic here is that when rebels cannot compete openly with the government in terms of resources, destroying the government's ability to provide those resources is their next best option.

When insurgents are weak or have lost their control over a territory they are likely to rely on indiscriminate attacks on the goods and services provided by the state as well as those civilians who choose to use them. They thereby attempt to undercut any benefit the civilians expect to receive from these resources. Moreover, these attacks may even succeed in convincing the population that the government's provision of benefits is an invitation to insurgent violence, thereby causing civilians to resist government-provided benefits. This tactic attempts to directly undermine the "hearts and minds" strategy that governments often use to attract civilian loyalty.

Governments with sufficient resources to do so often attempt to provide benefits such as schools, roads, clinics, or other social and economic development projects in order to win over the population (Leites & Wolfe, 1970; US Army, 2006). Such projects then often become the expressed targets of insurgents who seek to destabilize and destroy any benefits produced by the state. As a result, insurgents commit indiscriminate violence such as

attacking schools, bombing hospitals, or mining village roads. Insurgents facing declining power in a conflict have frequently used such strategies. For example, in Vietnam the NLF turned to terror to disrupt local elections and social programs implemented by the government (Pike, 1970: 11, 21). Similarly, they adopted a campaign of terror against the local population in areas where government pacification plans had been implemented in an attempt to deprive the government forces of intelligence and support (Pearce, 1967: xi). The goal of such violence is to create fear and terror and deter civilians from supporting the government (see Davison, 1968: 27; Pike, 1970: 21, 28).

In addition to targeting the more tangible benefits provided by the government, insurgents also have an incentive to employ random violence as a means to create instability and insecurity in government-controlled areas or areas into which government control is expanding. As argued in previous chapters, civilians are particularly receptive to the provision of security and order and often follow whichever actor appears most capable of providing it. As such, the ability to negate security is a powerful tool that insurgents can use to undermine civilian loyalty to the state. While resorting to terror and random violence would not necessarily win immediate converts to the insurgency, the competitive, zero-sum nature of the conflict environment means that any reduction in civilian loyalty to the government represents a victory for the insurgency, particularly when it is weak or declining in power relative to the regime. This gamble for resurrection may be viewed as the only practical strategy for fending off the government's progress in "pacifying" and "stabilizing" insurgent areas. Thus, insurgents have an incentive to create instability and fear through acts of random violence, thereby creating a space within which they can attempt to establish (or re-establish) control (Hosmer, 1970: 8-9; Millen, 2006/2007; Thompson, 1966: 29; Vinci,

2005). The *shabbab* (Palestinian Liberation Organization activists) targeted local Arab officials and policeman, and used terror in order to create a vacuum that could be exploited to gain control over the population (Anderson, 2004: 188-189). Communist insurgents in Vietnam used terror to create a "social pathology or anarchy" in the countryside of South Vietnam; this breakdown of social and political order was intended as a precursor to the general uprising that the Front envisioned would topple the US-backed government (Pike, 1969: 111-112). Shultz (1978: 81) likewise observes that insurgents were more likely to rely on terror in the early stages of the movement when the objective was the separation of peasants from the extant political order. Hosmer (1970: 16) states the situation in most emphatic terms:

The primary objective of [NLF terror] is the destruction of the GVN. Through the physical elimination demoralization, and subversion of personnel at all levels of the government structure, the Viet Cong seeks progressively to erode an eventually paralyze the GVN's capabilities to govern.

Consequently, in addition to direct coercion as a means to compel loyalty, terror and violence are applied with the expectation that they physically detach the people from the government, allowing insurgents the opportunity to establish their own control systems.

In an extension of this logic, insurgents may employ random violence with the hope of provoking government backlash, which is in turn expected to contribute to a collapse of normal order, mass state repression, and other conditions that insurgents may exploit (Lake, 2002). This logic is clearly articulated by urban Marxists like revolutionary Carlos Marighela, who asserted:

It is necessary to turn political crisis into armed conflict by performing violent actions that will force those in power to transform the political situation into a military situation. That will alienate the masses, who, from then on, will revolt against the army and the police and blame them for this state of things (quoted in William, 1989: 9).

Lacquer (1977: 185) refers to this as a "scorched-earth" strategy in which insurgents differentiate little between their military-political targets and civilians. The objective is the creation of disorder and insecurity so as to provoke mass regime repression broadly against the population. As Thompson (1966: 29) states, insurgent violence is intended to create chaos and instability, and if their attacks "in turn entice the government to go blundering around the countryside, so much the better."

Insurgent and "terrorist" organizations have adopted this strategy with some frequency when their limited capabilities keep them from competing with the government in less violent ways. The National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algeria (whose actions provided much inspiration to Marighela (see Horne, 1987: 118; William, 1989: 10) adopted this strategy in their war against the French Colonials. The 1955 Philippeville Massacres orchestrated by the nationalist insurgents were intended to provoke exactly the type of heavy-handed response envisioned by Marighela. As part of a broader military offensive in the Constantine region FLN insurgents orchestrated attacks on civilians in area villages, killing dozens of French residents and nearly as many moderate Muslims in extremely brutal ways (Horne, 1987: 119-122). Almost immediately, French security forces provided the expected response, indiscriminately killing perhaps thousands of civilians in their attempt to "regain order" over the area (121-121).²⁶ News of the violent response could then be used to mobilize support for the insurgents.

Just as shifts in the power dynamics of the conflict contribute to overall changes in the frequency with which insurgents target civilians, declining capabilities relative to the

²⁶ As with most, such events numbers are disputed. French sources claim 1273 "insurgents" were killed, likely including some civilians. FLN sources claimed that as many as 12,000 civilians were killed in French reprisals (Horne, 1987: 122).

government also structure the insurgent strategies with respect to the types of violence they employ. Specifically, as insurgents weaken and lose control over both populations and territory they become more likely to resort to random violence against civilians both because they lack the ability to effectively police the territory they are able to control and as a means to undercut the streams of resources that governments attempt to provide to civilians to attain or retain their loyalty. This argument suggests two hypotheses related to those presented above:

H3: *The lower the incidence of insurgents in a conflict area the more likely insurgents are to use indiscriminate violence.*

H4: *The greater the decline in relative capabilities the more likely insurgents are to use indiscriminate violence.*

Research Design

I rely on quantitative analyses to test the hypotheses presented above. I rely on Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) given the ordinal nature of the dependent variables. Herein, the dependent variables are categorical measures of the frequency of insurgent violence against civilians as well as the types of targeting adopted by the group in a given year. All models reported in the tables below are ordered probit models with Huber (1967) and White (1980) robust standard errors clustered on the insurgent group to account for heteroskedasticity.

The temporal range for this analysis includes the years 1997-2006.²⁷ The temporal range is constrained by the range of the dependent variable, which was constructed for this

²⁷ In some models the number of observations declines significantly. This is largely due to the military capabilities variable taken from Cunningham, Gleditsch & Salehyan (2009), which only extends through 2003.

project and is henceforth referred to as the *Political Actor Violence Index* (PAVI).²⁸ I rely on the UCDP *Dyadic Dataset* (Harbom, Melander & Wallensteen, 2008) to define the sample of civil wars and conflict actors for which PAVI scores are generated. This produces a dataset with approximately 425 group-year observations for 120 distinct insurgent organizations. However, missing data across the predictors as well as the need to calculate the first difference or to lag some variables significantly reduces the number of observations used in the analysis.²⁹ After missing values are dropped, the sample size is reduced to just over 300 observations including some 70 groups. The sample size varies somewhat depending on model specification.

The PAVI dataset provides two separate actor-year measures of violence committed against non-combatants by the insurgents. Violations are considered along two dimensions: the *frequency* of violence and the *range* or violence (or targeting strategy). *Frequency* pertains to the number of massacres, assassinations, or other intentional killings of non-combatants that occur during the year. In essence, this measure is a categorical estimation of the number of non-combatant deaths attributable to the group in a given year. Frequency includes three categories:

- 1) Rare or uncommon
- 2) Often
- 3) Routine or Commonplace

²⁸ The *Political Actor Violence Index* (described in more detail in appendix 1), which has been constructed for use with the project, currently includes data for only the years listed above. In the future, the time period will expand significantly. However, the time intensive coding process has permitted me to code only the 10-year period mentioned. As a check on the robustness of the regression using the PAVI scores as the dependent variable, I also test model utilizing the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's (UCDP) *One-sided Violence* dataset (Eck & Hultman, 2007; Kreutz, 2008).

²⁹ Missing values are a significant source of frustration in quantitative studies of civil conflict. This is particularly true with respect to data on insurgent groups, which have significant incentives to mask their true capabilities, behaviors, locations, and other relevant characteristics. The data used here reflect a good faith effort to accurately account for relevant variables using the available data. Future research, however, should strive to improve upon these data and to therefore improve upon this analysis.

Range reflects the selectivity of the violence (see Klayvas, 2006: Ch. 6). The intuition here is that it is important to differentiate between persons targeted due to their political involvement and those targeted at random (see also Gibney & Dalton, 1996; Stohl et al., 1986). *Range* is measured as three categories accounting for the selectivity of the violence. In the most selective category a group targets only military personnel or political figures intimately connected to counterinsurgency policy.³⁰ The three categories are:

- 1) Selective
- 2) Intermediate
- 3) Indiscriminate

PAVI scores are coded from information in the US Department of State *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the annual reports of Amnesty International (AI) and Human Rights Watch (HRW). In addition, supplemental reports from AI and HRW are used to improve the coverage and reliability of the data.³¹

Relative Capabilities & Support

The primary variable of interest is the change in the ratio of insurgent to government capabilities from the previous year to the current. As in the previous chapter I generate a change variable using the ratio of insurgent to government troops (RC_i) as reported in the

³⁰ The threshold value to establish that a group employed this type of violence is multiple attacks in a year in which a total of at least 25 persons were injured and resulting in at least 10 deaths. Where such specific information (what: was available?) the qualitative descriptors used in the human rights reports was evaluated to determine if a group had repeatedly employed this level (type?) of targeting.

³¹ Some scores are also based on information included in media reports. Media reports compiled from a search of the Factiva database (Dow Jones, 2010) were used when the primary documents used ambiguous language with relation to the insurgent groups (i.e., referring only to "insurgents", "militants", "rebels", or a title other than the specific name included in the UCDP *Dyadic Dataset*).

UCDP database (UCDP, 2009).^{32,33} To account for this change, I compute a variable accounting for the change in relative capabilities from the previous year to the current (ΔRC_i). This value is determined simply by subtracting the previous period's value of RC_i value from the current period's value. Hence, $\Delta RC_{it} = RC_{it} - RC_{i(t-1)}$. I employ ΔRC_i in the statistical models to test the two hypotheses regarding change in capabilities. The change variable accounts for the dynamic processes that are at the heart of the theory: as insurgent strength increases their reliance on violence should decrease. The measure, of course, does not fully capture the balance of power in the conflict. As discussed above, "power" is a multidimensional concept that incorporates military capabilities, social capital, economic resources, territorial control, and multiple other facets.³⁴ The measure employed here represents a proxy for this complex concept. I choose to rely on this measure of the change in the balance of military capabilities for two reasons. First, data for other dimensions of violence are simply unavailable in a cross-sectional, time-series format. Second, and more importantly, the balance of forces should theoretically be an acceptable measure of the overall balance of capabilities because military capabilities are closely related to the other aspects of power. For example, military capabilities are essential for exerting control over

³² Troop values are often given as a range of estimates from various sources. In these cases, averages of values were generally used. When available, government-backed paramilitary forces are also included in the measure of government strength as well as foreign forces allied with the government or the insurgents.

³³ Very few measures of insurgent strength exist. This is only one way to mathematically account for the balance of power in a conflict. Another strategy is to calculate the relative strength of the group by scaling government strength based on the strength of multiple insurgent actors within the country. Scaling accounts for multiple insurgencies within a country that presumably necessitate the division of government troops.

³⁴ See Race (1972: 144-145) for a discussion of power versus force ratios. In brief, the latter refers to the real ability of insurgents to muster support among the population and command loyalties, which is related as much to political and social organization as military capabilities. The latter refers specifically to the military balance of power. Unfortunately, currently available data does not allow for a suitable test of "power ratios;" as such, I rely on "force ratios" as a proxy. Arendt (1970) also provides a useful theoretical exploration of the difference among, "force," "power," and "violence."

territory, which in turn is a precursor to the group's ability to provide security and other benefits.

The second hypothesis in each pair reflects the importance of support among the population, used in the last chapter's analysis as the dependent variable as the "incidence" of insurgent recruitment among the population within the conflict zone. The logic here in is that as popular support and loyalty for the insurgency increases, the rebels have less incentive to direct violence against the population. Thus, it is necessary to include this measure as a test of a key aspect underlying the theory articulated in this manuscript — popular loyalty structures the violence of insurgents. In addition to standing simply as a proxy for civilian loyalty, the measure is in itself a reflection of the organizational capabilities of the insurgency. As the ratio of insurgents relative to the population increases the ability to police that population and gather information about potential defectors increases; as a result, higher values of this ratio should correlate to a lower likelihood of indiscriminate violence. This variable is constructed by dividing the estimated number of combatants in the insurgency in a given year by the number of persons living in the population areas.³⁵

Other Predictors

To account for the general relationship between overall insurgent military capabilities and the use of violence, I rely on the more static measure of balance of military capabilities constructed by Cunningham, Gleditsch & Salehyan (2009). The theory presents a dynamic argument of insurgent violence based on the manner in which shifts in the conflict environment structure the strategies insurgents adopt a specific time point. However, the overall capabilities enjoyed by insurgents are likely to inform these decisions as well.

³⁵ See Chapter 3 for more details.

Specifically, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, more robust insurgencies that possess greater military capabilities are more likely to signal greater power and a higher likelihood of victory to civilians. They are also more likely to be able to control territory and provide the resources that increase civilian loyalty. Greater military capability should, according to the theory, therefore predict lower levels of violence against civilians and less reliance on indiscriminate violence. This variable is chosen because of its difference from the other measures used to test the hypotheses (see Chapter 3). However, it suffers from the fact that it is largely time invariant and therefore does not capture the dynamic nature of conflict in a way that is meaningful for the hypotheses herein. An additional issue is that relative military capabilities are likely to produce countervailing effects on the use of violence. Positive changes in capabilities and the level of support enjoyed by insurgents theoretically reduce the incentive to use mass violence against civilians; similarly, a relatively high ratio of capabilities on the part of the insurgents should likewise lessen the tendency toward violence. However, greater combat capabilities also provide the opportunity to inflict more violence on civilians. In this sense, greater aggregate capabilities might lead to more violence generally but less indiscriminate violence. The theory presented herein only touches the surface of this issue, and later analyses should attempt to tease out this specific relationship. For the analysis at hand, I chose to focus on the specific mechanisms outlined in the theory: change in capabilities and civilian support for insurgents.

Recent conflict data accounts for local features of conflicts that are diluted in larger aggregations. The control variables include a combination of conflict-specific indicators as well as more traditional country-level variables. Table 4.I summarizes variables used in this analysis.

Table 4.1. Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Δ Insurgent Capability	0.004	0.099	-0.693	1.063
Military Capability	0.536	0.617	0	4
Insurgent Incidence	12.326	24.830	0.050	177.271
Insurgent Range	2.219	0.823	1	3
Govt. Range	2.236	0.525	1	3
Ethnic Mobilization	0.738	0.44	0	1
Conflict Severity_(ln)	5.730	1.981	0	10.779
Age	12.922	12.528	0	57
Democracy	0.3989	0.490	0	1
GDPpc_(ln)	0.891	1.014	-1.22	3.567
Conflict Area_(ln)	11.636	1.502	6.055	14.642
Lootable Resources	0.581	0.494	0	1

Recent analyses suggest a positive relationship between government and insurgent violence (Bohara, Mitchell & Nepal, 2006; Heger & Salehyan, 2007). However, comparative analyses of insurgent recruitment and mobilization during civil war suggest that massive state violence drives peasants into the arms of insurgents (DeNardo, 1985; Goodwin, 2001). Others have pointed out that state terror should not necessarily make civilians more likely to support the insurgents but simply indifferent between joining them and remaining neutral (Moore, 1995). To the extent that state violence against civilians does affect insurgent behavior, it should only be indirectly through increasing the strength of the insurgency relative to the government. The critical factor, then, is not the level of violence employed by the government but the ability of insurgents to provide cover and aid to non-combatants victimized by government counter-insurgency activity. The theory presented here is therefore agnostic about the independent effect of state violence on insurgent strategies. As

with the analysis in Chapter 3, I rely on the *range* measure from the PAVI dataset constructed for this project. This measure of state violence is constructed using the same criteria and coding rules as for insurgent violence (see above).

Popular accounts of civil wars suggest that conflicts between different ethnic groups or conflicts fought over secession are bloodier, longer, and more intractable than other conflicts (Huntington, 1996; Kaufmann, 2001). Ethnic conflicts may lead to dehumanization, making violence more brutal and more visceral. Eck (2009b) shows that ethnically motivated insurgencies escalate more rapidly from "conflicts" to "wars." The theoretical justification for this argument is that ethnically-based insurgencies facilitate recruitment because ethnicity reduces the coordination costs among members of the group, produce more credible movements, and attract more ideologically committed rebels (373). Hence, mobilizing along ethnic lines should lower the cost of recruitment and control on the part of the insurgents. Eck argues that the greater mobilization that accompanies ethnic insurgencies produces more intense violence more quickly compared to other conflicts because such movements can field larger numbers of troops compared to other types of insurgencies.

This relationship has theoretical application to the role of violence against civilians as well. The ability to field larger forces and presence of a more sympathetic and mobilization-conducive environment should reduce the need for the insurgents to rely on coercive violence or indiscriminate repression as a strategy for controlling territory and populations. As such, in contrast to theories that portray ethnically delineated conflicts as being more savage and producing higher levels of civilian victimization, the theory presented herein predicts the opposite. If ethnicity facilitates control and abets collaboration, we would expect that

conflicts in which the insurgents use ethnicity as a primary means of mobilization should produce lower levels of insurgent violence as well as well less frequent use of indiscriminate violence. Data on ethnic mobilization is taken from Eck (2009b). The variable is dichotomous and takes a value of 1 if the rebels originate from a different ethnic group than the government and use ethnicity as a mobilization strategy and 0 otherwise.

Kalyvas (2004: 133; 2006: 168-169) suggests that indiscriminate violence should diminish over time as political actors slowly recognize its counterproductive effects. To account for the age of the insurgency I include the count of years since the first battle-related death associated with the group. This count is taken from UCDP *Dyadic Dataset*. Conflict severity is also likely related to civilian victimization. Intense conflicts provide incentives for violence against civilians because warring parties may become more desperate and focus violence on civilian population centers rather than better-defended military targets in order to wear down the adversary (Downes, 2006; 2008). Escalating battlefield costs may pressure insurgents to target civilians in order to signal their resolve to continue the fight (Hultman, 2007). Conflict severity is the logged-value of the annual number of total battlefield casualties among all parties in the conflict (Lacina & Gleditsch, 2005).³⁶

The size of the conflict zone may also influence the number of civilian casualties. Insurgents' abilities to expand the conflict outward from mountain hideouts or remote jungles and to penetrate the more populous areas of a conflict country are also likely to be indicative of their power. As such, it is likely that as the conflict zone expands in relation to insurgent capabilities, the incentives for violence decline. Conflict area is the logged value of the estimated area of the conflict zone in square kilometers and is constructed from geo-

³⁶ Hultman (2007) included the number of battlefield casualties accruing to each party. These data were collected from UCDP coding sheets, which are currently not publicly available.

referenced conflict site data available from the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO) (Raleigh et al., 2006).

Lootable resources and foreign support for rebels have been linked to insurgent violence in both media accounts and qualitative analyses of conflict (Hovil & Werker, 2005; Weinstein, 2005; 2007). I construct a binary indicator for the presence of loutable resources within the conflict area that is coded 1 if any gems (diamonds, rubies, jade, etc.) or drugs (cannabis, opium, or coca) are located within the conflict zone and 0 otherwise. Geospatial data on the location of gems is from Lujala (2009) and Gilmore et al. (2005) while drug data is from Lujala (2003).

High levels of development allow the state to provide incentives to individuals as a non-violent means of dissuading them from participating in rebellion. In addition, more developed states are better able to institute effective anti-terror and security measures that can protect civilians from rebel violence. However, wealthier states also exacerbate the resource disparity between insurgents and the regime. In accord with the hypotheses, it is also probable that insurgents resort to more frequent or more indiscriminate violence when facing richer states because they lack the capabilities to compete for loyalty. As such, wealth represents something of a simultaneously motivating and countervailing influence on violence. The measure is the logged value of GDP per capita from the Penn World Tables (Heston, Summers, and Aten, 2009). It is lagged for one year owing to the detrimental effect of war on national income.

Democratic regimes may also encourage violent attacks on civilians by virtue of their participatory nature and the links between the preferences of the population and the actions of the state (Goodwin, 2006; Pape, 2005). The measure is a binary adaptation of the 21-point

Polity2 indicator from the Polity IV dataset (Marshall & Jaggar, 2006) The measure is coded as 1 if the state received a score of 7 or higher and 0 otherwise.

Lastly, I control for temporal dependence in the strategies adopted by a group. For the models using the 3-category PAVI measures, I included lagged binary indicators of the dependent variable, omitting the highest category. I use this technique because previous analyses have pointed out that while temporal dependence remains a significant issue in MLE models, simply employing a lagged dependent variable is not appropriate. This method is a suitable alternative that additionally provides for easy substantive interpretation of the results with respect to changes in the dependent variable between $t-1$ and t .³⁷

Results

Tables 2 and 3 provide the results from the regression analyses predicting the frequency and range of insurgent violence.³⁸ Models 1 through 3 in Table 4.2 show the results for the ordered probit regressions reflecting the results for the frequency of abuse. According to each model ΔRC_i is negative and statistically significant, providing support for hypothesis 1.³⁹ This result strongly suggests that as insurgent power declines relative to the government between the previous and current period — as a result of pro-government intervention, significant combat losses or troop defections, or superior recruitment by the government —

³⁷ See for example Hafner-Burton (2005) and Wood (2008) for other applications of this technique to state repression.

³⁸ Appendix 2 provides robustness checks using the alternative dependent variable. The results support the primary hypothesis regarding the relationship between changes in insurgents' relative capabilities and the frequency and type of violence. The secondary hypotheses regarding the incidence of insurgent recruitment are not supported.

³⁹ For each model I also ran robustness checks dropping observations in which ΔRC_i fell two standard deviations above the mean. Results were substantively similar and the change in capabilities variable was consistently negative and statistically significant.

rebels become more likely to kill greater numbers of civilians. Looking at Models 2 and 3, the result provides marginal support for hypothesis 2, which posited that greater levels of insurgent violence are more likely when there is a lower incidence of insurgent recruitment among the population. The value for the variable is significant and negative in Model 2, but just passes the level of marginal significance in Model 3 ($p=0.11$). The lackluster performance of the variable may suggest that while insurgents generally lower violence as their capabilities and support increase, they still frequently target persons they perceive as enemies such as activists for their opposition and civilians suspected of collaboration. In order to evaluate this relationship it is useful to examine the results for the *range* of insurgent violence tested in models 4 through 6.

Models 4 through 6 in Table 4.3 provide support for hypothesis 3, which argued that negative changes in the relative capabilities of insurgents contributed to a greater likelihood of indiscriminate violence. As in the first set of models, ΔRC_i is negative and significant across the specifications. Consistent with the theory, these results suggest that as insurgent capabilities increase, rebels become less likely to resort to indiscriminate violence against the population. In addition, Models 5 and 6 support the secondary hypotheses regarding the recruitment ability of insurgents and their support within the conflict zone. In both models the coefficient on the variable achieves at least marginal statistical significance and is negative. Thus, the results suggest that as the ease with which insurgents can gain support from the conflict zone increases and as their ability to police the population of that area increases, they are less likely to resort to randomized violence in order to deter collaboration with the regime. This may also explain the results from the previous set of regressions in which the incidence of insurgents only returned marginally supportive results. Support may

only have a marginal effect on overall levels of violence, but the incidence of insurgent recruitment clearly leads to a reduction of violence against civilians broadly. That is, the range of violence falls as the incidence of recruitment increases.

Table 4.2 Regression Results: Frequency of Insurgent Violence

	Model 1 Frequency	Model 2 Frequency	Model 3 Frequency
Δ Insurgent Capability	-1.777 (0.476)**	-1.344 (0.464)***	-1.410 (0.477)**
Insurgent Incidence_{t-1}		-0.004 (0.001)**	-0.003 (0.002)
Military Capabilities	0.021 (0.125)	0.064 (0.126)	
Govt. Violence Range_{t-1}	0.126 (0.179)	0.174 (0.179)	0.154 (0.175)
Ethnic Mobilization	-0.450 (0.222)**	-0.442 (0.224)**	-0.489 (0.215)**
Conflict Severity_(ln)	0.323 (0.049)***	0.320 (0.050)***	0.331 (0.046)***
GDPpc_{(ln)t-1}	-0.0001 (0.006)	0.001 (0.006)	-0.015 (0.106)
Age	-0.050 (0.103)	-0.048 (0.103)	0.001 (0.006)
Lootable Resources	0.243 (0.187)	0.249 (0.175)	0.275 (0.172)*
Democracy	-0.235 (0.206)	-0.252 (0.202)	-0.260 (0.203)
Conflict Area_(ln)	-0.198 (0.077)***	-0.204 (0.074)***	-0.237 (0.073)***
DV Category 1_(t-1)	-1.830 (0.275)***	-1.793 (0.278)***	-1.865 (0.267)***
DV Category 2_(t-1)	-1.021 (0.225)***	-1.008 (0.232)***	-1.043 (0.226)***
Log-pseudolikelihood	-236.990	-235.938	-240.476
Wald X^2	134.45	156.06	161.57
Prob. > X^2	0.000	0.000	0.000
Observations	310	308	319
Dyads	71	70	78

Coefficients and robust standard errors clustered on dyads in parentheses. ***=P<0.01 **=P<0.05 *=P<0.10 Two-tailed test.

Table 4.3. Regression Results: Range of Insurgent Violence

	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	Range	Range	Range
Δ Insurgent Capability	-1.249 (0.457)***	-1.537 (0.446)**	-1.624 (0.471)**
Insurgent Incidence_{t-1}		-0.005 (0.002)**	-0.006 (0.002)**
Military Capabilities	-0.114 (0.119)	-0.054 (0.119)	
Govt. Violence Range_{t-1}	-0.073 (0.195)	-0.223 (0.204)	-0.026 (0.197)
Ethnic Mobilization	-0.105 (0.257)	-0.111 (0.253)	-0.152 (0.242)
Conflict Severity_(ln)	0.208 (0.045)***	0.223 (0.044)***	0.219 (0.042)***
GDPpc_{(ln)t-1}	0.189 (0.104)*	0.166 (0.096)*	0.163 (0.094)*
Age	-0.001 (0.006)	-0.001 (0.007)	-0.0001 (0.007)
Lootable Resources	0.215 (0.171)	0.202 (0.170)	0.198 (0.166)
Democracy	-0.076 (0.191)	-0.273 (0.200)	-0.103 (0.183)
Conflict Area_(ln)	-0.108 (0.074)	-0.121 (0.075)*	-0.124 (0.070)*
DV Category 1_(t-1)	-1.640 (0.268)***	-1.676 (0.271)***	-1.690 (0.266)***
DV Category 2_(t-1)	-0.970 (0.162)***	-0.965 (0.156)***	-0.996 (0.152)***
Log-pseudolikelihood	-244.443	-240.764	-247.674
Wald X^2	104.83	111.45	115.61
Prob. > X^2	0.000	0.000	0.000
Observations	310	308	319
Dyads	71	70	78

Coefficients and robust standard errors clustered on dyads in parentheses. ***=P<0.01 **=P< 0.05 *=P< 0.10 Two-tailed test.

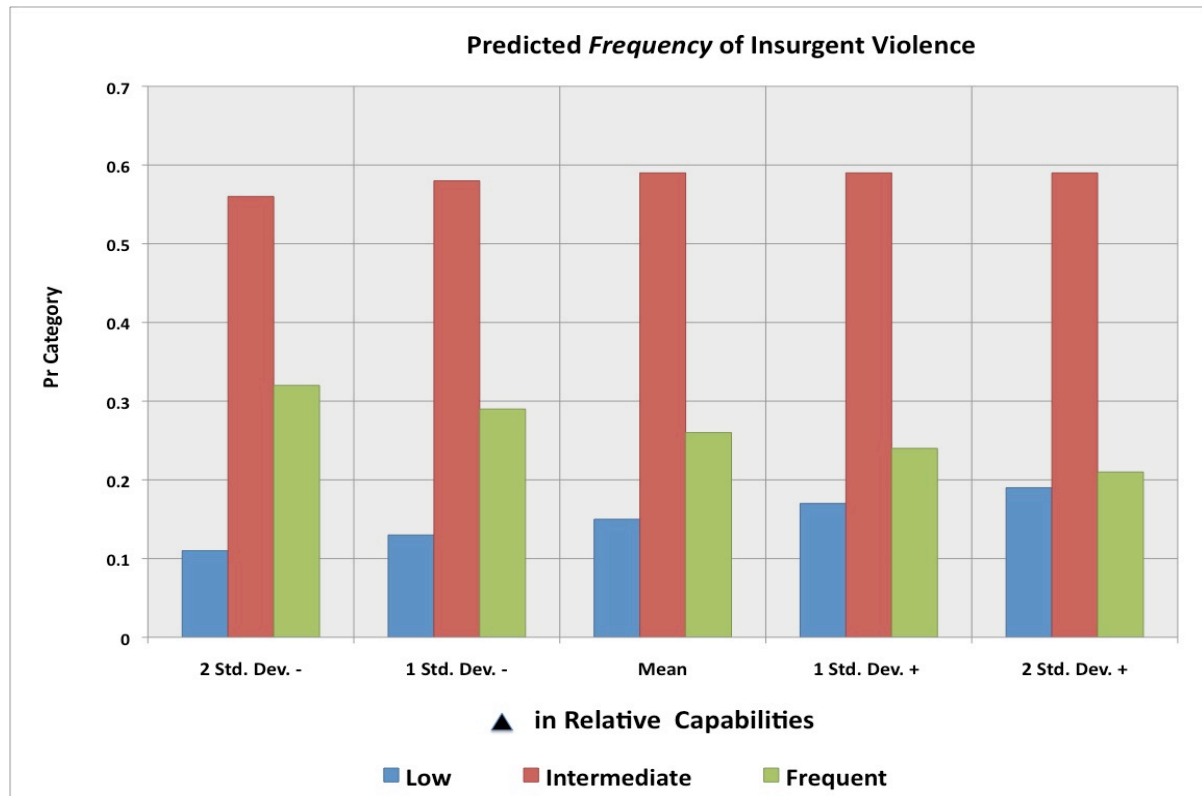
In order to provide a more substantive interpretation, using the results from models 2 and 5 I compute the predicted probabilities for the effects of ΔRC_i and the incidence of insurgent recruitment from the conflict zone on the expected change in the frequency and

range of insurgent violence from $t-1$ to t . Specifically, these estimations predict the probability of insurgent violence being in one of the three respective categories *given that they engaged in an intermediate level of violence in the previous year*. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 present the predictions for the frequency of violence while Figures 4.3 and 4.4 give predictions for the range of violence. First, the role of temporal dependence is clear in all figures. According to Figure 4.2, if an insurgent group adopted an intermediate level of killing in the prior year, the probability that it maintained that level of killing in the next year was nearly 60% regardless of the change in the capabilities. This was similar for predictions using the insurgent incidence variable at all levels save for those approaching the maximum value. However, in line with hypothesis 1, Figure 4.1 also shows that as insurgent capabilities increase relative to the government between t and $t-1$ they become increasingly likely to de-escalate violence. For example, a two-standard deviation increase in ΔRC_i above the mean *increases* the probability that insurgents switch from an intermediate level of violence to the lowest category by approximately 4%. Conversely, a two-standard deviation decrease from the mean *increases* the probability of the group moving from the intermediate to the highest category of violence by approximately 6%.

Figure 4.2 shows the predictions for the change in strategy based on the incidence of insurgent mobilization within the conflict zone. According to these predictions, the incidence of recruitment produces only small changes in the frequency of violence across most levels of recruitment. Moving from the minimum level of recruitment to the mean leads to only a 2% increase in the probability that a group reduces its level of civilian killing by one category from the previous year. Moving from the mean to twice the mean increases that probability by approximately 4%. The major change in insurgent violence frequency,

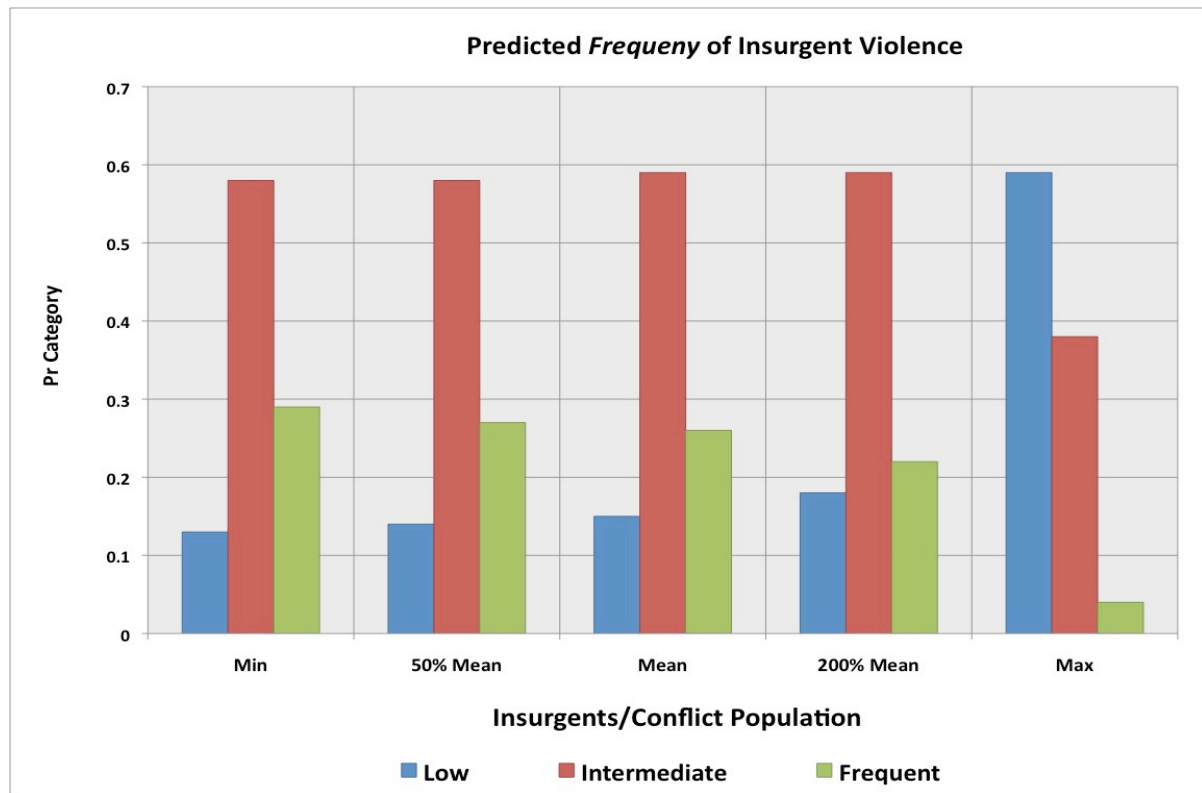
however, comes when insurgents experience significant mobilization capacity among the population. When the incidence of insurgents extends to the maximum value in the tested sample (~180 insurgents per 10,000 civilians for the tested sample) the likelihood of a one-category decrease in violence frequency increases by almost 45%. These results (as well as diagnostics performed on the regression results) suggest that only very high levels of mobilization and civilian support exert tangible impacts on changes in the frequency of violence adopted by insurgents.

Figure 4.1: Predicted Frequency of Insurgent Violence by ΔRC_i



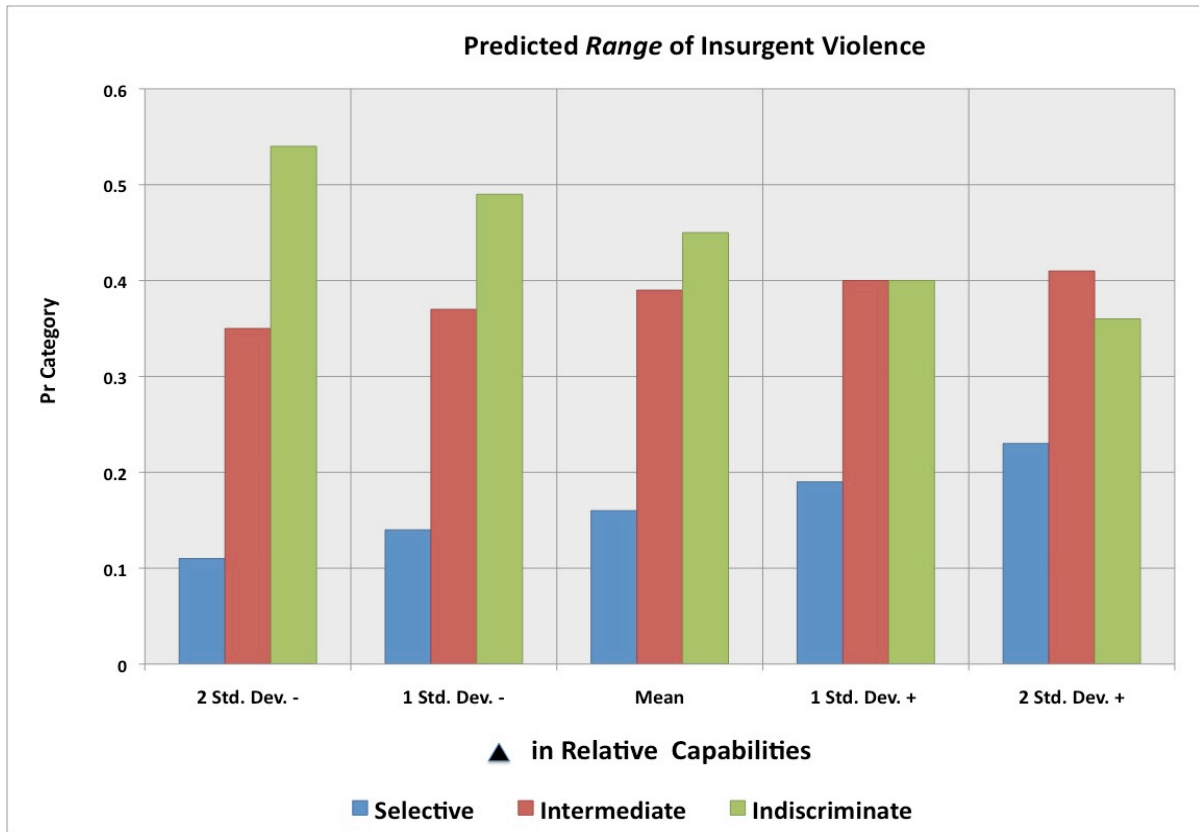
Note: The figure shows the predicted probability of a change from the intermediate category of violence to another category given the specified change in relative insurgent capabilities from t-1 to t. Estimated values were simulated using Clarify (King, Tomz & Wittenberg, 2000). Previous year's violence value set to the intermediate category; all other values set at their mean, median, or modal values.

Figure 4.2: Predicted Frequency of Insurgent Violence by Insurgents Incidence



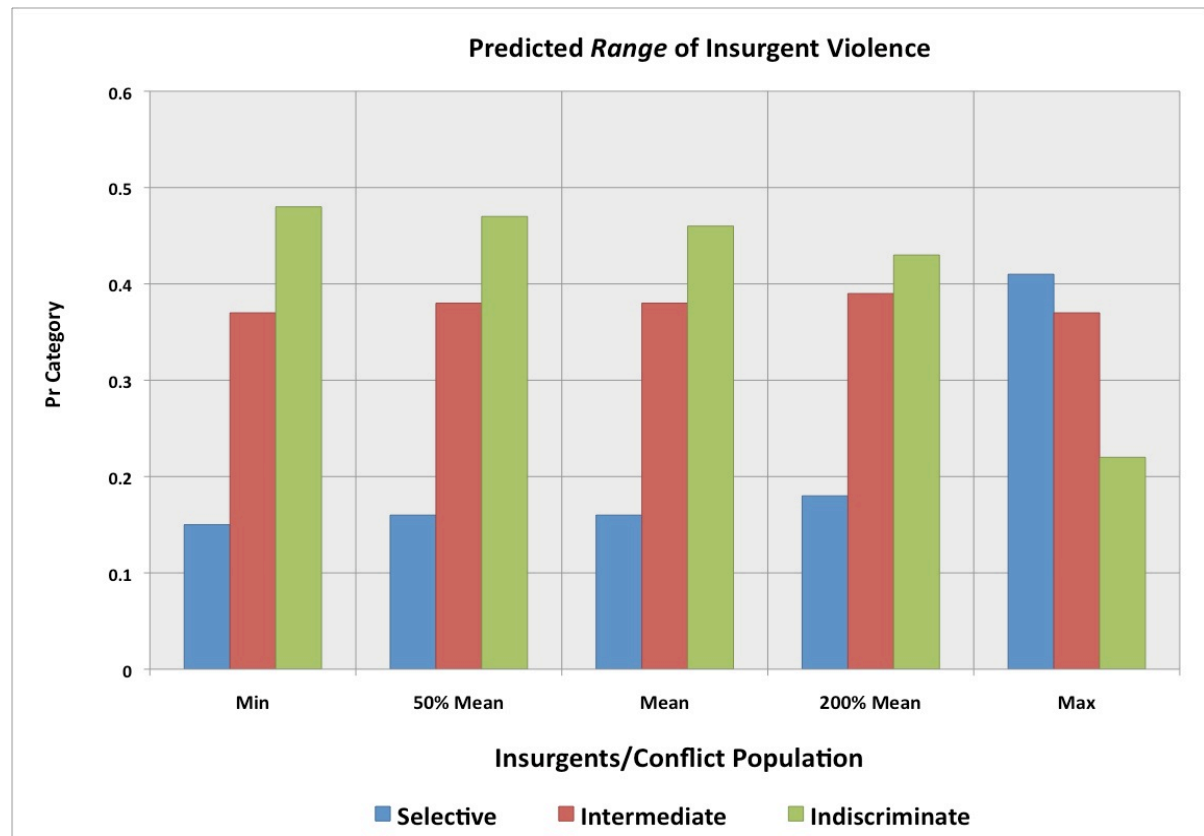
Note: The figure shows the predicted probability of a change from the intermediate category of violence to another category given the range of insurgent incidence (insurgents per 10,000 persons in the conflict area). Estimated values were simulated using Clarify (King, Tomz & Wittenberg, 2000). Previous year's value set to intermediate category; all other independent variables set at their mean, median, or modal values.

Figure 4.3: Predicted Range of Insurgent Violence by ΔRC_i



Note: The figure shows the predicted probability of a change from the intermediate category of violence to another category given a range of changes in insurgent-government troop ratios between time $t-1$ and t . Estimated values were simulated using Clarify (King, Tomz & Wittenberg, 2000). Previous year's value set to intermediate category; all other independent variables set at their mean, median, or modal values.

Figure 4.4: Predicted Range of Insurgent Violence by Insurgent Incidence



Note: The figure shows the predicted probability of a change from the intermediate category of violence to another category given the range of insurgent incidence (insurgents per 10,000 persons in the conflict area). Estimated values were simulated using Clarify (King, Tomz & Wittenberg, 2000). Previous year's value set to intermediate category; all other independent variables set at their mean, median, or modal values.

Similar trends emerge in Figures 4.3 and 4.4, which demonstrate the effects of changes in insurgent capabilities and the level of insurgent mobilization within the conflict zone on the range of insurgent violence. Like the simulations for the frequency of violence, these simulations suggest a high degree of temporal dependence — a group that adopted the intermediate range category in the previous period was approximately 40% likely to maintain that strategy in the current period. Interestingly, unlike the predictions for the influence of the incidence of insurgent recruitment on the frequency of violence, the predictions for its relationship to the range of violence show a more consistent temporal effect, hovering around

40% across the values of the variable. These simulations add additional support to hypothesis 2. Figure 4.3 suggests, as predicted, that shifts in the balance of power that benefit the insurgents contribute to a decrease in the likelihood that the group switches to a more indiscriminate strategy of violence. In Indochina, as the Vietminh's strength rose relative to the French colonial forces, its use of indiscriminate terror decreased (Pike, 1967: 251). By contrast, the more ground insurgents lose relative to the government from one year to the next, the more likely they are to randomize violence. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda in late 2008 and early 2009, the LRA dramatically escalated violence against random civilians following a shift in the power dynamics of the conflict as the rebels were nearly defeated by a multinational military force (Rice, 2009; HRW, 2010). Specifically, these estimates predict that a two-standard deviation decline from the mean in relative capabilities contributes to 9% increase in the probability that the group moves from the intermediate to highest range category, while a two-standard deviation increase leads that probability to decline by 8%.

According to figure 4.4, as the incidence of recruitment increases, the probability of adopting more indiscriminate forms of violence also falls. Much like the trend in the predictions for the frequency of violence, the probability of change is minor across most values, showing almost no change from the minimum to the mean. However, as was the trend in the above predictions as well, the movement from the mean toward the maximum values leads to a substantial change in the probability of a shift in strategy. Specifically, an increase from the mean incidence to the maximum in the sample is associated with a 26% chance that the group moves from the intermediate to the highest range of violence. Put in other terms, both high popular loyalty as well as changes in the group's capabilities

contributes to a significant decline in their reliance on terrorism or random violence against the population.

Turning to the other predictors, it is important to note that the power dynamics seem to outweigh simple power ratios in terms of the effect on violence against civilians. While the level of insurgent military capabilities was generally expected to influence the severity of violence against civilians, this analysis suggests that when the changes in capabilities from one period to the next are accounted for, the influence of the power ratio alone washes out. Hence, the dynamic story may be more important than the static story in this case. In all models for which it is accounted, the measure of military capabilities fails to achieve statistical significance. Surprisingly, in the models explaining the frequency of violence the coefficient was positive across specifications but consistently negative in the models accounting for range.

Two additional factors likely related to the ability of insurgents to mobilize support and loyalty among civilians return negative and significant coefficients in the models. First, the variable accounting for ethnic mobilization is negative in all models, though it only achieves marginal significance in models accounting for the frequency of violence. Consequently, this suggests that it has a significant effect on decreasing the frequency of violence but no significant effect on the range of violence. Based on the rationale presented above, if ethnic ties facilitate loyalty and attract more dedicated, higher quality recruits, it stands to reason that — in contrast to many popular theories — conflicts in which insurgents mobilize along ethnic lines may lead to a lower frequency of civilian victimizations if not more selective violence.

Second, the size of the conflict area is negative and significant across all models though it is only marginally significant in most of the models accounting for the range of insurgent violence. This generally suggests that as the size of the conflict area increases the frequency and range of civilian targeting declines. While this variable technically accounts for only the size of the area in which conflict occurred, it is possible that it also picks up on the level of control exerted by insurgents over territory. In this sense, it would provide support for Kalyvas's (2006) theory regarding control and violence. In addition, it would generally fit with the arguments in this a manuscript that as power dynamics favor insurgents, the group has less incentive to target civilians for violence because capabilities should be correlated with the size of the conflict area.

The effect of government violence on insurgent violence is inconsistent in these models. In all but one of the models accounting for the frequency of insurgent violence the frequency and range of government violence exerts a positive but insignificant effect. In the first set of models the measure of insurgent violence is positive while in the second set it is negative; neither achieves statistical significance.

Consistent with all past studies of anti-civilian violence, the overall severity of the conflict in terms of battlefield deaths is a significant predictor of the severity of insurgent violence toward civilians. State strength as proxied by the natural log of GDP per capita is insignificant and changes signs in the three models examining the frequency of insurgent violence; however, it reaches marginal significance in the models accounting for the range of insurgent violence. This suggests, perhaps, that insurgents facing stronger states are more likely to use random violence and acts of terrorism in an attempt to destroy the superior resource flows that strong states are likely to provide to their citizens. As such, it is

somewhat consistent with the theory presented herein. As the capabilities and wealth of the state increase it becomes harder for insurgents to mobilize support; as such, they may employ random violence and terror as a means to undercut the benefits provided by the state.

The variable accounting for the age of the conflict is negative but insignificant across most specifications, suggesting the lack of a relationship between the duration of the insurgency and the level of type of violence. Lutable resources have a consistently positive relationship to insurgent violence, yet the effect is significant — and marginally so — in only one of the models. As such, it largely fails to support theories (e.g., Kaldor, 1997; Weinstein, 2007) that argue that lutable resources such as diamonds and drugs produce greedy and therefore brutal rebel groups. Similarly, the age of the insurgency is positively correlated with both the range and frequency of violence but never produces significant results. Lastly, democracy has a generally negative relationship across the models but fails to achieve significance, thus failing to support theories (e.g., Goodwin, 2005) that insurgents are more likely to use terrorism or indiscriminate violence against populations in democratic states.

NLF Violence in Vietnam: A Case in Brief

In order to illustrate the mechanisms elucidated in the theory more clearly I examine these dynamics within the context of the Communist insurgency against the government of South Vietnam. The case is a useful illustration for several reasons. First, both the levels of insurgent killings as well as the relative balance of power between the conflict actors vary notably over the conflict. Importantly, the changes in both are easily tracked over time, and can be compared using a number of available proxies. The detailed statistical data compiled by the US government during the war allows for convenient tracing of these dynamics;

similarly, the wealth of survey research and contemporary analyses of the case conducted as it unfolded facilitate examining the relationship between the central variables. Lastly, despite the likely criticism that Vietnam was an internationalized conflict rather than a true civil war, the international dimension make it a particularly useful case to for illustrating the expected theoretical relationships.⁴⁰ Because the "foreign" interventions occurred at different time points in the conflict and after the conflict had already been active for a number of years, the changes in the power dynamics they wrought are illustrative of the broader theory painted here. That is, as articulated in this and previous chapters, broader changes in the relative balance of power between the two sides of the conflict contribute to changes in the violence strategies they adopt. Moreover, these interventions help to demonstrate that the magnitude of the power shift is often related to the change in violence strategy. As shown below, for example, while NLF violence varies notably during the period prior to the direct involvement of US ground forces, the major changes in the levels of violence correspond to the US buildup and subsequent departure. Arguably, this is the case because it represented the largest shift in the relative power balance between the Communists and the GVN and its allies during the conflict. Consequently, the case is useful starting point for exploring and illustrating the general dynamics of the theory presented above.

In brief, the theory fits the Vietnam case quite well. During periods of sustained or increasing relative capabilities, civilians revise upward their opinions of insurgent victory and shift support to the insurgents. The expansion of NLF control in rural areas during the late 1950s and early 1960s demonstrated the strength of the rebellion. The perception of growing insurgent strength coupled with the relative capacity of revolutionary institutions in

⁴⁰ In truth, few if any civil conflicts are wholly domestic affairs. A review of civil wars of the 20th century shows that the vast majority experienced foreign intervention, crossed over international borders, or otherwise actively and explicitly involved governments or armed groups beyond the conflict state.

rural communities encouraged recruitment and lessened the need to rely on terror against the peasantry (Joiner, 1974: 181-183; Tanham, 2006: 66-67). However, increased US involvement in Vietnam and improvements in GVN counterinsurgency strategies throughout the mid- and late-1960s weakened the relative capacity of the insurgents and forced them to adopt more coercive strategies of resource mobilization, including forced conscription and greater violence (Berman, 1974: 50; Joiner, 1974: 247, 250-251). The major drawdown in US troops that began in 1969-1970 and continued until through 1973 again altered the balance of power in the conflict. As US troop strength declined, the relative military capabilities of the Communist forces increased. During this period, intentional insurgent violence against civilians began to decline as the rebels (with the assistance of NVA forces) increasingly asserted control over many southern provinces.

Figure 4.5 shows the annual number of intentional civilian killings through acts of terrorism and the assassination of local officials committed by the NLF insurgency for the years 1961-1972.⁴¹ In accord with the summary in the last paragraph, violence was comparatively low in the early years of the conflict but underwent significant escalation as US troop stocks began to alter the power dynamics of the conflict. In 1964 the US had roughly 20,000 troops in Vietnam, largely in support and special operations roles. The following year this number more than doubled, and the troops began to engage in direct combat with Viet Cong forces. These numbers grew rapidly between late-1965 and 1968, culminating in approximately a half-million US troops in the country. This surge of foreign forces resulted in a shift in the power balance and the movement of control away from the

⁴¹ Data on civilian killings as well as other data compiled either by the US military or for it should be treated with some caution as definition, data sources, and coding methods change at various points throughout the conflict and as different agencies or departments were charged with accumulating and analyzing data (see Shcultz, 1981).

NLF/NVA. As demonstrated in the figure, this shift corresponded to an increase in the number of civilian killing conducted by the Communist forces. After 1968, however, US forces were withdrawn from the country. As US troop levels declined (and as NVA infiltrations from the North increased), the power balance shifted back toward the communist insurgents who then began to constrain acts of terror against the population. The details of the case, even as presented briefly here, reflect the dynamics of the conflict that led to changes in the level of insurgent violence. However, a more slightly more nuanced articulation of events provides additional support.

Following the division of the North and South, as many as 100,000 of the Vietminh cadres fled to the North. Perhaps 10,000 remained in the South to establish an infrastructure for future action (Pike, 1967: 77-84; Zasloff, 1968: 1). In the mid-1950s those who had left for the North began to infiltrate back in order to launch the insurgency against the Diem regime. These cadres represented a rising threat to the stability of the Diem regime; as a result, it launched a campaign of repression against the infiltrators, remaining cadres, and former Vietminh (many who had been aligned with the anti-Communist wing of the movement during the insurrection against colonial rule). This repression quickly expanded and intensified and the government began to detain, torture, and often execute suspected collaborators as well as their family members, friends, and associates (Fall, 1966: 237-238; Pike, 1967: 79; Zasloff, 1968: 9-11).

While the regime's repressive campaign initially dealt a blow to the cadre's organizational efforts, in the longer term it created the conditions that allowed the movement to expand. Simply put, many former Vietminh and others who the regime perceived as collaborators or sympathizers felt they had little choice but to join the rebellion (Zasloff,

1968: 13-16, 26). As one NLF cadre related to a reporter in the early-1960s, he (and many other cadres) joined the Front because the Diem regime had begun arresting and executing a great many former and suspected Vietminh resistance members, even those with no association to the NLF (Oka, 1968: 337). These cadres became the "backbone" of the future NLF movement. By the late 1950s they had established safe zones in the swamps and mountains of the South within which they could train recruits and amass resources and from which to launch military attacks and lay the groundwork for large-scale rebellion, including both political and social organization in rural villages (Fall, 1968: 237-239; Zasloff, 1968: 16). For example, the NLF enjoyed some notable success in mobilizing support among highland tribes on the periphery of the state. During this period Vietminh from these areas who had remained in the North after partition infiltrated back to these tribal regions and began to mobilize support. Herein, previous anti-Colonial organizations were reactivated and the returnees relied on both their significant organizational capabilities (including the construction of public health facilities, education, and governance) as well as tribal discontent with the Diem regime to gain a secure foothold in the country (Joiner, 1968: 352-353). These highland areas became sanctuaries and refuges where the NLF could train guerrillas and from which they could launch attacks.

A vital part of this initial growth period included a violence program intended to separate the population from government control. To that end the guerillas initiated a campaign of "terror" in the countryside. However, while the Front escalated violence during this period, it remained largely selective and targeted local administrators, youth movement leaders, local security force members, and other agents of the state (Clodfelter, 1995: 38-39; Fall, 1966: 185). Arguably, the selectivity of the violence and its comparatively limited

nature (especially as compared to later conflict years) were related to the relative power the movement enjoyed in the countryside. Despite the limited number of troops they could field in comparison to the government (Thompson [1966: 48] estimates a 50:1 ratio during this time frame), they enjoyed significant capabilities in rural areas in terms of mobilization, indoctrination, and movement because the Diem regime could exert little effective control on the population outside of Saigon (Pike, 1967: 80). Moreover, the insurgents enjoyed significant sympathy among the population because of widespread discontent in rural areas (Zasloff, 1968: 22). As such, the newly re-organized cadres were able to grow and expand while using violence and terror in a selective and judicious manner (Davison, 1968: xi; Leites, 1969: 65; Shultz, 1978: 80-84).

In 1958-1959 the Diem regime expanded its reliance on repression, more broadly targeting the population, thereby creating resentment and fertile ground for the proto-guerrillas to mobilize support (see Pike, 1967: 79-80). The increasing repression of the Diem regime contributed to support for the insurgents and offers a partial explanation for the more limited use of violence by the guerrillas during this period. During this period the Front relied much less on violence than the regime, which translated into a more positive image among peasants (Shultz, 1978: 84). Thus, while the guerillas employed terror to expel village officials and security personnel, destabilize the countryside, and create the conditions necessary to establish Communist control, they had limited incentive to employ large-scale or indiscriminate violence against the peasantry.

By 1960 the rebels had become entrenched within the population. In response the government slowly began to construct a counterinsurgency strategy that could at the least halt the rapid expansion of the insurgency. In response to widespread unrest and increasing

instability in the countryside (and with increasing military aid from the US), the Diem regime expanded its counterinsurgency efforts, employing civic actions such as land reform and rural development programs (see Pike, 1967: 61-64) to supplement military components. These programs were intended to counter the expansion of the political and social reforms and programs promised by the Communist insurgents. However, the work of the regime's civic actions teams as well as policies such as rural development initiatives and land tenure programs were slow-moving, poorly implemented and invited only a tepid response from the population in terms of gaining support (Scigliano, 1968: 596-597; Ladejinsky, 1968; Pike, 1976: 64-68). Moreover, the general inability of the regime to provide security and the competing (and often superior) programs instituted by the Front negated any real success from the government programs.

During this period, particularly between 1960 and 1961, the Front's popularity grew significantly and it was increasingly able to mobilize support and recruit new guerillas from the rural populations (Leites, 1969: 40), particularly those areas under its direct control (Pike, 1969: 113-114). Following Tet in 1960, a large number of persons moved into Party-controlled areas because the Front had effectively limited the government presence in many rural areas and established itself as the de facto government (Race, 1972: 116). Bernard Fall (1966: 283), for example, citing a US military adviser, reported that by early 1962 80% of the countryside was under the nominal influence of the Viet Cong. The rising support for the Front and its growing capabilities allowed it to maintain a relatively selective application of violence. Moreover, during these years, the number of assassinations and intentional killings of civilians stabilized to just over 1000 per year (see Figure 4.5) — a high figure but still low

relative to the damage being inflicted by indiscriminate ARVN violence (Leites, 1969: 84-85).

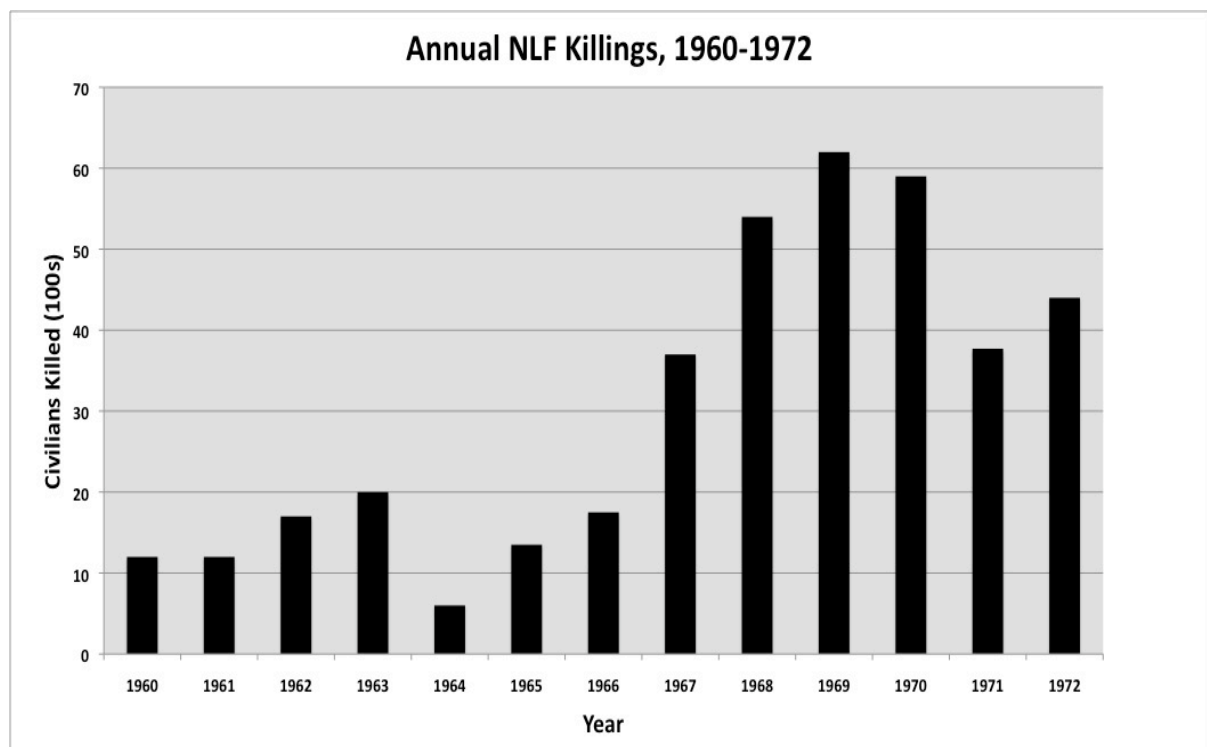
In 1962 the situation began to change, albeit only slightly, to the benefit of the government. The recognition of the recalcitrance of the insurgency and its rising support among the population prompted the regime and its US allies to undertake a significant change in its counterinsurgency strategy. First, US troop strength had increased to more than 10,000 and began engaging the Viet Cong in combat. In addition, US Special Forces troops organized local resistance to the NLF, including arming Montagnard units and training local defense militias to provide security to rural hamlets (Clodfelter, 1995: 44-45). More importantly, The Diem regime (with increasing US support), implemented the Strategic Hamlet program. Based in part on the successes of the British counterinsurgency effort in Malaya the decade before, Strategic hamlets were constructed with the intent of separating the people from the insurgents (or conversely, the fish from their sea) by providing physical security as well as a civic program designed to win "hearts and minds" (Dunn, 1981: 4-7; Pike, 1967: 64-68). This program began in earnest in early 1962 and met with some initial success. Despite its eventual failure and the poor press it received, the initial response of the insurgency was to back off and regroup (Dunn, 1981: 9). At least in the immediate-term, the fortified hamlets increased the difficulty with which the NLF insurgents could gain access to supplies, build revolutionary infrastructure, and they slowed the momentum of the movement. The aggressive activity of US special forces in the highlands and the (albeit limited) efforts of the Strategic Hamlet and rural development schemes provided some success in deterring NLF expansion in the rural highlands, making mobilization more difficult and protecting civilians from NLF violence (Joiner, 1968: 354-355). This shift in

the dynamics of the conflict — as the US slowly built up its forces in the country, as its support for the regime increased, and the government experimented with new counter-revolutionary strategies — led to changes in the level of support for the guerillas. While support was broadly forthcoming in the previous years, it began to waver in 1962 (Leites, 1969: 40). As popular support for the insurgents receded in 1962 and into 1963, the insurgents escalated the number of assassinations and killings they used in an attempt to undermine the government-built Strategic Hamlets. They also adopted increasingly coercive recruitment strategies, including the use of violence and kidnapping (Donnell, 1967: 11). As shown in Figure 4.5, during this period insurgent violence against civilians increased by approximately 50% between 1961 and 1962 and by 1963 was nearly double the levels of 2 years earlier.

The effect of the Strategic Hamlet Program (SHP) was short-lived. As with previous government programs, the benefits promised to the people failed to materialize and the government was unable to provide sufficient security to the population (Dunn, 1981: 12). While defection in the first few years of the SHP had increased (at least nominally), by late 1963 they were declining; moreover, desertions from the ARVN were steadily increasing (Dunn, 1981: 10). While in 1960 the force ratio between the government and insurgents was greater than 50:1, the disparity had been cut in half by late 1963; by the beginning of 1965 (prior to major US intervention), the ratio had fallen to less than 10:1 with some estimates as low as 5:1 (Burchett, 1968: 468; Thompson, 1966: 48). Moreover, by 1964 the SHP was in complete disarray, the dynamics of the war had again shifted away from the regime, and the NLF stood on the verge of victory (Dunn, 1981: 19-23). While the Saigon government had increased its forces dramatically (by nearly 50%) between 1960 and 1963, the Front had

grown at a more rapid pace, quickly whittling away at the numerical superiority of government forces (Burchett, 1968: 466). Furthermore, the NLF took advantage of the collapse of the Diem regime in a coup and the increased instability in Saigon brought by widespread protests (which spurred the coup) to significantly expand their power and authority during 1963-1964 (Clodfelter, 1995: 49-50).

Figure 4.5: Annual NLF Civilian Killings



Annual killing data are median values compiled from multiple sources: Fall (1966), Hillsman (1967), Pike (1967); Thayer (1985).

Consistent with the theory outlined above, the significant expansion of the NLF's capabilities and support during this period translated into a notable decline in the level of violence employed by guerillas. Following the collapse of the Diem regime, NLF killings fell to their lowest levels since the onset of major violence in 1959. According to the numbers compiled for Figure 4.5, the number of intentional killings and assassinations

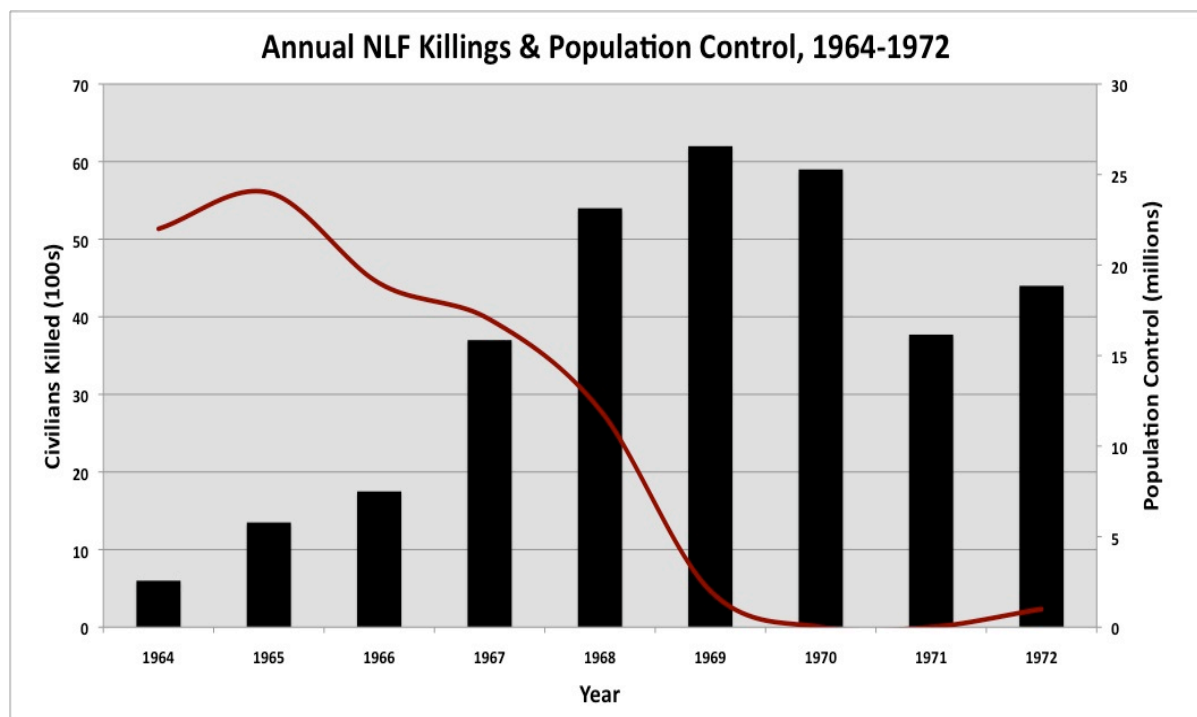
declined by nearly 70% between 1963 and 1964; while they climbed again in 1965 they still remained significantly below the levels recorded in 1961 and 1962.

The slight uptick in the violence in 1965 and the continued trend for the next 5 years is in large part related to the most significant shift in the war's strategic balance during the decade: the major buildup of US forces. At the beginning of 1965 the US had some 25,000 troops deployed in Vietnam; over the course of the year, however, this number grew rapidly to more than 180,000 (Clodfelter, 1995: 66, 75). By the end of 1967 this number had risen to nearly half a million. This dramatic shift in the power balance of the war presented a major strategic setback for Communist forces. Despite the increasing infiltration of NVA troops from the North, the tide of the war rapidly turned against the insurgents (Pike, 1969: 121). Pressure from the intensity of combat meant that the Communists had to divert resources away from infrastructure and political organization toward combat. For example, Pike (1969: 117) reports that while the ratio of resources devoted to political compared to military efforts was roughly 10:1 at the beginning of the decade, this ratio had fallen to 2:1 by the middle of it. Thus, the insurgents were increasingly focused on the military aspects of the conflict and less on the provision of goods and resources to civilians such as infrastructure, propaganda, and civilian mobilization. These pressures also required the front to increase its resource extraction from the areas under its control, both in terms of taxation and recruitment (Oka, 1968: 340-341). By the middle of the decade tax collection had become more difficult as peasants increasingly resisted the Front and resented the high price they paid for the ongoing conflict; in response, the Front employed increasingly coercive methods to maintain the resource needs (Davison, 1968: 28; Oka, 1968: 342-344).

By 1968-1969 the US had deployed more than half a million forces in the country and the combat forces of the GVN totaled more than 800,000. This compared to approximately a quarter million VC/NVA forces. While numbers differ as to the actual force ratios between the belligerents, the trend clearly suggests that until the end of the decade the balance of power was moving away from the Communists. While the estimated balance (of combat forces) was roughly 2:1 against the insurgents in the middle of the decade, this ratio had risen to approximately 4:1 in 1969 (in Thayer, 1985: 97). Consistent with the theory outlined above, this shift in resources and the declining faith in insurgent victory led to a reduction in support from the civilian population and increased difficulties in resources mobilization. While during earlier periods the Communist insurgents could easily attract the support of villagers, by the mid and late 1960s support waned and resistance to the Viet Cong increased among the population (Davison, 1968: xvi, 17, 165; Gurtov, 1967: xi, 9; Kellen, 1969: 8). The change in civilian support that began in the middle of the decade correlates to a shift in the balance of power in the conflict. However, the change in civilian behavior resulted primarily from two factors: the declining ability of the insurgents to provide security and declining optimism regarding insurgent victory. With respect to the former, US airpower played a dramatic role in this dynamic as Viet Cong forces could not protect peasants from the mounting "collateral damage" inflicted by US/GVN air and artillery strikes, leading many to flee Communist-held areas and find refuge in the comparatively safer government-controlled urban centers (Gurtov, 1967: 23-24; Race, 1972: 215). Prior to 1965 many peasants viewed support for the NLF as safer than service with the GVN; however, as the balance of power shifted, more youths began opting to join the GVN rather than be drafted or kidnapped by the guerillas (Davison, 1968: 18). Second, the period saw a declining belief

among peasants in the likelihood of NLF victory now that the US, with its vast resources and firepower, had actively intervened on the side of the South Vietnamese government (Davison, 1968: ix). This effect extended to the ranks of guerrilla fighters as well. Between 1965 and 1967 the desertion rate among the Peoples' Liberation Front (the army of the NLF) more than doubled (Pike, 1969: 124). In addition, the village infrastructure built in earlier years fell into disarray and the financial situation came under increasing strain (124-125). As such, the NLF lost much of the control they had gained in the earlier years of the decade.

Figure 4.6: NLF Civilian Killings and Level of Population Control

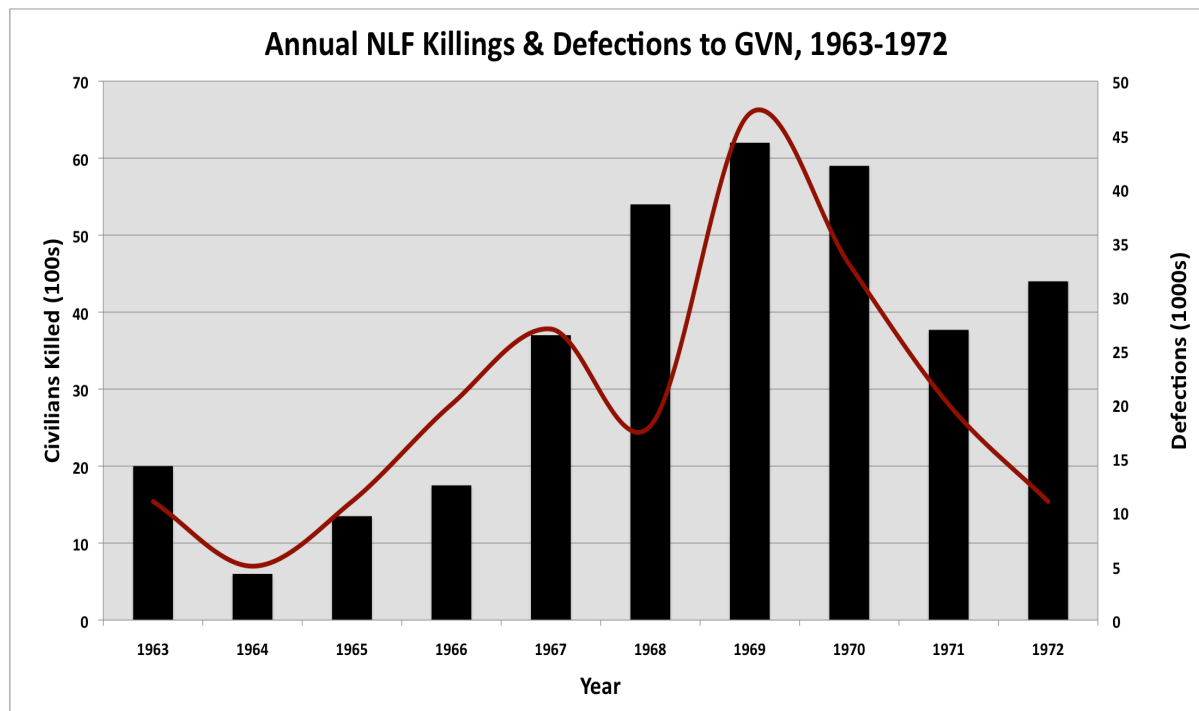


Bars represent the annual numbers of civilians killings committed by the NLF. Line represents the population living outside of GVN control according to the evaluations of the Strategic Hamlet Program and the Hamlet Evaluation System. Killing data are median values taken from several available sources. Data compiled from Thayer (1985).

Also as predicted by the theory presented above, the change in the conflict's power dynamics provoked changes in the rebels' use of violence as a means to garner resources,

control territory, deter defection, and enforce loyalty. Figures 4.6 and 4.7 plot NLF violence along with the level of control exercised by the insurgents and the annual number of defections respectively. These graphs illustrate a strong correlation between these measures of insurgent capabilities/support and the level of violence the rebels employed. During this period the guerrillas increased the use of violence against peasants and adopted more coercive recruitment techniques, kidnapping or forced recruitment with the threat of violence (Denton, 1968: 7; Goure, 1965: 4).

Figure 4.7: NLF Civilian Killings and Defections to GVN



Bars represent the annual numbers of civilians killings committed by the NLF. Line represents the number of annual defections from the NLF to the GVN. Killing data are the median values taken from several sources. Control data compiled from Thayer (1985).

In some areas — such as those that enjoyed nominally successful pacification schemes — during this period insurgents resorted to terror and intimidation of the local population (Pearce, 1967: xi; Pike, 1969: 129). As the GVN and US forces increasingly

pushed the Communist forces out of populated areas in the late 1960s, the NLF became increasingly responsible for civilian casualties (Thayer, 1985: 129). The most significant use of violence came in 1968 during the Tet offensive: in Hue NLF insurgents killed thousands of civilians and local officials. While some scholars (Shultz, 1978: 89; Hosmer, 1970: 50) assert that the level of the violence and its lack of discrimination was rather uncharacteristic of the Front, the violence seems like less of an aberration given the trajectory of insurgent violence during the previous years. As illustrated by Figure 4.5, the level of violence employed by the NLF rapidly escalated between 1965 and 1968 as the balance of forces shifted increasingly against the NLF/NVA and improved pacification projects began to have an effect on the loyalty of villagers.

1968 represented the high point of US troop involvement; in 1969 troop levels dropped to 400,000 by mid-year; by the end of 1971 they had fallen to approximately 150,000. While the official troop ratios remained static from approximately 1968 through the early 1970s because of increased recruitment on the part of the GVN, the reduction in US forces represented a major blow to the military capabilities of the South. The strategy of Vietnamization adopted by the Nixon regime called for a quick de-escalation of US troop involvement and a turnover of security and combat roles to the native Vietnamese forces; by August of 1971 all ground combat operation has been handed over to the ARVN. At nearly the same time, the NVA had geared up for a conventional military conflict and had superseded the guerillas as the major combat player in the conflict. By 1971 the GVN counted nearly a million men in arms, while the combined forces of the NVA and VC stood at roughly 250,000. The figure is somewhat misleading, however, as only half of the GVN forces were regular combat troops — a notable drop from 1968 — while the rest were local

guard and other irregular forces (Clodfelter, 1995: 196-197). Thus, while the force ratio between the belligerents appeared to be roughly the same as during the 1967-1969 period, in reality it had moved again toward the benefit of the Communist forces in the wake of US withdrawal. Thayer (1985: 34) reports that anti-Communist force strength fell by 25% between 1969 and 1972.

The shift in power following the US departure translated into a modest decline in the number of civilians intentionally killed by Communist forces from 1970-1972. While the figures for 1970 are roughly similar to those for the previous year, by 1971 killing had fallen by 40% from their peak two years before. In 1972 the value increase slightly, but still remain much lower than for the 1967-1969 period. Consequently, as the regime weakened and the NLF and North Vietnamese forces made significant gains⁴² against the ARVN, the level of violence they committed against civilians began to decline.

Conclusion

The statistical results presented above support the theory constructed in this manuscript. Moreover, they jibe with existing theories of population control (Kalyvas, 2006) and the role of military setbacks (Hultman, 2007) in structuring rebel violence against civilians. Similarly, the more detailed analysis of the Vietnam conflict in the 1960s and 1970s illustrates that macro-level changes in the power dynamics of the conflict lead to changes at the micro-level, increasing or diminishing the incentives for insurgents to use violence against civilians.

⁴² According to Clodfelter (1995: 199) US air and sea power was largely responsible for averting the collapse of the ARVN in summer 1972. Thus, while the war dragged on for nearly another three years, the ARVN was largely incapable of competing with the VC/NVA in terms of ground combat and the ability to control territory.

The theory locates violence in the changing power relationships between insurgent and government forces and argues that macro-level power shifts structure the strategies of violence adopted by insurgents. Specifically, power dynamics influence the incentives for violence because they alter the underlying distribution of civilian loyalty that abets or frustrates insurgent control. As insurgent power declines, the probability of civilians defecting increases, leading rebels to escalate and randomize violence to restore deterrence or undermine the gains made by the government. While violence may at face value appear antithetical to the insurgents' goals, resorting to these tactics at least temporarily may be the best of bad options for an insurgent organization. Increasing coercive repression is likely to cow civilians and prevent them from defecting to the government, providing immediate (if temporary) gains (Pike, 1969:117). Random violence is especially likely to be counterproductive if used frequently or for long periods (Kalyvas, 2006). Yet, as government forces consolidate control over a conflict environment it becomes increasingly difficult for insurgents to recruit supporters or compel the loyalties of civilians even if they are sympathetic to the insurgents' goal.

Given that civilian preferences are often weak, changing, and heavily determined by immediate security concerns and expectations regarding outcomes, they may become loyalty to the government if it is able to provide nominal security, order, social services, and other resources. Facing these conditions, insurgents have an incentive to destroy what resource flows have been implemented by the government, bombing clinics, schools, government building and randomly targeting civilians for violence. In this sense, the insurgents' goal is to change the more ordered systems established by the regime into something more closely resembling the Hobbesian anarchic world. Thus, in a perverse way, destroying government-

constructed order and randomizing violence puts insurgents on better footing for recruiting civilians and compelling their loyalty.

The brief case analysis of the Communist insurgency in Vietnam provides a slightly more nuanced illustration of these relationships. As the case demonstrates, during period of expansion and when the insurgency appeared strong relative to the government, they generally enjoyed a positive (or at least neutral) relationship with the aggregate civilian population. Because they could provide significant benefits to civilians in terms of land reforms, redistributive tax policies, educational and medical resources, and security, the population nominally supported the NLF; as a result, the insurgents had little incentive to direct violence against the population. By contrast, when the GVN implemented new counterinsurgency strategies that impeded NLF control or recruitment, insurgents escalated violence against civilians. The escalation in violence was steepest during the late 1960s following the massive build up of US forces and the slow whittling away of control that the NLF had established during the previous years. As the group's level of control in the countryside declined and more supporters defected to the GVN, the insurgents rapidly escalated violence as a mean to deter defections and undercut the advances made by the US and GVN forces.

CHAPTER 5

Enter the State: Variations in State Violence during Civil War

The theory of civil war violence detailed in this manuscript incorporates the behaviors and interactions of three central characters: insurgents, civilians, and state forces. Thus, while the primary focus has been insurgent decision-making regarding violence against civilians, failing to explicitly address government violence strategies would appear as an obvious oversight. To that end, this chapter identifies and unpacks the motivations for government violence perpetrated against civilians. It does so by applying the theoretical insights elucidated in the previous chapters to the behaviors of state repressive forces during civil wars.

As with insurgencies, government violence varies both across cases and over time. Insurgencies are invariably met with some manner of repressive response, yet not all insurgencies provoke the same level of government-sponsored violence, and not all regimes target civilians broadly or indiscriminately. Some regimes respond to violent dissent or insurrection with death squads or mass killings while others utilize more precision counterinsurgency tactics. Britain responded to the insurgency in Northern Ireland primarily with a police-style counterinsurgency that resulted in comparatively few civilian deaths while government forces in El Salvador engaged in widespread and systematic killings of rural peasants and organized death squads to assassinate—in extremely graphic and brutal ways—urban activists and political opponents. Furthermore, as with insurgents, the violence

strategies adopted by state forces change over time. Guatemalan security forces primarily engaged in comparatively selective violence against urban political activists and members of leftist organizations throughout the 1970s, but they dramatically escalated the level and broadened the scope of state repression in the early 1980s, elevating it to the level of mass killing and scorched earth tactics following the coup that installed Rios Montt as president in 1982. However, by the middle of the decade the body count had fallen significantly. From its peak in 1982 (~18,000), the number of killings fell to roughly 2000 the following year and then to a few hundred a year by the middle of the decade; moreover, the killings became increasingly selective (Ball, Kobrak & Spirer, 1999: 24, 62). This chapter attempts to explain this variation in the levels and types of targeting adopted by incumbent regimes over the course of a conflict.

In line with the previous chapters, this chapter argues that regime violence is a function of the balance of power in the conflict; moreover, changes in this power relationship contribute to changes in the levels and types of violence adopted by the regime forces at different time points. This argument is similar to existing theories that posit a direct relationship between regime threat perception and levels of repression and violence (e.g., Davenport, 1995; Gurr, 1985; Poe, 2004; Valentino, 2004). However, this analysis adds two additional components that more directly link the observed empirical relationship between "threat" and violence within the context of civil war. First, as discussed in previous chapters, the conflict is modeled as competition between the insurgents and state over the loyalty and support of the population within the conflict zone. As insurgent strength rises and the group is better able to compete with the regime in the provision of resources to supporters, the government may escalate violence (sometimes to obscene levels) as a means of undermining

the provision of rebel benefits and to sever the interdependent relationship that guerrillas have built with the population. Second, I locate threat perception within the context of a bargaining process that unfolds between the insurgents, civilians, and the regime over the course of the conflict. These processes alter the costs of civilian expectations regarding the likely outcome of the conflict as well as the goods they can demand from the conflict actors. As the cost of the conflict generally and of the resources required to "buy off" civilians increases, regimes look toward violence as a rational strategy of war termination.

This chapter proceeds as follows. I first review pertinent literature on state-sponsored terror and violence in counter-insurgency operations, namely the body of repression literature that has located state violence in the perception of threat from opposition. Next, I briefly recount the rationale for violence outlined in early chapters but reciprocally apply it to governments. As with insurgents, I argue that regime violence is related to the competition over the civilian collaboration and loyalty. As rebel strength increases, deterring civilian collaboration with the group becomes both more difficult and more costly, making civilian victimization a more appealing option. I further argue that indiscriminant repression is more effective than commonly asserted in the literature; put simply, scorched earth and mass killing strategies sometimes work. Thus, depending on the costs associated with buying off civilians through resource provisions, reform, or selective counterinsurgency policies, political elites may view mass violence as a reasonable gamble under certain conditions. Just as more durable insurgencies demand greater concessions from the regimes they challenge, civilians that perceive these shifts in the power dynamics expect greater and more credible levels of resources from governments in exchange for resisting the pressures to support the rebels. The combination of the increased threat from the insurgency and the

rising costs that would result from acquiescing to insurgent demands lead elites to view the gamble on mass violence as potentially less costly than the alternative of reforms and resource provisions to attract civilian loyalty. In the following section I discuss the research design and present the results of the statistical analysis. The results largely support the theory suggesting that changes in conflict power dynamics structure regime violence strategies. The final section provides a discussion of the results and a few concluding remarks.

Threat & the Magnitude of State-sponsored Violence

The state terrorism and state-sponsored repression literature has consistently demonstrated that domestic unrest, communal violence, and insurgency contribute to state terror (e.g. Davenport, 1995, 2007; Gurr, 1986; Poe and Tate, 1994; Poe. et al, 1999). The logic underlying such theories has predominantly focused on *threat* as a motivator for state violence. Gurr (1986: 51) explicitly argued that the existence of groups perceived as a threat to incumbent ability to rule is a necessary condition for state terror. Furthermore, the (perceived) depth of the latent support for rebels, as well as the active participation of the civilian population in the guerrilla's campaigns, structures the incentives for violence against the population at large (Gurr, 1986: 52; Wickham-Crowley, 1990: 226). Other scholars have echoed this theoretical relationship and adapted it to the study of state-sponsored mass killings and genocides (see Valentino, 2004; Valentino et al., 2004). In these models, the threat to the regime's goals posed by recalcitrant elements of the polity and the cost of selectively removing the threatening group lead elites to believe that mass terror is the best option for attaining their goals.

Poe (2004) presents a more formal model of the relationship between opposition threat and regime violence using an adaptation of Most and Starr's (1989: 126-128) model of domestic governance.⁴³ According to this model, leaders are principally concerned with the maintaining or recovering their superiority in the relationship between their political strength and the strength of domestic challengers.⁴⁴ When faced with an internal threat, the response chosen by the regime is structured by the perception that the challenge will succeed in altering the status quo (see also Valentino et al., 2004). As the probability that the "threat" will succeed in dramatically altering the status quo increases, regimes become increasingly likely to ratchet up repression as means to deter it.

While threat is certainly a powerful force that contributes to the willingness of regimes to resort to high levels of repression and violence against civilians, existing theories do little to locate threat in the dynamics of the conflict and largely neglect to explain the factors that contribute to changes in the level of threat perceived by the regime. Explaining threat requires unpacking the power dynamics within the conflict. In part, threat originates in the government's inability or unwillingness to successfully compete with insurgents (or dissidents) over popular loyalty. The declining ability of the government to deter civilians from collaborating with insurgents induces the sense of threat. Restoring deterrence can be accomplished by either increasing benefits to civilians as a reward for resisting insurgent pressures or by increasing the sanctions employed against civilians when they are believed to support insurgents. Previous theories have not fully explained the microfoundations of the

⁴³ See also Poe et al. (1999), Enterline and Gleditsch (2000) for various related applications.

⁴⁴ According to Most and Starr (1989), rational leaders are motivated to take actions to establish either of the following inequalities: 1) $(S_{nt} > T_{nt})$ or 2) $[(S_{nt}/T_{nt}) \geq (S_{nt-1}/T_{nt-1})]$, where S =the strength of the regime and T represents the Threat posed by a challenger. That is, the incumbent desires either to possess capabilities greater than the perceived threat or they wish to improve the ratio of their capabilities to internal threats over time and will initiate policies designed to accomplish this whenever they have the opportunity or capability to do so.

relationship between threat and violence or why states choose mass killing and repression rather than accommodation. As with the previous chapters, I assert that incorporating the competition over civilian loyalty is important to explaining these theoretical relationships.

Competition & Power Dynamics Re-dux

As Poe's (2004) model illustrates, "threat" is a function of the power relations between opposition and government forces. As such, these power relationships structure the regime's perception of threat. Shifts in the power dynamics of the conflict should then result in changes in the strategies of violence adopted by the regime. As demonstrated in previous chapters, power shifts are endogenously related to the competition between insurgents and incumbent regimes over the loyalty, support, and control of the civilian population. Like insurgents, states rely on the collaboration and loyalty of civilians. The relationship between states and civilians, however, is in some ways distinct from that between insurgents and civilians. While insurgents often rely extensively on civilians for material resources (Mao, 1961; Mason, 1989; Wickham-Crowley, 1987: 482-483), governments are comparatively less reliant on such resources (Valentino, 2004: 197-199). They depend primarily on civilians for intelligence or on the willingness of civilians to refuse to overtly support guerillas.⁴⁵

Government strategies are therefore typically constructed with the primary goal of preventing civilians from supporting or collaborating with insurgents rather than eliciting their overt support or sympathy. That said, the competition model still applies; both sides are concerned

⁴⁵ Governments are often reliant on civilians for tax revenues and for the recruitment or conscription of soldiers. That said, in a comparative sense they are often less reliant than insurgents because they have already amassed significant resources prior to the conflict. As such, they are most concerned with denying insurgents access to resources rather than adding to their own resource base. This relationship may change over the course of the conflict, however, which may change the nature of the competition. This is discussed in more detail below.

with the distribution of loyalty within the conflict because it influences the likelihood of different conflict outcomes.

In order to deter defections, governments apply a mixture of positive incentives and punitive measures. Governments generally assume the role of the primary provider of benefits to citizens. In the most basic sense they provide rudimentary economic and social benefits such as roads, schools, medical facilities, public sanitation, order and security, etc. While such provisions may be of poor quality or extremely limited in the least developed countries, they typically dramatically exceed those provided domestic rivals.⁴⁶ The rudimentary benefits provided by the state, coupled with their ability to inflict significant sanctions on persons suspected of collaboration, serve as a significant deterrent to civilian defection. However, as demonstrated in previous chapters, sufficient capabilities on the part of insurgents alter this relationship and represent an increasing challenge to regime deterrence. This shift forces the regime to either provide additional benefits or increase sanctions in an effort to restore deterrence.

Power Dynamics, Loyalty & Violence

As discussed in previous chapters, the balance of resources in a conflict is not static. Coercive violence, ideological motivation, the assistance of foreign allies, superior organizational capacity, or tactical successes over poor-quality or underpaid and demoralized government forces can (and often does) shift the balance of power and resources in the conflict away from the government and towards insurgents. When insurgents demonstrate

⁴⁶ Some exceptions exist: the FMLN in El Salvador, TPLF in Ethiopia, NLF in Vietnam, SPLM/A in southern Sudan, the Karen National Union (KNU) in Burma. In virtually all cases, however, the superior or equivalent resources provided by the insurgents exist more because the state has *chosen* not provide resources to people than because it simply cannot provide resources.

military capabilities, construct a developed social and political apparatus, exert control over territory, or provide other pecuniary and non-pecuniary benefits to potential supporters, the willingness of civilians to provide loyalty to the rebels increases (see Lichbach, 1995; Mason, 1989; 1996; Migdal, 1974: 254; Wood, 2003: 238-240). In the competitive civil war environment any gain in civilian loyalty for insurgents equates to a loss for the regime. Moreover, any increase in civilian loyalty to the insurgency impedes the ability of government forces to extract information regarding the activities of insurgents, reducing the ability of the government to quash the insurgency. Moreover, insurgent strength and civilian support are related to one another through an endogenous recruitment process—as civilian loyalty for the insurgency grows, the base from which insurgents extract resources and information expands, which translates into increased military capabilities on the part of the insurgency.

Declining civilian loyalty and the concomitant increase in their rivals' military capabilities induces a sense of threat among political elites. This sense of threat in turn increases the regime's incentive for violence (Gurr, 1986; Poe, 2004; Valentino, 2004; Valentino et al, 2004). More importantly, as the distribution of power moves away from the government the likelihood of insurgent defeat declines, and the probability that insurgents overturn the status quo increases. Thus, as the balance of power shifts away from the government and as civilian loyalty declines, the regime becomes more likely to rely on violence against civilians as means to restore deterrence and enforce loyalty among the civilian population. Just as insurgents may employ terrorism to undercut the stability and security provided by the state to its citizens, governments may dramatically escalate the attacks against civilians in order to demonstrate that insurgents lack the capability to

effectively protect their supporters. In Vietnam, for example, widespread US and ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) bombing and artillery fire at rebel-held areas had the effect of forcing many people out of liberated zones and into GVN-held urban areas (Gortov, 1967: 23). Such violence weakened the relationship between the people and the Front and made recruitment and resource mobilization much more difficult for the rebels, often leading insurgents to employ harsher methods (Davison, 1968: xvi, 92). Finally, by increasing violence and escalating the costs of combat, governments may hope to force insurgents to divert resources away from the provision of benefits to their supporters and toward the war effort.

As discussed in the previous chapter, this situation often contributes to an increase in rebel coercive violence against the population. Thus, state-sponsored violence against civilians can serve the dual purpose of deterring civilian collaboration with the rebels and forcing rebels into a position that incentivizes their own escalation of violence, thus alienating the population. This situation might appear superficially to lead to a stalemate; however, because the government can win simply by deterring support for the insurgents and does not necessarily require overt civilian support, the balance of the interaction nominally benefits the regime. Provided this case prevails and the government is able to reduce the threat presented by the insurgency by reducing the level of support among the population, the regime should then de-escalate violence. That is, in line with previous research, the reduction in threat in turn reduces the motivation for mass violence against civilians.

Empirically, this scenario occurs with some frequency as governments unable to thwart the guerillas living and thriving among the population (as Mao instructed) attempt to separate the fish from the water by targeting peasants in guerrilla-sympathetic areas. In

Guatemala, President Romeo Lucas Garcia slowly escalated and broadened violence against the population from the late 1970s to the early 1980s. However, this more selective (but increasingly brutal and widespread) strategy of repression failed to stop the expansion of the insurgency (and may have contributed to its growth) (Schirmer, 1998; Valentino, 2004: 209). By the early 1980s the largely Mayan Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP) counted to as many as 16,000 troops, enjoyed the active support of nearly a half million peasants, and controlled nearly half of the country's provinces (see Manz, 1988: 15; Schirmer, 1998: 41). In response to the failures of more selective repression strategies to deter collaboration and active support for the insurgency among the peasants, the newly installed Rios Montt regime adopted a scorched earth policy with the intent of smashing the insurgency by literally draining the sea around the rebels—the military depopulated rural villages through violence and destruction, treated civilians as if they were combatants, and exterminated as many as 75,000 peasants in less than 18 months through sustained, systematic brutality (Rubenstein, 1987: 221-222; Schirmer, 1998: 45; Valentino, 2004: 210).

In this case, brutality was successful in diminishing if not completely deterring the rebel threat. The mass killing and scorched earth tactics depopulated large swaths of rebel territory, thus undercutting the insurgents support base. By 1988, the government re-established control through most of the countryside and the estimated number of active rebels declined from a peak of more than 6,000 fulltime troops to approximately 1,000 (Arbuckle, 1988).⁴⁷ With the threat nominally controlled, the Guatemalan regime began to slowly ratchet down violence. By the end of the decade regime violence had fallen to levels at or below that undertaken by the government of Rios Montt. While abductions, assassinations,

⁴⁷ This number refers only to full-time, active rebels. As cited above at peak strength the guerrillas counted as many as 16,000 troops. That figure includes up to 10,000 armed local irregulars.

and political murder were still employed frequently by the "civilian" government, the raw number of killings as well as their scope paled in comparison to the mass killings and scorched earth approach of the earlier years.

Counter Offers

Violence is only one option available to the state. While insurgents often struggle to amass any set of benefits that could compete with the basic resources provided by even poor states to their citizens, states typically have comparatively large resource bases. Consistent with the model of combatant competition proposed in earlier chapters, an increase in material benefits to peasants represents one strategy available to governments seeking to undercut rebel support and increase collaboration with state forces. Governments often substitute or supplement repressive strategies with both public and private benefits or what Valentino (2004) terms "civic actions". Such efforts are at the core of the "hearts and minds" strategy outlined in recent Western military counterinsurgency manuals and numerous analyses of the effectiveness of counterinsurgency (see for example Hunt, 1995; Johnson, 1962; 659-660; United States Army, 2006: Chpt. 2). In Guatemala, beginning rather paradoxically shortly after the initial wave of mass killings in the rural highlands, the Rios Montt regime proposed a number of benefits to entice peasants to support the government. This "guns and beans" strategy included the construction of civil affairs units to provide benefits such as roads, medical facilities, electricity, sanitation and food to rural villages (Valentino, 2004: 215). Indeed, the government contended that nearly 70% of its counterinsurgency program was devoted to "beans" (Schirmer, 1988: 62). In Vietnam, it was frequently noted by both foreign advisers and many GVN officials that the loyalties of peasants flowed to whichever

"group, faction, party, religious sect, or local warlord" provided for their welfare (Scigliano, 1968: 598). This observation was a primary motivator for the reforms and civic action programs the regime implemented (albeit with limited finances and enthusiasm) in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

In addition to the simple extension of resources, regimes facing real threats from insurgents often undertake additional economic and political reforms in an attempt to diminish the "demand" for insurgency (see Leites & Wolf, 1970). Political elites as well as counterinsurgency experts recognize that lack of access to the political system is often a major grievance that insurgents use to mobilize support (and often counter with more democratic systems within their liberated zones). Thus, incumbents at times undertake liberalization policies designed to encourage peasant participation or to at least signal movement in the direction demanded by more moderate opposition groups. The 1984 election in El Salvador, which was heavily promoted by the United States and installed the Duarte government, was the first democratic election held in the country in more than 50 years (though only right and center right candidates participated). This reform represented something of a weak compromise compared to the demands of the insurgents and the desires of many of the country's poor peasants at that time. However, it was intended largely to recapture the declining support of the urban middle class that had become increasingly frustrated with the slow pace of reforms and rising regime violence. During the Malaya Emergency the British undertook several reforms to undercut the popularity of the Chinese communist insurgents. Non-Communist Chinese leaders were encouraged to participate in government and plans for national elections and independence were announced (Johnson, 1962: 659). Nagl (2002: 102) reports that with British decision to lift war-time restrictions

on movement and civil liberties in various parts of the country in 1953-1954 significantly increased local support for the counterinsurgency effort and reduced loyalty to the insurgents.

Similarly, states, at times, undertake economic reforms or provide direct benefits to peasants in an effort to undercut support for the insurgency. For example, the rightist military government of El Salvador initiated one of the most comprehensive land reform programs in the region as a means to lure peasants back from the leftist insurgency (Mason & Krane, 1989:189-190).⁴⁸ Similarly, in the wake of rapidly rising support for the Mujahadeen the Soviet-backed Afghan regime reversed many of its hard-line communist policies in an attempt to improve support among Afghans. In the early 1980s the Karmal regime (under Soviet pressure) began granting land to peasants in exchange for assistance in fighting the rebels and building mosques across the country where they had previously confiscated private property and repressed organized religion (Valentino, 2004: 225-226). In Malaya, the British government provided "good" land to Chinese squatters to address the community's grievances and mitigate support for the insurgents (Johnson, 1962: 659; Nagl, 2002: 97-98). The US and the South Vietnamese government later adopted elements of this strategy in response to rising peasant support for the NLF. Much of the government's pacification scheme focused on the provisions of land and property, access to educational resources, medical facilities, sanitation, and other key benefits (Pearce, 1965: 19-24).

Given the resource disparities between the government and insurgents, incumbents should be capable of providing superior benefits to civilians. Moreover, since most analyses suggest that peasants are primarily apolitical and loyalty is largely a function of security and resource provisions (see Chapter 3), such policies should be capable of offsetting the

⁴⁸ It is important to note, as will be discussed below, that such reforms often lead to the ouster of more moderate regimes and their replacement committed political elites.

comparatively meager benefits provided by rebels and deterring collaboration with insurgents. At least in some cases government programs do succeed in preventing civilians from supporting insurgents or at least stem rising support for insurgents. Thus, it is somewhat surprising that incumbents often choose violence when moderate concessions or the provision of benefits would appear *prima facie* to be a superior counterinsurgency strategy. The decision to resort to massive violence against peasants is particularly surprising given that much of the extant literature suggests that indiscriminate violence is counterproductive and drives civilian into the arms of the rebels (DeNardo, 1985; Goodwin, 2001; Kalyvas, 2006: 151-153; Kalyvas & Kocher, 2007a). The answer to this puzzle lies in the endogenous relationship between the increasing strength of insurgents and the willingness of regimes to meet both escalating insurgent demands and changing civilian expectations about the outcome of the conflict.

Capabilities, Incentives & Constraints

The section above shows that regimes can and (at times) do offer benefits as well as sanctions to entice the collaboration of civilians and deter them from supporting the regime. Yet, given that regime violence is often counterproductive, the question remains as to why governments choose indiscriminate or widespread violence against civilians rather than the provision of resources or a negotiated settlement with insurgents. The answer comes in two parts: first, the history of indiscriminate violence is not as replete with failures as the literature suggests—it works under some circumstances. Since the success of mass violence is a probabilistic outcome, incumbents are willing to weight their expectations for its success against the immediate and more concrete costs of providing sufficient benefits to prevent

civilian collaboration with the rebels. Second, expanding insurgent capabilities and rising civilian expectations complicate the provision of resources or accommodations in quantities sufficient to 'buy off' civilian support or satisfy demands. Put simply, when power dynamics shift, increasing insurgent capabilities, insurgents (and their supporters) can demand greater concessions from incumbents (see Bapat, 2005). Furthermore, as argued in Chapter 3, rising insurgent capabilities lead to rising civilian expectations about the likelihood of insurgent victory and the value of future rewards. As with the bargaining relationship between rebels and the state, civilians expect and can demand greater reforms or benefits from incumbents in exchange for their nominal loyalty. This in turn drives up the costs of the goods that regimes have to provide to induce defections from insurgents or to deter collaboration with them. Facing this dynamic, incumbents become more likely to gamble on the success of targeting civilians as insurgent strength (and civilian demands) increase.

The Effectiveness of Mass Killings

Much of the past literature on regime violence suggests that civilian targeting on the part of the regime drives peasants into the arms of the rebels (DeNardo, 1985; Goodwin, 2001; Kalyvas, 2006: 151-153; Kalyvas & Kocher, 2007a). However, as Kalyvas (2006: 167) notes, indiscriminate regime violence is likely to only be effective (and therefore most likely employed) when insurgents are weak and unable to protect civilians. Once the insurgency is strong enough to defend its territory and protect its supporters, mass government violence may become a selective incentive that insurgents use to promote support among peasants (Mason, 1996; Migdal, 1974; Kalyvas & Kocher, 2007a). Consequently, the effectiveness of regime brutality is intimately tied to the extant strength of the insurgency.

Mass killing or other widespread targeting of civilians is something of a gamble undertaken by the regime. If the insurgents prove capable of protecting civilians or offering some other set of benefits that can offset the costs of support, the strategy fails and may be the undoing of the regime. The GVN strategy of violence in Vietnam reflects this scenario, and likely, the rightist regime in El Salvador had the US not buoyed the government with nearly a billion dollars of aid and military supplies. However, as in Guatemala, if the insurgents are weak enough or the regime can successfully "drain the sea" the strategy may pay off, effectively eliminating the rebels' existing support base and deterring future challengers.

While numerous scholars have argued against the utility of mass regime violence in thwarting insurgencies, there exists significant evidence to the contrary. Downes (2007), for example, makes a compelling argument for the effectiveness of targeting civilians in civil wars as an effective counterinsurgency strategy given specific conditions. This is particularly true, he argues, when the population of the conflict area and size of the conflict population are relatively small or when they have fewer options for escaping violence. Sustained indiscriminate violence may fail in the long-term because peasants see "no other way out" (Goodwin, 2001); however, in the short-term mass violence is often quite effective at undercutting the power of opponents (Arreguin-Toft, 2001). More importantly, the effectiveness of indiscriminant violence is contingent on the goals of the user with respect to the target population. That is, indiscriminant violence is comparatively less effective when the goal is gaining the support or loyalty of the population; yet, when the goal is the control of territory governments may have more freedom to act violently (Downes, 2007: 422). Compared to guerrilla insurgencies, regimes are less directly reliant on civilian populations

for resources (and so less interested in overt support from civilians). They therefore seek primarily to *deter* collaboration; thus, the direct costs they incur from violence against the population are likely to be lower, at least in the near term. This provides them some latitude to adopt violence that may not exist for insurgents.

While targeting the civilian population may fail in the long-term, and may perhaps drive peasants away from the regime, at times it functions successfully as a low-cost alternative to either selective violence or the more sustainable alternative of resource provision and accommodation. As such, particularly in low-information environments or when the regime misjudges the real capability of the insurgents to protect civilians, governments seeking to make short-term gains in the reduction of threat are likely to gamble on civilian victimization as means to deter defection and undercut the support base of their adversaries. This strategy is likely to be particularly appealing when the mounting costs of conflict with stronger insurgents constrain the options available to incumbents, leaving them to choose between major revisions in the status quo or the gamble of mass violence.

Expectations & Costs

Insurgent demands are endogenous to the dynamics of the conflict and specifically to the capabilities attained by the group. As insurgents demonstrate their ability to withstand regime counterinsurgency efforts they (as well as civilians) update their beliefs about their ability to achieve their desired goals. This processes of updating leads them to increase the minimum level of concessions they are willing to accept from the regime in exchange for terminating the conflict. As such, the stronger the insurgency grows the more difficult it becomes for the regime to satisfy rebel demands and the lower the probability that they

accept a negotiated solution (Bapat, 2005). Put simply, past a certain strength threshold the insurgents will simply not accept moderate concessions. This relationship has consequences for the level of violence applied by the government. Because stronger insurgents demand more from the regime, regimes are more likely to resort to violence rather than to accommodate demands (Gartner and Regan, 1996; Regan and Henderson, 2002; Valentino, 2004). Where governments have the ability to meet the opposition's demands without dramatically altering the status quo, they are less likely to employ severe repression. Taken together, these observations suggest that conflicts both become longer and more violent as the balance of power shifts against the incumbent regime.

A similar logic also applies to the bargaining relationship between civilians and the incumbent regime. As insurgent capabilities expand, the group can credibly offer more to its supporters. In turn, the government must counter the provision of insurgent resources with its own basket of incentives. In addition to the benefits provided by the rebels in the immediate term, ascendant insurgents are able to make increasingly convincing promises to supporters regarding future payoffs. As discussed in Chapter 2, when insurgent capabilities increase, civilians update their beliefs about the likelihood of insurgent victory over the regime as well as their beliefs about the future payoffs associated with supporting either side. As such, civilians are likely to expect greater levels of benefits from the government in order to offset the increasing probability of insurgent victory (as well as the increasing flow of benefits from insurgents). As the expected benefits necessary to compel civilian support increases, regimes are increasingly likely to view violence against the population as a preferable strategy to the distribution of benefits. In short, rising insurgent capabilities

increase the costs necessary to lure civilians away from collaboration with rebels and make violence more appealing.

Given the increased costs, incumbent regimes are increasingly willing to gamble on the effectiveness of escalating violence against civilians. While it might be technically possible for incumbents to simply buy off civilians, the costs of such resources are likely to outweigh the probability of success with the comparatively low cost strategy of violence. This rationale is particularly likely in non-democratic systems (the states most likely to experience civil wars) in which the incumbents are beholden to small winning coalitions (see Bueno de Mesquita et al, 2003; Heger & Salehyan, 2007). Democratic states might adopt a similar rationale in cases where the violence is targeted at a specific group or community with little power in the political sphere and when the incumbents can shield their winning coalition from violence. For example, democracy has not greatly restricted the violence committed by Israel against Palestinians, Russia (in the early 1990s) against Chechnya, or India against Kashmiri separatists. Consequently, incumbents are often more willing to accept the risk of backlash or failure associated with the strategy than to pay the immediate and more certain costs associated with concessions or resources significant enough to draw popular support away from insurgents.

Hypotheses on Choosing Violence

The above discussion models civil war as a competition between governments and insurgents over the nominal loyalty of the civilian population. Both offer civilians packages of benefits as well as the threat of sanctions to accomplish this goal. However, because insurgents are more directly reliant on the population for support and depend on their loyalty while

governments predominantly seek deterrence, the relationship is somewhat asymmetrical.

Increased insurgent capabilities and high levels of civilian support for the insurgency induce a sense of threat among incumbent political elites and incentivize the use of violence.

Shifts in the power dynamics of the conflict increase both the goods available to insurgents with which to buy off civilians and increase the expectations among civilians of insurgent victory and of future resources flows following the ouster of the regime. Consequently, they demand greater benefits from the government in exchange for their loyalty to the regime. Faced with rising expected costs from the provision of resources that would threaten to destabilize the status quo, regimes are increasingly likely to resort to mass violence against peasants as an inexpensive short-term strategy of threat reduction. While this strategy represents a gamble for the incumbent regime, so long as their belief in the probability of success exceeds the expected value of the costs necessary to buy off civilians, violence against the population may appear to be the most "rational" solution available given the rising threat.

This discussion, then, produces several testable hypotheses regarding the relationship between threat and incumbent violence against civilians. As threat increases—measured as either the changes in military capabilities of the insurgents or as the incidence of insurgent support—incumbents are more likely to escalate both the magnitude of civilian killings as well as the range of violence employed against the population:

H1: *The greater the incidence of insurgents among the population the greater the frequency of state violence against civilians.*

H2: *The greater the incidence of insurgents among the population the greater the range of violence states are expected to employ.*

H3: *The greater the growth in insurgent relative capabilities the greater the frequency of state violence against civilians*

H4: *The greater the growth in insurgent relative capabilities the greater the range of violence states are expected to employ.*

Research Design

As with analyses conducted in the previous chapters, I rely on quantitative analyses to test the relationship between the various components of regime "threat" perception and the likelihood that incumbents increase or expand the level of violence they employ against civilians during civil conflicts.. I rely on Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) given the ordinal nature of the dependent variables. In the following models the dependent variables are categorical measures of the frequency of government violence against civilians as well as the types of targeting adopted by state forces in a given year. All models reported in the tables below are ordered probit models with Huber (1967) and White (1980) robust standard errors clustered on the country to account for heteroskedasticity.

While the previous analyses were conducted at the insurgent group level, these models take the state as the unit of analysis. This construction produces some 267 country-year observations for the period 1997-2006. However, because of missing data and the need to lag the dependent variable, the number of observations used in the regression models falls to approximately 200.

Power Dynamics

Ideally, this analysis would test the relationship between the threat of any given insurgency within the state and the level of violence used by the state against that group or the population within that specific conflict area. However, no cross-national measures that easily

disaggregate the level of violence committed by states in different conflict zones currently exist. Using the same dataset applied in previous analyses and simply flipping the independent and dependent variable would lead to severe redundancies in the dependent variable for all cases in which a state experienced more than one insurgency in a given year. The dataset used here takes the state as the unit of analysis and collapses measures for multiple insurgencies into one aggregate measure. For example, the primary independent variables that were originally taken at the insurgent-group level have been transformed into aggregate measures of the combined relative capabilities for all insurgents groups active within the state in a given year, the total insurgent incidence among the combined population of all conflict areas, and the change in the combined insurgent capabilities from $t-1$ to t . The relative capabilities measure and the insurgent incidence measure are lagged for one year to control for endogeneity. The sources for these measures were discussed in previous chapter and do not need to be recounted here. Table 5.1 presents the summary statistics for the variables used in the analysis.

Other Predictors

The control variables included in this analysis are drawn from past studies of state repression, genocide, and civilian victimization during civil wars. These variables include: the intensity of the conflict, the level and range of violence employed by insurgents against civilians, the state's regime type and level of development, and the population size of the conflict state, and whether the conflict was organized around identity. As in Chapter 4, I also include lagged binary measures of two of the three categories of the dependent variable in order to account

for the change in violence from one level or type to another between the previous time period and the current.

Table 5.1: Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Δ Insurgent Capability	0.002	0.158	-0.8	1.113
Military Capability	0.798	0.605	0	4
Insurgent Incidence	23.008	31.905	0.193	182.708
Insurgent Range	2.416	0.783	1	3
Govt. Range	2.119	0.605	1	3
Govt. Frequency	2.221	0.694	1	3
Ethnic Conflict	0.782	0.41	0	1
Conflict Severity_(ln)	6.019	1.930	0	10.779
Age	15.812	14.069	0	57
Democracy	0.255	0.436	0	1
GDPpc_(ln)	0.891	1.014	-1.228	3.567
Distance_(ln)	5.334	1.335	0	7.673

In addition to the absolute or relative size of an insurgency, the ability of a rebel group to inflict costs upon the incumbent regime figures prominently in its perception of threat (Valentino et al., 2004). Effective rebel groups need not be large in numerical terms to present a significant threat to the regime. The real cost of an insurgency to a regime is difficult to assess. One way to gauge this cost, however, is by assessing the losses incurred by the regime during battles with insurgents. Effective insurgent groups are able to impose heavy costs on the regime if during battles they are able to inflict heavy casualties on the incumbent's forces. The loss of troops during battle imposes multiple costs on the regime. First, lost troops require replacement as does their equipments, which is often appropriated by the guerillas. Thus, as the number of soldiers killed in battle increases, the regime must

spend an increasing amount of resources to match the insurgent threat. Second, higher numbers of casualties are likely to increase dissatisfaction with the regime among both the public and the coalition of regime supporters. Falling support from these groups increases the threat perception of the incumbent because it increases the likelihood of coup or other internal ouster. As this pressure increases, incumbent leaders become more likely to ramp up their level of violence against perceived enemies of the state. Similarly, intense conflicts provide incentives for violence against civilians because warring parties may become more desperate and focus violence on civilian population centers rather than better-defended military targets in order to wear down the adversary (Downes, 2006; 2008). Escalating battlefield costs may pressure insurgents to target civilians in order to signal their resolve to continue the fight (Hultman, 2007). Conflict severity is the logged-value of the annual number of total battlefield casualties among all parties in the conflict (Lacina & Gleditsch, 2005).

Recent analyses suggest a positive relationship between government and insurgent violence (Bohara, Mitchell & Nepal, 2006; Heger & Salehyan, 2007). The previous analyses presented in this manuscript, however, have found a rather ambiguous relationship between the two. That said, given that previous theories have argued that mass state violence may be counterproductive, it is possible that indiscriminate rebel violence also pushes civilians back toward the government. If this is the case, we might expect that strategically minded incumbents would use the escalation in rebel violence against civilians to their advantage, reducing their own level of violence as a lure for civilian loyalty. The measure is the range of rebel violence taken from the PAVI dataset and explained more fully in the previous

chapters, and, as with reciprocal measures used in previous chapters, it is lagged for one year.⁴⁹

Ceteris paribus, rising existential threat may increase an incumbent's desire to resort to strategies of mass repression. However, political institutions are a complicating factor in the relationship between dissident threat and repression. Political institutions constrain or permit leaders to carry out repression (Davenport, 1995; 2007; Davenport and Armstrong, 2004; Poe and Tate, 1994) and mass killing (Rummel, 1994; Valentino, et. al, 2004). Arguably, autocratic regimes are more likely to resort to indiscriminate repression in order to "restore deterrence" because they are not constrained by public opinion but rather are concerned with the effect of policy choices on their core supporters and with their ability to maintain the stability of their regime (Bueno de Mesquita et al, 2003; see also Heger & Salehyan, 2007). However, a notable selection effect is in play given that most democratic regimes manage to circumvent insurgency and civil war by nature of their more inclusive political process (Hegre et al, 2001). As such, democratic institutions may be successful at preventing revolutions but less effective at constraining violence. Davenport (2008) shows that while the components of democracy still reduce the physical integrity violence within the context of civil wars, the effect is muted. That said, based on the balance of empirical evidence I expect democracy to diminish the likelihood that the regime escalates or expands violence. I include a measure of regime type adapted from the Polity IV dataset (Jagers and Marshall, 2002). The measure is coded 1 if the state's combined Polity score was greater than 6 and 0 otherwise.

⁴⁹ Tests using the frequency of rebel violence return similar results. Only one measure is used here to avoid overburdening the model.

The timeline of the insurgency may also impact the regime's decision to escalate violence against civilians. While the theory above primarily focuses on the balance of power in the conflict, it in part taps into its duration. The theory asserts that as insurgents survive—which the theory folds into the strength of the rebels—regime violence becomes more likely. As such, longer insurgencies may contribute to more violence. On the other hand, Kalyvas (2006: 168-169) has argued that over time violence is likely to become more selective as regimes slowly realize that it is counterproductive. As such, I am agnostic about the affect of insurgency duration, largely because power relationships should be at the core of the decision to resort to violence. The measure of war duration is simply the natural log of the count of years since the start of the longest running insurgency in the state. The count is taken from the UCDP database (UCDP, 2009).

Several studies have identified a relationship between economic development and state-sponsored violence against civilians (e.g. Poe and Tate, 1994). These studies suggest that higher levels of economic development, measured in GDP or GDP per capita, produce lower levels of physical repression. With respect to this analysis, the inclusion of this variable accounts for the ability of wealthier, more developed regimes to both undertake (and pay for) more costly strategies of selective repression against rebels and suspected collaborators. It likewise accounts for the ability of the regime to either make greater concessions to insurgents or to prosecute a more restrained—yet costly—counterinsurgency while simultaneously providing sufficient resources to the winning coalition to prevent defections to a challenger. That said, like democracy, high levels of development might function more to prevent the onset of violence or the outbreak of civil war than as an impediment to the use of violence by the state once the civil conflict has begun. Arguably,

among the states likely to experience conflicts (the vast majority of which are developing states), greater levels of resources may permit the incumbent to more efficiently kill greater numbers of civilians and with less discrimination. For example, the use of air power for strategic bombing and access to more advanced missile systems or large amounts of heavy artillery may dramatically increase the killing potential of comparatively wealthy regimes. The measure is the logged value of GDP per capita taken from Penn World Tables (Heston, Summers, and Aten, 2009); it is lagged for one year because of the effects of war on national wealth.

Previous analyses have also found that population size is positively correlated with repression and mass killing (e.g., Poe & Tate, 1994; Valentino et. al, 2004). I therefore control for the size of the country's population. The measure is taken from updated data found in Gleditsch (2002). I take the natural log of the total population. Lastly, I control for the effects of conflicts driven by identity on regime violence. Popular accounts of civil wars suggest that conflicts between different ethnic groups or conflicts fought over secession are bloodier, longer, and more intractable than other conflicts (Huntington, 1996; Kaufmann, 2001). Ethnic conflicts may lead to dehumanization, making violence more brutal and more visceral. The measure of identity-driven conflicts is updated from the measure constructed by Gates & Buhaug (2002).

I also control for the distance between the capital city and the site(s) of conflict. Previous research has suggested that the distance between the center of power and the sites of rebel strongholds is related to the capabilities of insurgents, their objectives, and the likelihood of their success and survival (Buhaug, Gates & Lujala, 2009; Buhaug, 2006). The greater the distance between the government's power base and the insurgents' enclave, the

more resources the government must expend in moving troops and overcoming other logistical dilemmas; as such, greater geographic distances diminish the positive power balance the governments frequently enjoy (Buhaug, Gates, & Lujala, 2009: 550). Based on the theory outlined herein, this decline in power gradient should result in an increased incentive for the government to use violence. Additionally, great distances between the government's seat of power and the insurgency are likely to exacerbate information gathering and the ability to accurately locate and punish defectors. In line with Kalyvas' (2006) theories on information asymmetries and violence, this suggests that insurgencies far removed from the capital may engender more violence from the regime. The measure of distance is taken from geospatial data compiled by Buhaug, Gates, & Lujala (2009), which measures distance as the natural log of the distance between the capital city and the conflict area. Since the data structure used here is at the state level, I use the distance of the conflict that was taking place furthest from the capital during the year.

Previous research has determined that recent practices shape current strategies (e.g. Poe and Tate, 1994). A similar effect is likely at work here. In addition to the standard bureaucratic inertia argument, it is likely that regime forces may become enmeshed in tit-for-tat exchanges with insurgent forces. That is, if rebels adopt strategies of violent repression against civilians in government-held areas, regime forces may be tempted to respond in kind by escalating violence against populations in rebel-dominated regions of the country or to resort to more violent acts of repression against suspected dissidents or rebel sympathizers in areas under regime control. Once this process has been initiated, both sides may continue to employ high levels of repressive violence in order to punish the other for past abuses. Employing a lagged dependent term is also a useful way of controlling for autocorrelation

(Beck and Katz, 1995). Based on these arguments, I include lagged measures of the dependent variables.

Results & Discussion

Tables 2 and 3 present the results of the statistical analyses. In general, the results provide significant support for the theory outlined above—as threat increases governments escalate and broaden violence against civilians. However, the results also show some notable differences between the mechanisms driving the frequency of government violence and the range of government violence. First, the incidence of insurgents within the population is statistically significant across specifications in both the models examining the effect of covariates on the frequency and range of violence. In models 1 through 6 the coefficients for the variable capturing the ratio of insurgents to the conflict area population are both positive and statistically significant, suggesting that increases in relative capabilities lead incumbents to both intensify and broaden violence from $t-1$ to t .

The results for shifts in the balance of power of the conflict—a measure that attempts to capture more directly the dynamic nature of civil conflict—are less robust across the model, but generally provide support for the theory. With respect to changes in the frequency of government violence (Table 5.2), Models 2 and 3, the coefficients for the change variable are both positive and statistically significant. These results are consistent with the theory presented in this chapter—as with the overall theory of this manuscript—that argues that violence is a function of the dynamics of power within the conflict. Turning to the range of regime violence, however, the results are less robust. In Models 4 and 5 (Table 5.3) the results for the change variable fails to achieve statistical significance and the

coefficients switch sign between the models. In tests using models without the other measures of rebel capabilities and support, the variable returns a positive but insignificant result.⁵⁰ Consequently, these results fail to support the role of shifts in relative capabilities and changes in the levels of violence.

Still, the results suggest that power dynamics play a large role in the construction of regime violence strategies with respect to the frequency of violence committed against civilians. More importantly, the general theory finds support in these models. As the number of insurgents within the population increases, governments perceive a threat to the status quo, making them more likely to resort to higher levels of violence; in addition, this rising threat leads them to adopt more indiscriminate forms of repression, targeting civilians more broadly. Theoretically, this effect is driven by the regime's declining ability to compete with insurgents over the loyalty of the population. As the insurgency grows and attracts more members, it is better able to offer greater benefits to their supporters. This increases the costs of resources that must be supplied by the regime as a counteroffer. As the price of the counteroffer increases, regimes are more likely to choose higher levels of violence as well as more broadly targeted violence as a means to undercut civilian support and eradicate insurgent threat. The results also suggest the regimes are sensitive to smaller, more short-term shifts in the balance of power, but only with respect to the frequency of violence. As power shifts toward the insurgents between the previous and current periods, regimes are more likely to kill greater numbers of civilians. However, the effect does not carry to breadth of targeting: shorter-term changes in the power dynamics do not notably alter the scope of the violence carried out.

⁵⁰ Testing other variables individually produce results consistent with those presented in Tables 5.2 and 5.3.

Table 5.2: Regression Results, Frequency of Government Killing

	Model 1 Frequency	Model 2 Frequency	Model 3 Frequency
Insurgent Incidence_(t-1)	0.0178 (0.006)***	0.019 (0.007)***	
Δ Insurgent Capability		1.174 (0.607)**	0.885 (0.545)*
Military Capability	0.138 (0.264)	0.108 (0.268)	0.325 (0.252)
Insurgent Range_(t-1)	-0.429 (0.186)**	-0.421 (0.188)**	-0.434 (0.171)**
Age	0.010 (0.007)	0.010 (0.007)	0.009 (0.007)
Conflict Severity_(ln)	0.346 (0.057)***	0.320 (0.057)***	0.289 (0.069)***
GDPpc_{(ln)t-1}	0.041 (0.146)	0.032 (0.144)	0.063 (0.149)
Democracy	-0.128 (0.435)	-0.067 (0.435)	-0.111 (0.384)
Identity Conflict	-0.021 (0.267)	0.085 (0.290)	0.241 (0.277)
Distance_(ln)	0.053 (0.104)	0.045 (0.103)	0.023 (0.097)
DV Category 1_(t-1)	-2.190 (0.104)***	-2.239 (0.461)***	-2.400 (0.437)***
DV Category 2_(t-1)	-0.830 (0.332)***	-0.893 (0.343)**	-1.111 (0.340)**
Log-pseudolikelihood	-121.584	-119.145	-129.092
Wald X^2	111.31	113.90	85.89
Prob. > X^2	0.000	0.000	0.000
Observations	187	187	191
Countries	35	35	35

Coefficients and robust standard errors clustered on dyads in parentheses. ***=P<0.01 **=P< 0.05 *=P< 0.10
Two-tailed test.

Table 5.3: Regression Results, Range of Government Killing

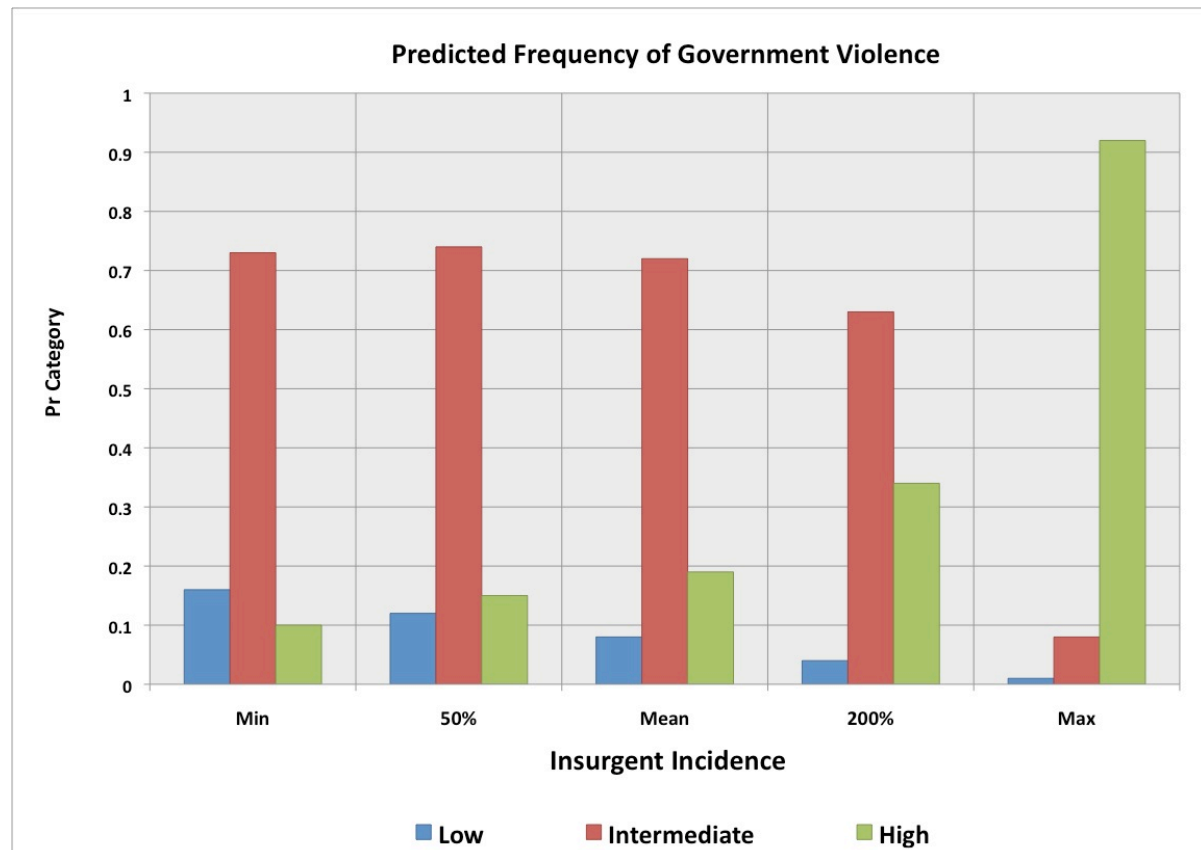
	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	Range	Range	Range
Insurgent Incidence_(t-1)	0.022 (0.006)***	0.022 (0.006)***	
Δ Insurgent Capability		0.144 (0.325)	-0.450 (0.405)
Military Capabilities	0.121 (0.162)	0.116 (0.160)	0.319 (0.192)*
Insurgent Range_(t-1)	0.090 (0.133)	0.093 (0.132)	0.043 (0.132)
Age	0.021 (0.007)***	0.021 (0.007)***	0.019 (0.007)***
Conflict Severity_(ln)	0.246 (0.069)***	0.243 (0.068)***	0.218 (0.062)***
GDPpc_{(ln)t-1}	0.205 (0.140)	0.203 (0.140)	0.241 (0.162)
Democracy	-1.038 (0.361)***	-1.029 (0.363)***	-1.011 (0.338)***
Identity Conflict	-0.216 (0.026)	-0.206 (0.264)	-0.090 (0.232)
Distance_(ln)	0.187 (0.081)**	0.181 (0.081)	0.153 (0.089)*
DV Category 1_(t-1)	-1.760 (0.647)***	-1.760 (0.647)***	-2.038 (0.694)***
DV Category 2_(t-1)	-1.570 (0.319)***	-1.597 (0.318)**	-1.814 (0.322)***
Log-pseudolikelihood	-100.045	-100.025	-109.474
Wald X^2	77.17	76.55	85.12
Prob. > X^2	0.000	0.000	0.000
Observations	187	191	191
Countries	35	35	35

Coefficients and robust standard errors clustered on dyads in parentheses. ***=P<0.01 **=P< 0.05 *=P< 0.10
Two-tailed test.

Interestingly, when also accounting for other aspects of insurgent threat, the overall military capabilities of the insurgency do not significantly alter regime strategies of violence. While the coefficient is positive in each model, it fails to attain conventional levels of significance in all but one model (Model 6). When the variable is included without other aspects of threat (not shown) it is marginally significant in models accounting for the frequency of regime violence and statistically significant in the model accounting for the range of violence. One explanation for this result is that the control variable accounting for the overall intensity of the conflict mutes its independent effect. Recent research suggests that conflicts with comparatively stronger rebels produce greater numbers of battlefield casualties (Lujala, 2009). In models removing the severity variable, the generally static measure of insurgent military capabilities yields significant results in almost every specification. As such, somewhat poor performance of the variable in this analysis should not necessarily be seen as contrary to the theory presented.

As with the other chapters, in order to more clearly demonstrate the substantive effects of these variables, I compute the predicted probabilities for select models. The predictions for the frequency of civilian killings are based on the results from Model 2 (Table 5.2) while predictions for the range of killings are based on the results from Model 5 (Table 5.3). Because of the insignificant results for the change variable in the models accounting for range, I do not calculate predicted probabilities for its impact on the range of violence. As with the models presented in the previous chapter, the values of the regime violence in the previous time period are held constant at the intermediate level. Thus, the predictions reflect the probability that the regime escalates or de-escalates violence from its previous levels.

Figure 5.1: Predicted Frequency of Government Violence by Insurgent Incidence

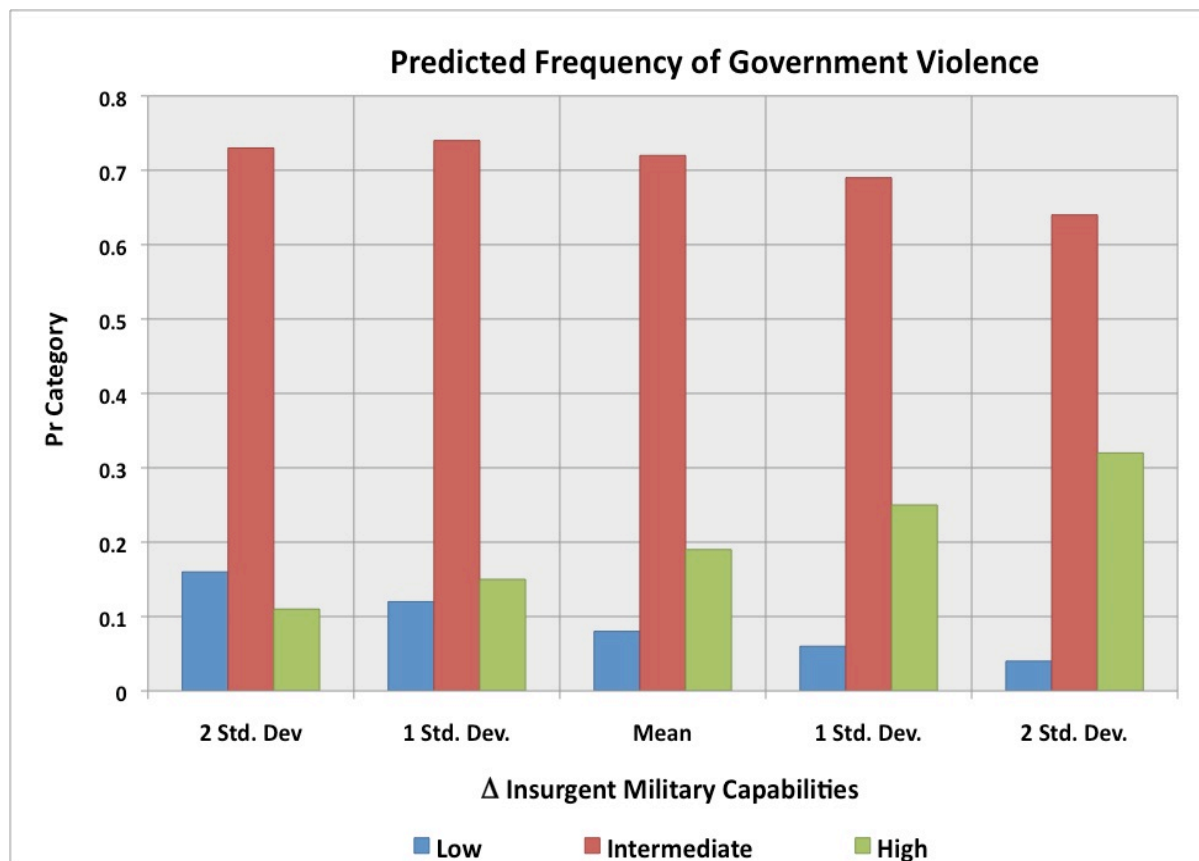


Note: The figure shows the predicted probability of a change from the intermediate category of violence to another category given the range of insurgent incidence (insurgents per 10,000 persons in the conflict area). Estimated values were simulated using Clarify (King, Tomz & Wittenberg, 2000). Previous year's value set to intermediate category; all other independent variables set at their mean, median, or modal values.

Figure 5.1 shows the predicted likelihood of changes in the frequency of government killing of civilians from $t-1$ to the current period give various values of the insurgent incidence measure. According to these predictions, an increase in the incidence of insurgents from 50% below the mean value (~12 insurgents per 10,000 citizens) to 200% above the mean (~50 insurgents per 10,000 citizens) increases the likelihood that the incumbent regime escalates violence from the intermediate value to the highest category of violence by approximately 20%. Conversely, a regime fighting a relative low threat insurgency is predicted to reduce its application of violence. Lowering the insurgent incidence by the same

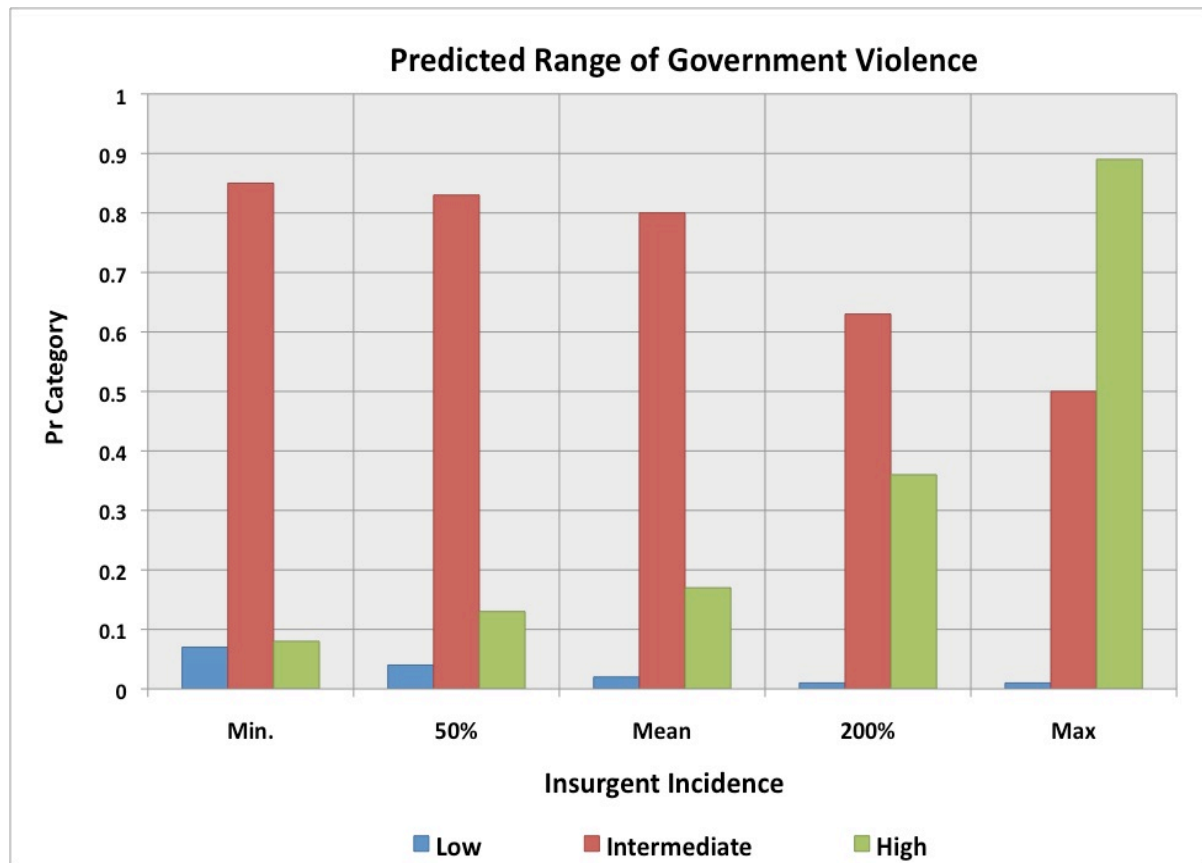
level increases the probability that the state reduces violence from the intermediate to the lowest level of violence increases by about 10%. A particularly powerful insurgency—one that enjoys the active participation of nearly 1 in every 50 citizens in the conflict area (Chechnya in 2000)—increases the probability of a shift to high levels of violence by about 90%. Thus, as predicted by the theory, as the level of threat posed by the rebels increases incumbents are increasingly likely to resort to more frequent killing of civilians in an attempt to mitigate the threat and undercut support for the insurgency. By contrast, as threat levels fall, regimes are more likely to de-escalate violence, killing comparatively fewer civilians.

Figure 5.2: Predicted Frequency of Government Violence by Δ Insurgent Capabilities



Note: The figure shows the predicted probability of a change from the intermediate category of violence to another category given a range of changes in insurgent-government troops ratios between time $t-1$ and t . Estimated values were simulated using Clarify (King, Tomz & Wittenberg, 2000). Previous year's value set to intermediate category; all other independent variables set at their mean, median, or modal values.

Figure 5.3: Predicted Range of Government Violence by Insurgent Incidence



Note: The figure shows the predicted probability of a change from the intermediate category of violence to another category given the range of insurgent incidence (insurgents per 10,000 persons in the conflict area). Estimated values were simulated using Clarify (King, Tomz & Wittenberg, 2000). Previous year's value set to intermediate category; all other independent variables set at their mean, median, or modal values.

Figure 5.2 shows the predictions for the relationship between the one-period change in insurgent capabilities and the change in the level of regime violence over the same period. This variable is intended to capture more directly the dynamic processes of the conflict. Compared to the overall balance of power in the conflict, the year-to-year fluctuations in the conflict's power dynamics exert a smaller substantive effect. For instance, according to the predictions from the model, if the strength of the insurgency grows from one standard deviation below the mean to one standard deviation above (a growth rate of approximately

20%) over the course of the year, the likelihood that the regime escalates violence by one category increases by 10%. Again, the converse holds as well. As the strength of the insurgency declines by the reciprocal rate over the year, the likelihood of the incumbent reducing violence from the intermediate to the lowest category increases by approximately 7%. These predictions suggest that while the aggregate threat observed in a given year is probably the more significant factor affecting regime decisions regarding the level of violence inflicted upon civilians, the more short-term changes in the dynamics of the conflict likewise contribute to changes in regime strategies of violence.

Lastly, Figure 5.3 illustrates the effects of the incidence of participation in the insurgency on the range of violence chosen by the regime. Again, according to the figure, as the threat posed by the insurgency increases, the regime becomes increasingly likely to broaden the targets of its violence. For example, increasing the level of active participation in the insurgency from 50% of the mean to 200% increases the likelihood that the regime expands the targets of violence from politically active civilians or suspected collaborators to the population broadly by approximately 21%. The reciprocal also holds, but only very weakly: as the threat posed by the insurgency decreases from the mean to one standard deviation below, the likelihood that the incumbent regimes applies violence more selectively, tightening it from politically active civilians to more conventional military targets increases by only roughly 3%. As these predictions show, in general, states seldom reduce the violence to the most selective type, which avoids intentional civilians casualties almost entirely, once they have expanded violence to include politically active civilians. Even when the threat level declines tremendously states are by far the most likely to continue using the

same strategy of violence. This suggests the strong effects of path dependence or bureaucratic inertia on state violence strategies (see Poe & Tate, 1994 among many others).

These predictions are largely consistent with the dynamics observed in historical cases. For instance, in El Salvador the growth of the strength of the FMLN constituent organizations in the late 1970s and early 1980s contributed to rising regime violence. Their military growth was suggestive of a shift in peasant loyalties as well as a broader shift in the power dynamics of the conflict. By the early 1980s the insurgents maintained an active force of some 8,000 troops as well as 100,000 part-time militia forces and irregular troops. Moreover, they received support in the form of food, intelligence, and other resources from almost one quarter of the country's population (Leiken, 1984: 118). This shift in the power dynamics in turn corresponded to a significant increase in the level of indiscriminant violence employed by the regime's repressive apparatus. This violence, while supplemented with moderate reform and resource provisions, continued at high levels until the mid-1980s (Mason & Krane, 1989: 188). During this period government pressures forced the insurgents to largely abandon their "liberated zones" and return to a more mobile strategy of insurgency (Valentino, 2004: 229). Moreover, while the available evidence does not point to a serious decline in rebel troop levels, recruitment stabilized during the period as the combination of government violence and modest reforms began to have effect—the land reform program that had inched along for the previous few years began, as well as the moderate political reforms of the mid-1980s, began to incrementally return dividends in terms of slowing the rise in FMLN sympathies and restoring a measure of popular support for the government (Mason & Krane, 1989: 190-191). As a result, regime violence fell as the threat to the government

diminished from its high point in the early 1980s when the insurgents were making great strides and the government seemed to be teetering on the verge of collapse.

Turning to the controls, in general rebel violence seems to have some impact on the formation of government violence strategy. The range of insurgent violence negatively affects the frequency of regime violence. This relationship is intriguing as it suggests that as rebels increasingly adopt terrorist attacks, governments reduce the frequency of civilian killing. This suggests that terrorism may on balance fail to result in the backlash that is often expected by smaller insurgent organization (e.g., Lake, 2002). That is, while indiscriminant insurgent violence is at times intended to increase the level of violence employed by the government, it might actually create the opposite effect, leading regimes to de-escalate violence. However, it seems to have little bearing on the range of government violence.

As anticipated, the greater the intensity of the conflict the more likely regimes are to both escalate violence and engage in more indiscriminant violence against civilians. This result fits with the theory because more intense conflicts induce more intense feelings of threat among political elites. Moreover, as the intensity of the conflict increases, regimes must divert greater levels of resources to the conflict, diminishing the resources available to police the population and gather intelligence that allows for the accurate identification of collaborators and rebel agents. As such, it should reduce the ability of the regime to attract the nominal loyalty of peasants through the provision of benefits and limit the regime's ability to apply more selective violence.

The duration of the insurgency is positively correlated to regime violence in all of the models tested, and it attains significance in Models 4 through 6. Thus, there is partial support for the notion discussed above that the longer the insurgents survive the more threatening

they appear to the regime and thus the more repressive the regime response. However, as noted above, the duration of the conflict is related to the extant strength of the insurgents in complex ways that over-ride the direct effect of the duration of the rebellion. While Bapat (2005) suggests that as insurgencies survive they become stronger and demand greater concessions, other studies have shown that stronger insurgent groups fight shorter wars (Cunningham, Gleditsch & Salehyan, 2009; Buhaug, Gates & Lujala, 2010). As such, the duration of the conflict is likely less important than the balance of capabilities in the conflict in terms of structuring regime violence. That said, this analysis fails to provide support for Kalyvas' (2006) assertion that violence falls as wars drag on and combatants slowly realize the supposed counterproductive nature of indiscriminant violence.

The variable accounting for democratic institutions provides some interesting results. Consistent with past analyses, the democracy variable is negative across all specifications. However, it is only significant in the models accounting for the range of violence. This result is unsurprising given that institutional and political constraints should theoretically impede high levels of violence or indiscriminant violence against the populations. What is surprising is that the presence of democratic institutions does not necessarily exert an independent effect on the frequency of regime violence. Hence, democracies may be more selective in their targeting, but the institutions do not necessarily constrain them from committing violence against civilians with frequency.

The distance between the capital and the conflict zone shows some similar trends. While it is in the expected direction across all specifications, it is only significant in the models for the range of violence. Consequently, as the distance between the capital and the conflict zone increases, regimes tend to use more indiscriminate forms of violence against

civilians. In part, this may be because such acts can be done with greater secrecy given the distance to population centers. However, as stated above, it is also likely related to the effect of distance on power ratios and on its negative effects on the ability of security forces to accurately identify active participants in the insurgency and collaborators from neutral civilians. Hence, the result is at least partially consistent with the theory presented here and lends some tangential support for Kalyvas' (2006) theory of information asymmetry and violence.

Finally, the conflict country's level of development is statistically unrelated to the regime's level or type of violence according to these models. This result is contrary to studies of regime repression and mass killing that include states in times of peace as well as war. This result is also surprising given that wealthier regimes should possess greater resources with which to buy off civilians, thereby lowering the incentive to use violence. The results for the identity conflict indicator are also somewhat surprising in that many extant theories suggest that ethnic, religious, or other identity-based conflicts are more savage and produce greater numbers of civilian casualties. However, these results fail to support this notion. Finally, as with all previous studies of repression or mass violence, there is large and substantial effect exerted by recent behavior. As clearly depicted in the figures above, the decisions made by the regime in the previous period are highly predictive of the decisions made in the current period.

Conclusion

While a number of previous studies have asserted the relationship between regime threat perception and the strategies of repression adopted by the regime, few have made a serious

effort to unpack the underlying causal mechanisms that drive regime threat or to elaborate on the processes that drive regimes to respond to threats with violence. This chapter has attempted to address these issues in order to provide a clearer and more thorough explanation of the escalation and de-escalation of regime violence that occurs over the course of a civil war. To that end, I adapted slightly the model of insurgent violence outlined in the previous chapter and reciprocally applied it to states. In both cases, the belligerents are interested in deterring collaboration and promoting loyalty. However, as I note, the competition is somewhat asymmetrical. While insurgents often rely significantly on civilians for active or tacit support, government forces are typically less interested in active support and simply expect civilians to withhold their support from insurgents. That said, just as the case with rebels, governments must provide some mix of benefits and sanctions to promote loyalty and deter defections as these are the primary stimuli to which civilians respond. The balance of these tactics is largely related to the power dynamics within the conflict. As rebel strength increases, deterring civilian collaboration with the group becomes both more difficult and more costly, making civilian victimization a more appealing option.

Facing declining civilian loyalty and the concomitant increase in costs associated with less violent deterrence strategies, incumbents may see the escalation and broadening of violence as an increasingly appropriate option. Despite criticisms regarding its frequent failure and the likelihood of backlash, indiscriminant repression is effective in some instances. Incumbents weigh their subjective expectations about the likelihood of failure against the more concrete and immediate costs associated with less violent counterinsurgency strategies. In order to thoroughly unpack the logic of the "gamble" on violence, it is important to incorporate the manner in which rising insurgent capabilities alter the bargaining

space, thereby changing the costs associated with various strategies. Just as stronger, more durable insurgencies demand greater concessions from the regimes they challenge, civilians that perceive these shifts in the power dynamics expect more credible and greater levels of resources from governments in exchange for resisting the pressures to support the rebels. The combination of the increased threat from the insurgency and the greater costs that would result from acquiescing to insurgent demands and/or proving greater benefits or accommodations to civilians lead elites to view the gamble of mass violence as potentially the less costly option.

CONCLUSION

During the late 1960s, and particularly in early 1968 with that year's Tet Offensive, Communist insurgents in Vietnam made significant revisions to their war strategies. The aspect of this strategic revision related to the broader military tactics employed by the Front. The NLF attempted to move the insurgency into a new phase of revolutionary warfare: the General Offensive and General Uprising. According to this plan, the NLF would shift its focus from guerrilla attacks and low-level, isolated strikes against military targets, to coordinated, larger-scale offensives against GVN installations in towns, cities, and villages. The hope of this more conventional offensive was that the force of the attacks would weaken and demoralize the GVN government and convince the population of the strength of the NLF, thereby sparking a general insurrection among the people that would quickly bring about the collapse of the GVN and the departure of its US allies.

The second aspect of the strategic shift undertaken by the Front reflected a change in the types and levels of repression it chose to employ. As the discussion and examples in previous pages illustrated, Communist insurgents consistently used repression and terror as a means to control the population and disrupt government authority. However, whereas in the previous years the NLF's violence strategy had emphasized relative restraint, flexibility, and the selective use of violence that was closely crafted to the political and social situation of a given area, beginning in 1968 violence became central tool used with the intent of hastening the collapse of the GVN in both urban and rural areas. As such, the scale and the scope of

NLF violence against perceived enemies and agents of the state intensified throughout the country (Hosmer, 1970: 32, 36-37).

The massacre of more 3,000 civil administrators, perceived GVN sympathizers, Catholics, and other civilians in Hue following the Tet Offensive is often cited as the most extreme example of NLF violence during this period. Yet, as the graph of NLF violence presented in Chapter 4 demonstrates, the violence in Hue was hardly an outlier, at least in terms of intensity. The last years of the 1960s and early 1970s reflect a general trend toward increased violence against civilians by the Communist insurgents. Moreover, during this period the NLF apparently became increasingly broad in its targeting criteria. While it had most frequently targeted civilian administrators, defectors, and other agents of the government or *known* traitors, during earlier periods, the NLF broaden its definition of traitors, spies and enemies to include not only those persons working with the GVN administration but also persons who remained in contact with family members in the ARVN, persons suspected of sympathizing with the GVN, and even peasants who had been involuntarily relocated by the government or who otherwise "complied" with government orders (Hosmer, 1970: 27-28).

Like the example of the LRA used to introduce this manuscript, the example presented here and detailed in Chapter 4 illustrates the variability of insurgent war strategies. Both the combat strategies adopted by rebels as well as their strategies of violence and repression employed against civilians shift during the course of a civil conflict. During some periods of a conflict insurgents act with relative restraint toward the civilian population, intentionally killing few civilians and/or limiting violence to selective targets such as government officials, politically active civilians, or known collaborators. At other moments

in the war, they may dramatically escalate violence, increasing the frequency of killing and broadening the targeting criteria to include any persons suspected sympathizing with the enemy or simply to the population writ large.

Despite the appalling nature of many of the acts committed against civilians during civil wars, this manuscript adopts a rationalist approach to violence consistent with the assumptions and theories outlined by other recent works (Downes, 2008; Kalyvas, 2006; Hultman, 2007; Valentino, 2004). Like these works, it views violence—even mass killing and other atrocities—as a strategic choice adopted by armed actors when they believe that such actions can effectively and efficiently assist them in attaining their goals. Specifically, the theory presented herein argues that violence strategies are largely shaped by fluctuations in the power dynamics between the armed political actors within the conflict.

In both the Vietnam case as well as the LRA example, the insurgent organizations revised their war strategies, including the frequency and range of violence against civilians, following major shifts in the balance of power in the conflict. In both cases insurgents escalated violence when they faced significant declines in their capabilities relative to their adversary. For the NLF, the steady buildup of US forces in the country and improved GVN counterinsurgency strategies throughout the mid- and late-1960s inhibited the ability of the insurgents to mobilize support among rural villages, protect supporters from US/GVN violence, and control rural hamlets. In an attempt to halt this loss of control and support and to undercut the rising strength of the Saigon government, the NLF intensified violence and began to target the population more broadly. In the case of the LRA, very near defeat by their adversary resulted in a strategy shift among the battered remnants of the insurgency. Following both operation "Iron Fist" in 2002 and operation "Lightning Thunder" in 2008, the

severely weakened LRA rebels dramatically escalated violence, massacring hundreds of civilians and abducting perhaps thousands more during the weeks that followed. Thus, in line with the theory proposed in previous chapters, as insurgents weaken, thereby losing their ability to control territory and command popular loyalty, they are increasingly likely to resort to greater and more indiscriminate violence as a means to restore deterrence and regain or maintain control.

To recapitulate the argument, power asymmetries and resource disparities fluctuate over the course of the conflict; so to do the levels and types of violence adopted by armed groups. I model the conflict as a competition over the nominal loyalty of the civilian population. Both the state and the insurgent group attempt to entice civilian loyalty by providing a mixture of benefits and sanctions. The outcome of this competition largely structures the strategies of violence the group adopts. Civilian support produces negative incentives for violence—such action would simply undermine and punish an existing resource. By contrast, when civilians withhold loyalty insurgents have an incentive to use violence and terror to undermine the resources provided by the regime, thereby attempting to reduce the extant resource asymmetry and to deter civilians from collaborating with the regime.

An additional and complicating feature of civil wars is the often-fickle loyalty of the population. Popular loyalties fluctuate over the course of the conflict; in turn, this variation produces changes in the strategies of violence the armed group employs from one time point to another. All else equal, civilian loyalty is predicated on the ability of the insurgents to provide material and non-material benefits to supporters in order to offset the risk of collaboration with or participation in the rebellion. Consequently, the side that provides

civilians with the largest credible level of goods compels the loyalty of the target population. Civilians' subjective assessment of the likely outcome of the conflict represents an additional factor in determining loyalty and support. The ability of the insurgents to provide sufficient benefits to the target population as well as the populations' perceptions of likely war outcomes depend on the capabilities of the group relative to the regime. Thus, changes in the in the power dynamics of the conflict contribute to changes in the level and depth of civilian loyalty to the insurgents. Civilians are sensitive to shifts in the balance of power in the conflict and update their strategies in response to changes in them. When insurgents face battlefield setbacks, when foreign powers intervene on the behalf of the government, or when other factors cause a decline in the insurgents' relative capabilities, civilians become more likely to defect and support the government. The increased threat of defections and a general decline in civilian loyalty creates an incentive for insurgents to use violence against the population as means to deter collaboration with the government and to enforce civilian loyalty. Consequently, the incentive for violence is driven by the shifting loyalties of the civilian population, which are in turn responsive to fluctuations in the relative capabilities of the conflict actors. The general prediction, then, is that when a group is declining in power it becomes more likely to escalate violence as a means to enforce loyalty among civilians and prevent them from defecting to the adversary.

The statistical results as well as the case analysis of the Vietnam conflict provided support for this theory. Chapter 3 addressed the predictors of civilian support for the insurgency, and found that more militarily capably insurgent organizations and those whose relative capabilities were increasing from the previous period to the current enjoyed a higher level of participation from the conflict population. In chapter 4 I examined the factors

contributing to the frequency and range of insurgent violence. The results supported the theoretical assertion that changes in the broader power dynamics of the conflict contribute to changes in insurgent violence strategies. Specifically, as a group's relative capabilities decline from one period to the next, they are more likely to both escalate the frequency and broaden the targets of violence; by contrast, rising insurgent capabilities contribute to a reduction in violence. Also as anticipated, the greater the incidence of insurgent troops within the conflict population, the lower the likelihood of violence escalation. This chapter also presented a brief analysis of the relationship between power dynamics and violence in the Vietnam War between 1956 and 1972. Chapter 5 assessed the applicability of the general theory and model to the dynamics of state violence. Merging the competition model presented here with existing threat-based theories of repression and mass killing, this chapter argued that stronger, more durable insurgencies raise the cost of the benefits and reforms that regimes must pay to "buy off" insurgents and their supporters. As these costs increase, regimes increasingly view indiscriminate violence and mass killing as "rational" policy substitutions to pay offs that might dramatically alter the status quo within the state. As with previous chapters the results generally supported the theoretical propositions.

By focusing on power dynamics, the theory presented herein departs from those that look primarily at static aspects of the conflict such as initial endowments, ethnic enmity, ideology, organizational characteristics, or pre-war political alignments. As asserted in Chapter 2, arguments based on static factors largely ignore the often-significant variation in actor violence over the course of a war. While initial conditions or pre-war socio-political relationships may act as a constraint or propellant to violence, these features seldom change over the course of a conflict. As such they have limited purchasing power in terms of

predicting the escalation or de-escalation of violence within the conflict. In order to address such variation, I argued—and thus employed—for a more dynamic model actor violence that incorporates the more fluid features of the conflict environment. Moreover, the theory presented herein also acknowledged the interdependence of actor strategies within this environment and attempted to integrate this aspect of conflicts into the theory of violence.

This project likewise departs somewhat from recent theories that assert violence can only be understood by examining it theoretically and empirically at the micro-level and focusing wholly on local power dynamics (e.g., Balcells, 2010; Kalyvas, 1999; 2006). While local contestation and control figure prominently in the formation of violence strategies in a given geographic locale, they may only figure marginally in terms of shaping the general strategies adopted by a group. For example, declining control in a few villages or a similarly defined small geographic area might well result in an escalation in indiscriminate violence within that locale. All else equal, however, it is unlikely that such a minor loss would result in large-scale violence that would be clearly reflected in the aggregate violence strategy of the group.

In one sense, Kalyvas's (2006) points regarding more micro foci are correct: the change in strategy at the local level would be largely overlooked by more macro-level analyses such as this one. Yet, this argument misses the larger point, which is that local levels of control are largely reflective of power dynamics in the aggregate. As mentioned in earlier, the larger strategic shifts within Eastern Europe during World War II large defined the power dynamics between the Nazi occupation force and Greek partisans. As German forces faced increasing Allied pressure on the Eastern Front and elsewhere in the Balkans, they redeployed troops throughout the theatre, raising the relative ability of the Partisans to

control territory and command the loyalty of the population. True, this translated into changes in insurgent and occupier violence at the local level, but these changes were largely driven by the effect of macro level power dynamics. The LRA and NLF cases reflect similar dynamics. While geographic variation in both the intensity and the selectivity of violence no doubt exists, focusing solely on that dimensions runs the risk of ignoring the bigger picture. As I articulated in this manuscript, changes in the more macro-level power relationships between the conflict actors contributes to changes in the aggregate level and types of violence they adopt. In this sense, micro and macro theories of violence should be seen as complimentary rather than competitive because only through the application of both lenses will scholars fully understand the dynamics of violence in civil wars.

This analysis joins a small but growing body of theoretically informed analyses of conflict violence dynamics that produce policy relevant predictions. Despite the wealth of research on terrorism, genocide, and civil war onset and duration, until quite recently very little theoretical or empirical research considered the construction of violence strategies vis-à-vis civilians within the context of civil wars. Arguably, this omission has been to the detriment of peacekeeping, nation building, or humanitarian missions within conflict countries. With respect to this analysis, practitioners and policy makers that neglect the manner in which their entrance into or interference in the conflict environment alter the power dynamics between the actors may inadvertently affect changes that result in (at least temporary) violence escalation.

The cases discussed in this manuscript quite readily illustrate the relationship between armed foreign intervention and changes in actor violence strategies. Despite the eventual failure of the US to protect its Southeast Asian ally, the US military buildup in Vietnam

succeeded in exerting tremendous pressure on the military, political, and administrative apparatus of the Communist insurgency. From its high point in the early- to mid-1960s, from which the collapse of Saigon appeared all but given, US military power, aid, and strategy helped to whittle away the gains made by the NLF, reversing its decade-long advance and fighting it to a standstill by the end of the decade. With the shift in these power dynamics, however, came a change in the strategies of violence employed by the insurgents.

Throughout the late 1960s the NLF escalated and intensified violence, killing many times more civilians than it had in its earlier years when it enjoyed broad control over most of the countryside and the loyalty of much of the rural population. In a similar way, while the complete annihilation of the LRA in either the 2002 or 2008 would likely have saved thousands of lives, the failure of these operations may have inadvertently caused even more deaths. Following both campaigns, the weakened group resorted to mass violence, abductions, and atrocities against the population. Both cases suggest that potential interveners should carefully consider the likelihood of such outcomes and adopt strategies that can mitigate the fallout against the population in the event that they fail in the primary military objective.

This analysis therefore fits with other recent studies that suggest that intervention may create an unanticipated backlash of violence. Analyses of NATO's intervention in Kosovo and France's intervention in Rwanda in 1994 suggest that despite the interveners' intention of preventing or reducing abuses against civilians, the entrance of the third party led perpetrators to escalate violence (see for example Kuperman, 2001; 2008). This effect is likely not limited to armed intervention as the entrance of even well intentioned or neutral actors may likewise alter power dynamics in unforeseen ways. At least one recent analysis

suggests an interaction between humanitarian aid and violence (Hoffman, 2004). According to this analysis, insurgent groups may precipitate humanitarian crises (including mass killings and other atrocities) in order to provoke good-willed international agencies and states to deploy humanitarian resources to the conflict zone, which the group(s) can then pillage and exploit. In many ways this argument shares similarities with the theory elucidate here. As argued herein, the structural and resource weaknesses of the group are a strong contributor to the group's use of violence as a strategy of resource acquisition. The additional cautionary note sounded by this analysis, however, is that the good will of the international community may inadvertently provide additional incentives for violence. Arguably, weak actors can only gain so much from pursuing violence—eventually the population is depleted either through death or flight. The influx of aid resources, however, prevents the attainment of what is likely a natural equilibrium in civilian-insurgent violence interaction. That is, so long as aid flows, the perpetrator continues to gain from violence.

These observations should not be taken as a call to halt the provision of international aid to conflict-stricken populations or to avoid intervention intended to prevent conflict or abuse. Rather, it should simply be seen as an additional complexity to which international agencies and organizations and national governments should attend when devising intervention strategies. If anything, the observation that power dynamics play such an important role in the construction of violence strategies suggests the need to carefully design armed and humanitarian interventions that do not radically alter the extant balance of power. In this sense, neutral interventions that can maintain the balance of power while simultaneously providing a security umbrella under which both parties can negotiate an end to the conflict may therefore offer a superior strategy for halting conflicts and reducing

violence compared to interventions that explicitly attempt to challenge the perpetrator or provide overt protection to the weaker conflict party. Future research should therefore consider the role of power dynamics in affecting changes in levels of violence within the conflict and apply the theoretical arguments articulated herein to determine empirically the most effective strategies for protecting civilians during war or resolving civil wars.

Future research should likewise focus on constructing new and improving existing measures of conflict violence and the relevant characteristics of the conflict actors. The measures used herein are admittedly blunt; however, they represent among the best—and often only—cross-national data available with which to test group-level theories of insurgent behavior. With respect to violence data, the UCDP (2009) One-sided Violence dataset mentioned briefly in previous chapters was a major first step in measuring violence against civilians; however, it lacks information about the identity of the targets or the context of their targeting. The PAVI measures constructed for this project represent a first cut at further improving violence measures; to the extent possible, I have attempted to identify the selectivity of the violence in addition to its frequency.

Doubtless, improvements could be made in both measures. First, killing is only one type of violence employed by armed political actors; they may also resort to torture, mutilation, abduction, rape, or other types of violence. Recent efforts have been made to collect data on some of these abuses, but a unified dataset incorporating measures of each would represent a major advancement in the study of conflict violence. In addition, measures of conflict violence should, in the future, attend to the spatial dimensions of the conflict as well. Theories regarding the geographic distribution of violence (e.g., Balcells, 2009; Kalyvas, 2006) are important to the understanding conflict dynamics, but thus far they have

only been tested in single case analyses. Developing cross-national datasets that capture this dimension of violence would assist researchers to bridge the gap between spatial and temporal theories as well as between micro- and macro-level theories and analyses.

Lastly, insurgent groups, particularly their organizational structures and capacity, represent one of the great black boxes of cross-national civil war research. Research within this area demands reliable measures of insurgent capabilities, territorial control, leadership and command structures, administrative structures, recruitment strategies, resource endowments, and other factors associated with the manner in which insurgents construct their organizations and sustain themselves. To date, only one measure has been constructed that attempts to capture information on these features of insurgency (Cunningham, Gleditsch & Salehyan, 2009). While this effort deserves much credit, the existing measure is extremely limited in that it is largely temporally invariant, providing just a snapshot of a portion of group characteristics. Moreover, it lacks information on recruitment strategies, organizational capacity, and many other important facets of insurgent organizations. Indeed, creating the measures that would facilitate the study of many of the theoretically interesting questions about insurgent behavior is no small order; yet, real advancement in the understanding of conflict and violence dynamics is likely to be slow coming in its absence.

Appendix

Summary of Dataset

Recently, scholars of political violence, conflict processes, and human rights have begun to systematically examine the patterns of violence that occur within civil conflicts. Specifically, much important research has been devoted to violence against civilians during conflicts, target selection by insurgent forces, and the evolution of state counterinsurgency strategies.

Most existing datasets on violence committed against civilians are state-centered (Gibney and Dalton, 1996; Cingranelli and Richards, 1999; Harff, 2003; Rummel, 1994). Yet insurgent groups, paramilitaries, local militias, and/or other non-state actors (NSA) rather than (or in addition to) government security forces perpetrate much of the violence observed in civil conflicts. The notable absence of NSA-centered violence measures therefore hampers large-N empirical research on coercion and repression during civil conflicts.

The dataset used for the analysis in this manuscript includes both non-state and state actors violence against civilians using an approach drawn from the conceptual core of the well-known Political Terror Scale (PTS) (Gibney and Dalton, 1996; Gibney et al., 2010). Specifically, it captures how frequently the groups employ tactics such as abduction, torture, and killing against civilians as well as what segments of a society fall victim to them.⁵¹

Conflicts, Conflict Actors, and Dyadic Relationships

The unit of analysis for this dataset is the conflict group year. A complicating factor in analyzing violence against civilians is that states may experience multiple conflicts within

⁵¹ This appendix only includes information on rebel and government killings as those are the only violations considered in this manuscript.

their border, and some states engage multiple non-state actors within the same conflict. As a result, datasets on civil war violence must extend beyond the state or even the conflict as the unit of analysis to the conflict actors. Analyses of violence in civil wars require a dyadic framework that allows researchers to differentiate which violent actors commit acts of violence and in what context. Consequently, this dataset uses the recently released Uppsala Armed Conflict Data Project (UCDP) *Dyadic Dataset* (Harbom et al., 2008) to identify the relevant dyads for which violence against civilians is coded. The UCDP *Dyadic Dataset* includes conflicts occurring over territory or governance that involves the state and at least one violent, armed organization that result in a minimum of 25 battle-related deaths per year (Harbom et al., 2008).⁵² This relatively low threshold allows for the inclusion of small-scale insurgencies or early periods of insurgent movements.

Defining Non-Combatants

The definition of civilians or non-combatants has received only cursory attention in existing datasets, and indeed by most scholars of political violence.⁵³ This conceptual oversight is a significant theoretical impediment given that civil war actors do not divide neatly into categories of insurgent, state, and civilian (see Downes, 2008; Walzer, 1977). Civilians are conventionally perceived as innocent bystanders. I take as given that fine distinctions over who cooperates with insurgents or the regime is generally unknowable to researchers in most

⁵² The UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset (ACD) (Gleditsch et al. 2002) uses similar criteria.

⁵³ For example, Eck and Hultman (2007) make repeated references to civilians. However, no clear, substantive definition of civilian is found in their codebook. The definition of one-sided violence used by the creators is ‘the use of armed force by the government of a state or by a formally organized group against civilians which results in at least 25 deaths per year’ (Eck, Sollenberg and Wallensteen, 2004, 136).

cases. It is, however, possible to draw valid distinctions between groups that engage in combat-related activities and those that do not.⁵⁴ This project specifically adopts the definition for noncombatant populations employed in the Geneva Convention (IV) (1949):

*Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed hors de combat by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause...(Article 3)*⁵⁵

For this dataset, the noncombatant population therefore includes health workers, journalists, NGO workers, public employees, political representatives, bureaucrats, and other representatives or associates or employees of state or dissident groups that do not *actively* participate in a violent manner in armed conflicts. It also includes soldier, police, security forces, insurgents, and other violent actors that have been wounded, detained, or surrendered to opposing forces. It also includes such security-related persons killed when they are off duty or not participating in security duties at the time they are attacked (e.g., off duty policemen or soldiers on leave).

Defining Violence

For this project, the scope of violence is limited to the killing non-combatants during war.⁵⁶

The dataset includes killings that result from indirect but intentional actions such as siege,

⁵⁴ Many “noncombatant” actors such as aid workers, political activists, government officials, and bureaucrats perform their duties in or around conflicts zones. Governments and NSAs often view these actors as legitimate targets despite the protections afforded to them by the Geneva Convention. In El Salvador, for example, government forces frequently targeted health workers because they believed that they provided aid and comfort to the insurgents (or to their supporters). Similarly, Maoist insurgents in Nepal and the Philippines have targeted elected officials as well as public sector employees for violence. Lastly, support personnel such as those civilians that collaborate with insurgents by providing intelligence or supplies or the workers employed in factories that produce war-related equipment or munitions have often been viewed as legitimate targets by belligerents during civil conflicts (see Walzer, 1977).

⁵⁵ See also the 2nd and 3rd Protocols (1977; 2005) associated with the Geneva Convention (IV) (1949).

internment, forced labor, and indiscriminate shelling of civilian populated areas. It does not include unintentional actions such as disease caused by infrastructure collapse, or starvation from crop failure. “Collateral damage” is a particularly complicated occurrence. It is often difficult to separate accidental death and damage from intentional abuse. In many cases evidence of intent is difficult to locate; moreover, actors often have incentives to mask mass violence as collateral damage in order to avoid condemnation or interference by the international community. Both intentionally targeting civilians for violence and acting with depraved indifference toward civilian populations in pursuit of military goals are prohibited under the Geneva Convention. As such both types of violence are included in this dataset. This does not suggest that any civilian casualty is included. Rather, contextual elements of the story are used to differentiate collateral damage from indifference to civilian security.⁵⁷ For instance, an errant missile that kills several noncombatants in a village nearby a conflict zone is likely to be coded as collateral damage. However, sustained bombing of a residential area would be considered intentional violence against non-combatants and therefore coded in this dataset.

The PAVI dataset provides two separate actor-year measures of lethal violence committed against non-combatants by the insurgents and state forces. Violations are considered along two dimensions: the *frequency* of violence and the *range* of violence (or

⁵⁶ This dataset captures common modes of intentional violence committed by warring parties against civilians during war. Killings may be the most obvious and most frequently reported abuse of civilians, yet other types of violence are also common during civil war. Notably, torture, mutilation, rape, and abduction have been used routinely in civil conflicts. In addition to killings, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) amputated victim’s limbs; the Janjaweed militias in Darfur have used systematic rape; and Serb-backed militias employed sexual mutilation, rape, and other forms of torture against Muslims during the civil war. An extension of the data used here includes measuring other types of physical integrity violations committed by state and non-state actors. The specific categories of violence addressed in the larger data project include: torture and physical abuse, rape and sexual abuse, and political imprisonment, unlawful detention and kidnapping.

⁵⁷ Other datasets use similar contextual criteria in an attempt to ascertain the motive of actors (see for example the *Global Terrorism Database* codebook, Appendix A).

targeting strategy). *Frequency* pertains to the number of massacres, assassinations, or other intentional killings of non-combatants that occur during the year. In essence, this measure is a categorical estimation of the number of non-combatant deaths attributable to the group in a given year. Because the true number of civilian deaths is often unknowable, the measure used here is a subjective accounting of the scale of deaths. Specifically, it is based on the coder's assessment of the frequency with which the actor used intentional lethal violence against non-combatants. Frequency includes three categories:

- 1) Rare or uncommon
- 2) Often
- 3) Routine or Commonplace

Range reflects the selectivity of the violence (see Klayvas, 2006: Ch. 6). The intuition here is that it is important to differentiate between persons targeted due to their political involvement and those targeted at random (see also Gibney & Dalton, 1996; Stohl et al., 1986). Range is measured as three categories accounting for the selectivity of the violence. In the most selective category a group targets only military personnel or political figures intimately connected to counterinsurgency policy. The three categories are:

- 1) Selective
- 2) Intermediate
- 3) Indiscriminate

Collecting and Coding the Data

PAVI provides yearly information on the types, levels, and targets of violence for political groups involved in organized opposition to the state as well as for the states these groups

challenge. This means that scores are constructed with the group-year as the unit of analysis.⁵⁸

The primary sources for evaluating the level of violence committed by political actors are the US Department of State *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and news reports from various agencies. Lexis-Nexis searches are used to generate a sample of news reports with information relevant to the actions of political actors. These stories are used in addition to the State Department reports because of the tendency of these reports to use terms such as "rebels" or "antigovernment forces/militants" rather than the names of specific rebel groups in their descriptions of violence. In addition, annual reports from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are added to improve the coverage of these events. Various scholars have used these and similar documents to generate empirical measures of state respect for human rights or violations of physical integrity rights (Cingranelli and Richards, 1999; Gibney and Dalton, 1996; Poe and Tate 1994) as well as counts of terrorist events (GTD, 2009) and instance of civilian killing (Eck and Hukhtman, 2007). This dataset builds upon these efforts to produce an accurate measure of the frequency, types, and targets of state and rebel violence against non-combatants during civil conflict.

Reports are accessed at various websites. While retrieving USDS, HRW, and AI reports is relatively straight forward, accessing news stories is more complicated. This section explains how and where to access relevant source data.

⁵⁸ One important note should be made about the unit of analysis. Because states sometimes experience many conflicts in a given year we would ideally wish to know the extent and variations within state violence across conflicts or to differentiate "conflict-related" violence from other acts of state abuse. However, two problems prevent this fine separation of the scores. First, the source data often do not provide sufficient detail for accurate coding. Second, it is often difficult if not impossible to determine whether state actions are specific responses to insurgency or the result of other motivations.

- The USDS reports can be accessed at two websites:⁵⁹

Reports for years 1996-1999 can be accessed here:

http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/hrp_reports_mainhp.html

Reports for 1999-2008 can be accessed here: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/>

- Amnesty International no longer maintains an easily accessible website of past reports annual reports. However, the UNHCR retains past reports on their website. It can be accessed here:

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,AMNESTY,ANNUALREPORT,,,0.htm>

- Human Rights Watch maintains their reports on their website.⁶⁰ They are accessed here:

<http://www.hrw.org/en/node/79288>

After accessing the reports coders should read the report fully one time. Information on physical integrity violations by state and non-state political actors are most often detailed in the Section 1 of the USDS reports. Conflict specific information is typically included in Section 1g, and coders should particular attention to this information. In some cases, pertinent information is located in section 5, particularly in the subsections regarding national religious or ethnic minorities.

⁵⁹ Most of the relevant information for non-state actors will be included in sections 1a-1g of the United State Department of State *Country Reports*; however, some may be included in sections related to ethnic or national minority rights or similar sections.

⁶⁰ The 2004 annual HRW report is constructed on a thematic rather than country basis. There is therefore little information about specific countries, and it can be excluded from coding.

After reading the report, coders should record notes on the relevant actions for each actor on the coding sheets. Coders should be as detailed as possible and are encouraged to use the *exact language* from the reports or news stories whenever possible. It is acceptable to copy and paste passages from the source documents onto the coding sheets.

Non-combatants

Determining who counts as a civilian can be extremely difficult during civil wars. For this project we will rely on the definition of "non-combatant" outlined above. In more practical terms, violence against the following types of persons should be considered:

- Security forces *not* involved in combat, security, or other routine duties or operations. This generally applies to only off-duty security personnel.
- Soldiers, insurgents, and other persons that have been wounded, disarmed, detained or surrendered.
- International/UN peacekeepers
- Politicians, political activists, community leaders, protesters.
- Aid workers and medical personnel.
- Journalists, lawyers, NGO workers
- Other non-political, non-violent persons.

Persons not considered non-combatants or not coded

- Soldiers killed in combat, on patrol, or otherwise in the course of duty.
- Police or other security forces acting in official capacity.

- Civilians killed in crossfire or as collateral damage (though see below for more information).

Coders should make their best and most informed decision as to whether victims of abuse are non-combatants or otherwise. If the coder cannot make a decision or if there is insufficient evidence the coder should assume that the victims were legitimate targets, thus giving the group the benefits of the doubt. These cases, however, should be noted and the project manager should be informed.

Extra-legal killing and disappearance likely resulting in death

Extra-legal killing includes any extrajudicial execution, political assassination, assault leading to death, or any other arbitrary deprivation of life. It does not include, however, executions following formal judicial proceedings, regardless of their fairness according to international norms or laws. This can be a tricky issue given that many states conduct political executions following some form of formal trial. For example, countries like Iran and China have reputations of routinely executing dissidents following trials that are questionable in terms of fairness and due process. It is not the intention of this dataset to measure the validity of trials; consequently, when trials are conducted through an established legal system and in accordance with the laws of the state in question, these killing should be excluded. However, killings should be included when prisoners are summarily executed without due process or without a minimum level of access to formal legal proceedings.

Other types of killing such as political assassinations, summary executions of detainees or captured combatants, deaths resulting from the "unlawful" use of force or use of "excessive" force should be included. In general, non-combatant deaths resulting from the

direct actions of security forces or insurgents should also be included. In some cases, this may include deaths that would otherwise be viewed as "collateral damage". For example, if insurgents set off a car bomb on a busy urban street all the casualties would easily be included in their score. However, a bomb detonated outside of a police barracks in which some civilians were killed would not be coded unless there is evidence that civilians were also intended as targets.

In some cases, this information is impossible to locate and the violence must be seen as collateral damage. In other cases, contextual information can help determine the targeting criteria of the violent group. For example, if the bomb were placed next to a busy market area or otherwise in a manner meant to maximize civilian casualties, the ensuing civilian deaths would be included. Similarly, if a secondary were timed to detonate while rescue workers and bystanders gathered at the scene of the first explosion, the ensuing casualties would be included. By contrast, a suicide bombing against a security patrol in which no civilians were harmed would not be included. As another example, a government airstrike on a rebel encampment that causes some civilian casualties would not be included. However, an airstrike that broadly targets a residential area or entire village would be included even if the stated target were military in nature. This is because such broad targeting strategies reflect little effort to control collateral damage and show a general disregard for civilian casualties. If the report or article simply states "civilians were killed during combat operations" or "were killed in crossfire" and offers no more detailed information, these cases should not be coded. Explicit attacks on medical and humanitarian workers, peacekeepers, off duty security forces or police would also be included.

Lastly, deaths resulting from indirect actions would not be included. Thus, if heavy artillery bombardment led to the destruction of a town water treatment facilities, which in turn caused outbreaks of disease that killed dozens of residents, it would be not be coded. Similarly, looting, the destruction of crops, residences, and infrastructure should not be coded unless the act itself directly caused deaths. When government agents torch huts in a village, burning many residents alive, this counts as a direct act. When military forces loot property and destroy crops, contributing to disease, malnourishment and death, this not coded.

Scoring Abuse Frequency

The categories for all abuses are:

- 1) Rare/ uncommon
- 2) Common
- 3) Routine or widespread

In category (1) the abuse occurs rarely and a few cases per year would be observed. The political actor does not appear to rely extensively on this type of abuse but it may occur at times during the year. Adjectives used to describe this level of violation often include: *at times, sometimes, a few occasionally, rarely*. Other descriptions, such as *numerous* or *a number of* will require a closer reading of the text to determine whether the actions was rare or whether it was more of an established pattern of behavior for the group. When a report simply states that a political group used a type of abuse or that there "were reports of" a type of abuse but no figures or further description is provided, this category should be assigned. While the intensity of the abuse should be based primarily on descriptions rather than actual

numbers (as accurate counts are seldom available), the number of abuses in category (1) should not normally exceed 10 to 15.

In category (2) the frequency of abuses has been extended. In this category actors more commonly use the act in question, but do not make extensive use of it. This is an intermediate category between the rare or infrequent use of a type of abuse and its routine usage. Adjectives commonly associated with category include *multiple*, *numerous*, *often*, *some*, *a number of*, etc. Other descriptors such as *frequently*, *many* or *common* should be examined closely to determine how frequently is frequent. For instance, one report may describe 15 killings of suspected collaborators by government forces as *frequent* while another describes the killing of 125 with the same language. As a general rule, category (2) violations should reflect a pattern of abuse where agents of a political group make common usage of violence but do not use it in a routine or systematic way. This means that violations may occur several times during a year, but that the group does not use this type of violation in all or most cases. While actual numbers should not make up the basis for coding, in practice category (2) violations will not be less than a dozen and no more than "scores" (e.g. less than 100).

In category (3) the group has adopted a form of violence as a routine strategy. The type of violence reflects a pattern of behavior that is *widespread*, *routine*, *regular* or *systematic*. Coders should pay special attention to language such as *common*, *frequent*, or *significant number*. These could reflect category 2 violations or category 3 depending on context. While numbers do not define the category, this level of abuse will often reflect 100s or 1000s of killings by the group per year.

Scoring Selectivity (Range)

The most difficult—but perhaps most important—element of PAVI is the *range* indicator. This variable accounts for the segment of the population that is targeted for or intentionally exposed to violence. In short, it accounts for the selectivity of the violence—who is the victim? Range has three categories, ranging from highly selective violence to indiscriminant violence. This variable is intended to capture the patterns of targeting in a conflict—that is, do armed political actors generally target selectively, limiting violence to conventional military targets and the assassination of specific, high profile opponents (e.g., political leaders), or do they target large swaths of the population, making no apparent distinction between elites and apolitical peasants?

Range is captured in two ways. First, the illegal killings discussed in the previous section are disaggregated by the selection criteria used to target the victim. There are three categories of killings based on the *range* of violence used by the violent actor: *selective*, *intermediate*, and *indiscriminant*. Coders should separate the count of total non-combatant killings into the three categories described below.

In category (1) violence is directed explicitly and almost exclusively at military targets. Non-elites and non-combatants NOT actively engaged in politics are not targeted or are targeted very infrequently. For example, if an insurgent group routinely targets military bases, police stations, and security patrols for attacks, this behavior is consistent with category (1). This is the case even the attacks—for example, suicide bombing—is considered "terrorism" in the article or report. A caveat to this is when civilians are also killed in the attack as a result of the explicit indifference, negligence, or intention of the armed group.

In category (2) the *range* of violence extends beyond attacks on military targets to political elites and politically active non-combatants. For instance, government forces opening fire on a group of protesting students or assassinating opposition political activists, rival politicians, or local community leaders are examples of this category. While the act is a clear violation of physical integrity rights, the targets are clearly non-combatants, and act may be characterized as *indiscriminant* in the report or article, the targets of the violence were selected on the basis of the observable actions or associations of the victim. This distinction is intended to differentiate between violence inflicted upon those who voluntarily participate in politics and those that attempt to avoid violence by remaining neutral. It should be noted that family members of activist civilians are not considered political targets unless they also exhibit political behavior. Thus, the detention and killing of an activist's husband or the murder of her parents is considered indiscriminant violence (category 3) because the victim was not politically active (at least not simply based on their association with the activist). This category also includes the execution of prisoners of war or combatants otherwise detained by the armed actor.

*Killings of non-combatants counted in this category include: politicians (mayors, governors, etc.) suspected collaborators, politically active civilians, protesters, community leaders, activists, journalists, lawyers, or detained or incapacitated security force members, or other persons whose allegiances are visible to belligerents through their actions or voluntary associations.

*This category also includes any case in which the victim is named and specifically targeted because of their presumed associations. An example of this is when violent actors use "lists" of names to identify victims or when specific individuals are targeted as the result of information previously information attained by the belligerents.

Category (3) reflects arbitrary or indiscriminant violence. This type of violence affects persons regardless of their political involvement, inclination, or associations. It often is

observed in the context of "mopping up", "search and destroy," or "scorched earth" campaigns. It is also common in terrorist campaigns (though caution should be used to differentiate among terror targets). These attacks are often described as *indiscriminant*, *arbitrary*, or *random*.

A word of caution: reports often refer to an attack as *indiscriminant* even when it is directed against specific persons on the basis of their association or action. For example, police firing on a crowd of protesters may be described as indiscriminant in a press report; however, for the purposes of this dataset this action does not warrant coding as indiscriminant because the protesters were voluntarily choosing to involve themselves in political action. Again, this does not suggest that the action is less reprehensible, simply that the targeting as more selective than compared to government forces summarily executing all of the residents of a village because its inhabitants were from the same ethnic group as the insurgents.

A note on *collateral damage*: Collateral damage or unintentional deaths resulting from armed conflict deserve special consideration. It is often impossible to ascertain the true intention of an armed actor, thus coding such acts are difficult because it is simply not known whether a group intended to victimize civilians or whether the deaths were the result of accidental targeting or because the group was unaware of the proximity of civilians to the target area. Coders should use as much contextual information as possible to code the *range* of violence. However, a few guidelines will be helpful. As a general rule, when the perpetrator cannot be identified, the deaths should not affect any party's score. For instance, when the report states that civilians were killing in crossfire, these deaths should be excluded. When a report or article states that an actor fired artillery or rockets into civilian areas, the

coder should attempt to determine if the intended target was the civilian population or a military target located in or near the civilians. If the context suggests the former then the action is coded as category (3). If it is the latter, then the coder should determine whether the actor acted with gross negligence or indifference to the civilian population. This is often difficult to determine and in questionable cases the actor should be given the benefit of the doubt and the deaths should not be included in the actor's score. However, if an actor repeatedly directs attacks toward a civilian area with little apparent consideration for civilian victims, this actor should receive an intermediate score of (2). This is an effort to reflect a pattern of indifferent if not indiscriminant targeting.

Lastly, the *range* variable is intended to capture patterns of targeting. As such, a single act of violence, even indiscriminant violence, does necessarily relegate the actor to a specific score. Therefore, it is useful to establish a minimum threshold for abuse. Specifically, the group's actions must cause at least 25 casualties, with at least 10 deaths. This lower bound is intended to reflect a pattern of violence rather than outlying instances. If an actor does not meet the minimum threshold for a higher category, the casualties may be counted toward a lower category. For example, if a rebel group assassinates 12 rival political activists, executes 10 suspected collaborators, and also ignites a car bomb in front of a police state resulting in the deaths of 10 bystanders, the group should be assigned a score of (2). This reflects that in general the group targeted specific persons. However, if the car bomb had killed 25 persons or the insurgents had detonated several bombs killing and injuring 10 persons, the coder should assign a score of (3) because the pattern of abuse would reflect more indiscriminant attacks.

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