Title

Dissident Networks and Rebel Fragmentation in Civil War

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4wc4934s

Author

Mosinger, Eric Seth

Publication Date

2017

Copyright Information

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
IRVINE

Dissident Networks and Rebel Fragmentation in Civil War

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Political Science

by

Eric Mosinger

Dissertation Committee:
Professor Bernard Grofman, Co-Chair
Associate Professor Diana Kapiszewski, Co-Chair
Associate Professor Marek Kaminski
Professor Stergios Skaperdas
Professor Stathis Kalyvas

2017

DEDICATION

To

Rose and Lucy
for teaching me the narrative power of
"Where Is My Frog?"

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A dissertation is always the product of an individual and of the communities in which he or she is enmeshed. In my case, several communities embraced me, taught me, and sustained me, each in its own way. My dissertation reflects their influences and would not be worth reading without them.

Above all, I owe my deepest gratitude to my wife, Yasmell, my daughters, Rose and Lucy, to Martha, and to Lydia, who opened their hearts, their eyes, their homes, and their kitchens to me. More broadly, I thank the Nicaraguan people, whose decades of struggle have diminished neither their joy nor their generosity. I had the great privilege of meeting dozens of individuals who, when younger than I, turned their backs on comfortable lives and confronted fearsome violence to fight against what had become an intolerable tyranny. They were, and remain, both ordinary and extraordinary people. Many still insist on holding their patria to its Revolution's transformative promises of justice. May they succeed in their missions.

This dissertation is equally the product of my academic community, whose support for me goes far beyond the intellectual. I wish to thank Diana Kapiszewski in particular. She never let me accept anything but my best work, and she taught me how to do it. She has always been there over the years to help me solve the smallest puzzles and biggest conundrums, no matter how distant from her own research. Her dedication to her students did not flag when the profession took her to a new institution, something that became for me an indelible lesson in how to conduct oneself as a mentor and as a human being. I wouldn't have made it near finish line without her.

I'm also grateful to Bernie Grofman, for his way of reading my drafts in hours after I sent them and returning them to me with a series of comments that went right to the core of what I was trying to achieve. A number of propositions in this dissertation that I try to pass off as my own profound insights actually began life as brilliant offhand remarks by Bernie. I am equally indebted to the other member of my committee, who helped me and worked together terrifically. I have turned to Marek Kaminski with so many problems over the years, and he always solved them. Stergios Skaperdas has offered me great counsel and critiques on my work. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Stathis Kalyvas, who takes palpable joy in supporting the work of beginning scholars, and who committed himself to read, think about, and comment on my dissertation without much in the way of guarantee that it would all be worthwhile.

Scholars across the discipline have supported me and deeply influenced me. Lee Seymour and Jesse Driscoll have been generous with their time and energy, have taken me under their wing, and helped me theorize my theories. Anastasia Shesterinina and Sarah Parkinson sat me down (together!) to teach me how to do fieldwork – and Anastasia's friendship over the years has meant a great deal to me. So has Kai Thaler's, both in the field and after. I have received advice and encouragement from Peter Krause, Joe Young, Theodore McLauchlin, Regina Bateson, Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, Henning Tamm, Giovanni Mantilla, Romain Malejacq, and Costantino Pischedda. I have especially enjoyed meeting the terrific set of young conflict scholars through a series of International Studies Association panels the last few years, and have been fortunate to attend the Olympia Summer Academy, where I learned a great deal about studying conflict from

instructors Laia Balcells, Yvan Guichaoua, Jonah Schulhofer-Wolf, Nuno Monteiro, and Stathis Kalyvas.

Graduate school has given me the most wonderful lifelong friendships. My roommates and fellow travelers Robert Nyenhuis, Josh Gellers, and Jason Vick made it possible to get through everything. The times I've spent with Erin Persky, Arturo Jiménez, Daniel Wehrenpfennig, Tanya Schwarz, Heather Wickramarachi, Mark Berlin, John Cuffe, Trevor Allen, Josh Malnight, Alex Raleigh, Rottem Sagi, Katt Hoban, and Tom Le mean more to me than I can say.

Finally but certainly not least, I am grateful for my amazing family. My parents, Jack and Robbie, and my grandma, Shirley, whose support for me, like their love, has been boundless and unconditional; my sister, Adriana, who taught me whatever element of indomitability I possess, and her giant, giant-hearted husband Dave; my many marvelous cousins – Joe, Shana, Marjorie, Greg, Tavin, Tyler, Rachel, Ellie, Ruth, and David – who have always made me feel at home in this world; my nieces and nephews, Mel, Connor, and Cole, who are hilarious and talented.

I also would like to acknowledge the institutional support that I have received. The University of California Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation's (IGCC) Herbert F. York Fellowship made fieldwork possible and allowed me to meet other extraordinary young scholars of conflict such as Sherry Zaks and Timothy Peterka. I have also been supported be two UC Irvine centers: the Center for Citizen Peacebuilding's Kugelman Fellowship, which generously bent its rules a little to support me year in and year out, and the Center for Global Peace and Conflict Studies. I'm also grateful to the editorial team and anonymous reviewers at the Journal of Peace Research, whose feedback, received in the field, improved the subsequent course of my fieldwork. In the field, the staff and students at the Universidad Centroamericana and the Instituto de Historia de Nicaragua y Centroamerica (IHNCA) patiently helped and guided me. My participation in the Olive Tree Initiative, the most worthwhile pedagogical program I've ever encountered, and the extraordinary, passionate, undergraduate peacebuilders that run it, remains a highlight of my graduate experience.

To all these people and institutions and to many others, I give my heartfelt gratitude.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Eric S. Mosinger

Updated: August 2017

Macalester College   (314) 660-9045
Department of Political Science   emosinge@macalester.edu
Carnegie Hall, Room 203
Saint Paul, MN 55105

Research Interests

Civil wars and conflict processes, conflict resolution, rebel organizations, Latin American politics, international democratic regimes, network analysis

Academic Appointments

Macalester College, St. Paul, MN

Visiting Assistant Professor of Latin American and Comparative Politics, 2017-2018

Education

University of California, Irvine, Irvine, CA

Ph.D., Political Science, August 2017

– Dissertation: *Dissident Networks and Rebel Fragmentation in Civil War*

M.A., Political Science, December 2013

Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT

B.A., History and Anthropology (Double Major), June 2007

Publications

"Brothers or Others in Arms: Civilian Constituencies and Rebel Fragmentation in Civil War," *Journal of Peace Research* (OnlineFirst March 10, 2017).

"Crafted by crisis: integration and democracy in South America." In *Regions and Crises*, ed. by Lorenzo Fioramonti. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Work in Progress

"Can't Tear Us Apart: The Causes of Leadership Struggles in Rebel Groups."

"Unity and Fragmentation in Syria's Rebellions."

"Control & Collaboration: Simulating the Logic of Violence in Civil War for Political Science Students."

Awards

Fellowships and Honors

– University of California Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, Herbert F. York Global Security Fellowship	2015-2016
– International Studies Association Junior Scholar Symposium, selected as participant	2015
– UC Irvine Center for Citizen Peacebuilding Kugelman Fellowship	2014
– UC Irvine Center for Global Peace and Conflict Studies Fellowship	2014
– Olympia Summer Academy Scholarship	2014
– UC Irvine Center for Citizen Peacebuilding Kugelman Fellowship	2013
– Best Graduate Student Paper Award, International Studies Association West Annual Conference	2012

– UC Irvine Center for Citizen Peacebuilding Kugelman Fellowship		2012
– National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, Honorable Mention		2011
– UC Irvine Center for Citizen Peacebuilding Kugelman Fellowship		2011

Awards — Teaching
  – UC Irvine Department of Political Science Teaching Commendation
    (awarded on a quarterly basis to teaching assistants with student evaluations in the top
    20% of all political science teaching assistants)
                                 Winter 2015, Fall and Spring 2014, Winter 2012

Conference Presentations

"Under the Umbrella: Renegotiating Rebel Fragmentation in Central America,"
  International Studies Association Annual Conference, Baltimore, Maryland,
  February 22-25.

"Can't Tear us Apart: The Fragmentation of the *Frente Sandinista de Liberaci´on Nacional*,"
  International Studies Association Annual Conference, Baltimore, Maryland, February 22-
  25.

"Can't Tear us Apart: The Fragmentation of the *Frente Sandinista de Liberaci´on Nacional*,"
  Herb York Global Security Fellows Symposium, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory,
  Livermore, California, June 9-10, 2016.

"It Was Time to Take a Side: How Fighters Sort into Rebel Splinter Factions," International
  Studies Association Annual Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, March 16-19, 2016.

"Brothers or Others in Arms: Civilian Constituencies and Rebel Fragmentation in Civil War,"
  Political Networks (POLNET) Conference, Portland, Oregon, June 17-20, 2015.

"Brothers or Others in Arms: Civilian Constituencies and Rebel Fragmentation in Civil War,"
  International Studies Association Annual Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana, February
  18-21, 2015.

"Rebel Unity and Division in Civil War," International Studies Association West Annual
  Conference, Pasadena, California, September 26-27, 2014.

"Rebel Unity and Division in Civil War," Midwestern Political Science Association Annual
  Conference, Chicago, Illinois, April 2-5, 2014.

"The Collective Defense of Democracy from Caracas to Cairo," International Studies
  Association Annual Conference, San Francisco, California, April 3-6, 2013.

"Explaining Paramilitarization in Civil War," International Studies Association West Annual
  Conference, Pasadena, California, October 19-20, 2012.

"Explaining Paramilitarization in Civil War," International Studies Association Annual
  Conference, San Diego, California, April 1-4, 2012.

"The Collective Defense of Democracy from Caracas to Cairo," International Studies Association
  West Annual Conference, Pasadena, California, October 19-20, 2012.

"Crafted by Crisis: Integration and Democracy in South America," Pacific Coast Council of
  Latin American Studies, Los Angeles, California, October 28-29, 2011.

"Crafted by Crisis: Integration and Democracy in South America," International Studies
  Association West Annual Conference, Pasadena, California, September 23-24, 2011.

"Pacted Integration: UNASUR and the Politics of Presidential Authority," International
  Studies Association Annual Convention, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, March 16-19, 2011.

| Additional Training | Olympia Summer Academy (OSA), Olympia, Greece | Summer 2014 |
| | Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research (IQMR), Syracuse, New York | Summer 2010 |

Teaching Experience   Courses Prepared for Macalester College

- Foundations of Comparative Politics, Fall 2017, Spring 2018
- Revolution and Counterrevolution in Latin America, Fall 2017
- Latin American Politics, Spring 2018
- Civil War and its Aftermath, Spring 2018

Teaching Assistant at UC Irvine

- Introduction to International Relations, Spring 2012, Fall 2014, Winter 2015
- Introduction to American Government, Winter 2012, Fall 2013, Spring 2014
- Voting and Manipulation, Spring 2013
- Introduction to Anthropology, Winter 2011, Fall 2011

Professional Activity and Service   Professional Associations

- Member of the International Studies Association (ISA)
- Member of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA)
- Member of Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA)
- Member of American Political Science Association (APSA)
- Member of APSA Qualitative and Multi-Method Research (QMMR) Section

Service to the Department of Political Science at UC Irvine

- Graduate Student Instructor, Olive Tree Initiative (OTI), an NGO dedicated to promoting person to person peacebuilding initiatives in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict
- Political Science Department Faculty Liaison, Fall 2012 - Spring 2014

Languages   Spanish (fluent), German (intermediate), Italian (conversational)

References   Bernie Grofman (dissertation committee co-chair)

| Professor of Political Science | Phone: (949) 824-2904 |
| Jack W. Peltason Endowed Chair | E-mail: bgtravel@uci.edu |

Former Director of the Center for the Study of Democracy
University of California, Irvine
3151 Social Science Plaza
Irvine CA 92697-5100

Diana Kapiszewski (dissertation committee co-chair)

| Associate Professor | Phone: (202) 687-6221 |
| Department of Government | E-mail: dk784@georgetown.edu |

Georgetown University
Intercultural Center (ICC) 672
37th and O Streets, N.W., Washington D.C. 20057

Stathis Kalyvas (dissertation committee member)
Arnold Wolfers Professor   Phone: (203) 772-4273
Department of Political Science   E-mail: stathis.kalyvas@yale.edu
Yale University
P.O. Box 208301
New Haven, CT 06520-8301

Marek Kaminski (dissertation committee member)
Associate Professor   Phone: (949) 824-2744
Department of Political Science   E-mail: marekam@gmail.com
University of California, Irvine
3151 Social Science Plaza Irvine
CA 92697-5100

Stergios Skaperdas (dissertation committee member)
Professor   Phone: (949) 824-4167
Department of Economics   E-mail: sskaperd@uci.edu
University of California, Irvine
3151 Social Science Plaza
Irvine CA 92697-5100

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Dissident Networks and Rebel Fragmentation in Civil War

By

Eric Mosinger

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, Irvine, 2017

Professor Bernard Grofman, Co-Chair
Associate Professor Diana Kapiszewski, Co-Chair

Why do united rebel fronts emerge in some civil wars, while in other civil wars multiple rebel groups mobilize independently to challenge the state, and often, each other? Scholars have confirmed that, compared with conflicts between a government and a single rebel group, fragmented rebellions last longer, are much more violent, and are more likely to recur after a settlement has been reached. Given the deadly nature of rebel fragmentation, it is critical that we understand it.

Following recent advances in scholarship on violent mobilization processes by, *inter alia*, Parkinson (2013), Sarbahi (2014), and Cederman, et al. (2013), I have built a diffusion model of rebel fragmentation in which participation in rebellion spreads, completely or incompletely, through networks of civilians and dissidents. Using this theoretical framework I hypothesize that two factors jointly determine whether a rebel movement remains unified or fragments. Rising civilian grievances mobilize heterogeneous dissident networks, tearing rebel movements apart, while cross-cutting broad social networks can bind rebel movements back together by gathering distinct

rebel groups under umbrellas. In short, rebel fragmentation reflects the rebellion's civilian constituency.

My dissertation employs a mixed-methods research design. I first support my theoretical arguments with large-n statistical analysis of rebel fragmentation in 186 internal conflicts from 1946 to 2005. I trace causal mechanisms with an analysis of an original network dataset covering the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) and three splinter groups, gathered through interview and archival research during nine months of fieldwork in Nicaragua. I also illustrate the argument's application to two cases in Syria, by comparing data gathered from local and international media on early rebel mobilization in the current, radically fragmented Syrian civil war with recently declassified insider accounts of the largely unified 1979-1982 Muslim Brotherhood uprising.

1. INTRODUCTION

The civilian costs of rebel movement fragmentation

What explains why some rebel movements are united in a single coherent organization, while others are fragmented into multiple, potentially fratricidal organizations? Existing research focuses on why individual rebel groups fragment, that is, divide into two or more splinter groups (Christia 2012; Kenny 2010; Staniland 2014; Tamm 2016). Equally developed accounts of why rebel movements as a whole tend towards unity or fragmentation, at conflict onset and over time, have not yet emerged.[1]

While scholars have not yet crafted a coherent account of rebel movement fragmentation, its importance to human security is clear. No city on earth better exemplifies the grave threat that rebel movement fragmentation poses to civilians than Raqqa, in northeastern Syria. In March 2013, Raqqa became the first of Syria's provincial capitals to fall to rebel forces, when a coalition

---

[1] For partial exceptions, see Seymour, Bakke, and Cunningham (2015), who test several hypotheses for plausibility; McLauchlin and Pearlman (2012a), who offer a nuanced look at the role of state repression (though not specifically on *rebel* movements); Mosinger (2017), based on research for this dissertation; and Gates (2002) and Weinstein (2007), who offer preliminary theories of rebel movement fragmentation as appanages of more general theories of rebel mobilization.

composed of the moderate Free Syrian Army (FSA), the salafist Jabhat al-Nusra, and the as yet little-known Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) took the city. Civilians in Raqqa responded to the rebel conquest with "jubilation in the central square, where residents pulled down a statue of former Syrian President Hafez al-Assad" (Syria crisis 2013). Western journalists who descended on Raqqa reported a flowering of civil society (Lessons from Raqqa 2013), along with a "euphoria and optimism at the future" so great that Raqqa became known as the "icon of the revolution" (How Did Raqqa Fall to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria? 2014). Democratic anti-regime activists quickly assumed the administration of the liberated city, and in the months following its liberation, "any militia that dared assault the activist groups had to face massive demonstrations and sit ins until they they relented" (*ibid*). Yet dark clouds followed even this initial burst of jubilation. Videos that surfaced in the days after Raqqa's fall showed the results of the first of many purges: "dead government soldiers and security officials lying on the ground, their heads bearing gunshot wounds" (Hubbard 2013).

Raqqa (as of this writing) has never fallen back into the regime's hands. Nonetheless, Raqqa's war did not end with its liberation. Within two months, conflict for control of Raqqa broke out among its liberators. The Jabhat al-Nusra and ISIL mounted a campaign of intimidation, kidnappings, car bombings, and executions of FSA leaders, militants, and its civilian supporters, leading FSA leaders to complain bitterly: "After Assad falls, there will be a second revolution, against Jabhat al-Nusra,' said Amar Abu Yasser, a battalion leader with the [FSA's] Farouq Brigade" (Spencer and Rose 2013). In the mounting chaos, for a few days Raqqa even came under the control of a fourth rebel group, the powerful salafi-nationalist organization Ahrar al-Sham (al-

Hakkar 2013).[2] After ISIL executed "three citizens at the Clock Square in the city center on May 14 for 'spying for the regime'... the secular peaceful protest movement began to gradually wither, at least in the public sphere. Though activists called for peaceful protests to reject violence, their efforts did not pan out, especially as many activists were arrested" (*ibid*). Meanwhile, the two Islamist groups' assassination campaign against the FSA culminated in pitched battles, and by mid-September 2013, the FSA had been driven from the city (*ibid*).

After the expulsion of FSA forces, ISIL began a second purge against the pro-democracy activists who had initially administered Raqqa. As spies and informants spread throughout the city, ISIL began kidnapping, arresting, and otherwise disappearing hundreds of dissenters (Whewell 2013), as well as "regularly executed by firing line unidentified people they claimed were 'infidel Nusairis' [Alawites] in the Naim Roundabout, with large crowds present" (al-Hakkar 2013). Activists and Armenian Christians, whose churches were burned to the ground, fled the city, blending into the swelling tide of refugees (Kajjo 2014). Meanwhile, the FSA's absence did not end internecine rebel fighting; by November 2013, tension between ISIL and Jabhat al-Nusra had "mounted to such an extent that it now threatens to erupt into a full-blown war at any moment between the two al-Qaeda affiliates" (al-Hakkar 2013). In January 2014, Jabhat al-Nusra and Ahrar al-Sham ousted ISIL from Raqqa,[3] while the Tawheed Brigades, an Ahrar al-Sham ally, fanned out in trucks to purge the city of ISIL remnants (Barnard and Gladstone 2014). However, the moderate salafists' hegemony over the city was brief: by May, ISIL had re-entrenched itself, and, in order to purge the surrounding countryside of potentially disloyal civilians, "released a warning to residents of some border villages in the northeastern province of Raqqa, ordering them to vacate

---

[2] Ahrar al-Sham was then allied with the Jabhat al-Nusra, and is currently allied with the FSA against Jabhat al-Nusra (which has a new name, to contribute to the confusion).
[3] Both are salafist groups like ISIL, though far more moderate.

their homes or stay and face severe consequences. Dozens of Kurdish families had no choice but to flee and leave everything behind" (Kajjo 2014).

Over the next three years, Raqqa would become known as "the capital of ISIS" (Inside Raqqa, the Capital of ISIS 2015), governed under an extremist version of sharia law, with an atmosphere like a "giant prison" for the civilians inside (Beirut 2015). Among the civilian populace, anti-ISIL activism has continued in secrecy - for example, the citizen-journalist group Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RIBSS, http://www.raqqa-sl.com/en/) has smuggled out images of ISIL abuses at great risk to its members' lives. Meanwhile, by some reports, civilians rose in revolt against the rebel group in 2016, seizing control of five neighborhoods before being suppressed (Fadel 2016). However, given the chaos and back-and-forth purges of the first year after Raqqa's liberation, other civilians have welcomed the stability of ISIL's governance. One resident told the New York Times that, "I feel like I am dealing with a respected state, not thugs," while a businessman who had moved to Raqqa in pursuit of "a degree of order and stability absent in other parts of Syria" explained that, "The fighting in Syria will continue, so we have to live our lives" (Times and Hubbard 2014).

ISIL's "order and stability" has not survived to the present day. As I write these words in July 2017, a US-backed Kurdish rebel group, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), operating alongside FSA units and US military advisers, has placed Raqqa under a months-long siege (or "tightening the noose" (Associated Press 2017)). An "estimated 300,000 people are trapped inside the city" which held over one million when it was first liberated four years ago, who are "living in terrifying uncertainty over their safety" (The New Arab 2017). As the SDF cordoned off Raqqa, capturing village after village in the surrounding countryside (Said and Al-Khalidi 2017),

People from Raqqa [fled] their city under cover of night... running a gauntlet of minefields and hostile fighters instead of risking death in a major battle expected to begin soon. Islamic State has used threats and coercion to stop people leaving, forcibly returning some to the city in an apparent effort to use them as human shields against the looming assault by the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces.

Photographs being posted on Twitter show thousands upon thousands of civilians fleeing Raqqa, being "rescued" by SDF and FSA forces (Mamosta 2017). Inevitably, after liberating the city once more, the new rebel masters of Raqqa will purge the city not only of ISIL but also its willing and unwilling civilian collaborators, though one hopes this purge will not be as brutal as ISIL's were.

Raqqa's experience is exemplary, but hardly unique. Al-Rai and Azaz, strategically vital towns on the Turkish border, have "changed hands between Isis and the FSA several times" (Dearden 2016); Maaloula, an ancient Aramaic Christian town just north of Damascus "has changed hands several times in the war" (Isachenkov 2016); Handarat, a Palestinian refugee camp, "has changed hands several times in the past week" (Toumaj 2016); Qabasin "has changed hands between the warring parties four times in the past four days, devastating much of the town and leaving many civilians caught in permanent crossfire" (Tomson 2016b), a few days later it had "changed sides six times in just one week" (Tomson 2016a); neighborhoods and individual city blocks in Aleppo have "changed hands dozens of times over the past four years of conflict" (Carrié and Kotan 2016); similarly, in Deiz Ezzour, "during the IS' advance through the surrounding towns along the Euphrates, towns changed hands between the opposing forces on an almost daily basis (Syria Countrywide Conflict Report 2014, 35). In Deir Ezzour as in many other cases, ISIL was responsible for internal displacements and frightful violence against civilians after seizing

territory from other rebel groups: "As for the 'revolution' activists, some declared their repentance and remained in the city under surveillance, while others preferred to depart, fearing arrest or execution" (al Abd 2014); in Al-Shaetat, hundreds of tribesmen were executed by ISIL after they routed other rebels (Syria Countrywide Conflict Report 2014, 7); while fighting between ISIL and other rebel groups in northern Syria displaced 30,000 civilians in April 2016 (30,000 flee clashes between jihadists, rebels in Syria 2016). ISIL has no monopoly on human rights atrocities. As one example among many, the 16th Division, a Free Syrian Army group that "is backed by the U.S., and is part of a coalition that is fighting other U.S.-backed rebels" was accused of kidnapping Kurdish civilians by Amnesty International (Norton 2016).

The narrative above, of Raqqa and Syria as a whole, highlights one of the most important dynamics of rebel fragmentation: how it traps civilians in a web of front-lines between rival armed actors. As these multiple front-lines shift over civilian population centers with battlefield gains and losses, rebel groups attempt to consolidate their control by purging their opponents' supporters (Kalyvas 2006), amplifying the production of selective violence. Meanwhile, rebel groups such as ISIL have adopted the technique of deploying indiscriminate violence in their rivals' territory, convincing civilian populations that other rebel groups cannot protect them. As rebel groups conquer territory from one another, they stir up waves of new internally displaced persons and refugees, often by expelling populations who, by their ascriptive identities, are unlikely to support them (Alawis, Christians, Kurds).

Theorizing rebel movement fragmentation

Fragmented rebel movements are common and deadly. Over a quarter of all civil wars between 1945 and 2013 in the NSA Dyadic dataset (D. E. Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009) hosted multiple rebel groups fighting the state, and on average these civil wars killed more

civilians (K. G. Cunningham, Bakke, and Seymour 2012, 69), lasted longer (D. E. Cunningham 2006, 877), and were more likely to recur than civil wars fought by a single rebel group (Atlas and Licklider 1999; Stedman 1997, 5).

Rebel movement fragmentation bears an enormous human cost, and has contributed to several of the most important trends in world politics today: the international diffusion and increasing average length of internal conflicts, the global refugee crisis, and even the rise of xenophobic politics in Western polities. Accordingly, the phenomenon has received growing academic attention. Over the past several years conflict scholars have put aside simplifying assumptions that civil wars are fought between a state and a single, coherent rebel group, and have studied the dynamics of fragmented rebel movements. Pioneering studies have contibuted to knowledge about inter-rebel rivalries (Fjelde and Nilsson 2012) and inter-rebel alliance politics (Akcinaroglu 2012; Christia 2012), civilian victimization (Wood and Kathman 2015), side-switching (Seymour 2014), and other important outcomes of rebel movement fragmentation.

Despite this progress, few scholars have attempted to explain the underlying phenomenon, rebel movement fragmentation, itself. A number of studies have developed explanations of rebel *group* fragmentation: see, *inter alia*, Christia (2012), Staniland (2014), and Tamm (2016). Yet there is no *ex ante* reason to assume that the causes of splits in individual rebel organizations are the same as those that cause rebel movements as a whole to be fragmented - especially given that most second-moving rebel groups are not splinter groups at all, but rather mobilized independently from already existing rebel groups.[4] I am aware of only two cross-

---

[4] See Chapters 2 and 3. By point of comparison, explaining why political parties divide in two is not the same as explaining why a party *system* tends toward fragmentation, though explanations of the different levels of analysis may be congruent.

national studies, Seymour, Bakke, and Cunningham (2015) and Mosinger (2017)[5] that test explanations for fragmentation at the rebel movement level of analysis.

In this dissertation, I fill this lacuna by developing a systematic theory of rebel movement fragmentation. I then test my theory through cross-national statistical analysis (Chapter 3), as well as cross-case and within-case analysis of several rebel movements in Nicaragua (Chapters 4 through 6) and Syria (Chapter 7). To summarize my *civilian constituency theory* briefly, I hypothesize that rebel movements fragment when their civilian constituency, which rebels rely on for resources and recruitment, is large and diverse enough to support multiple rebel organizations. In this model, civilian constituencies are something like a market: like markets, they may be large or small, and thus able to support many or few rebel groups (or firms, in the market analogy).

This general model suggests two hypotheses for when rebel movements fragment. First, the *rebels' organizational type* matters. When rebel groups are predatory or otherwise unable to invest in building durable ties to civilian networks, they may fail to incorporate potential civilian support - that is, they are unable to "corner the market" on anti-regime civilian loyalties. In contrast, I hypothesize that rebel groups which consciously seek civilian support - which I term *stationary* groups, as opposed to predatory *roving* groups - are more likely to build unified rebel movements. Even when a market is very large, a well-run firm that offers a superior product may capture a large market share, or even a monopoly.

Second, and as already alluded to, I propose that "cornering the market" on civilian support is more challenging when that market is very large. Hence, rising *anti-regime civilian grievances*, which turn civilians into dissidents and dissidents into rebels, may allow multiple rebel groups to mobilize and thrive, fragmenting the movement. However, the role of rising civilian

_____

[5] This article was largely based on the research conducted for this dissertation's Chapter 3.

grievances in promoting rebel movement fragmentation is not necessarily linear: at very high levels, grievances may spur broad civilian networks to participate in rebellion, which may help and even force distinct rebel organizations to join together under umbrella organizations, unifying the movement as a whole.[6] Thus it is at *moderate levels of civilian grievances* where rebel movements should be most fragmented: a "fragmented middle."

Methodology

In order to test the civilian constituency theory and other possible causes of rebel movement fragmentation, I employ a mixed-methods research design based on Lieberman's (2005) nested analysis. Thus, I use my initial large-*n* research for qualitative case selection in order to maximize the generalizability of the small-*n* cross-case and within-case analysis. This research design allows me to coherently incorporate a diverse array of methods, including cross-national regression analysis of UCDP data (with hand-coded additions), formal network analysis of a unique, custom-built dataset of *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* (FSLN) commanders, as well as qualitative cross-case comparison and within-case process tracing based on archival and interview research conducted during extensive fieldwork in Nicaragua.

Structure of dissertation

This dissertation proceeds as follows. In Chapter 2, I review the extant literature on the causes of rebel movement fragmentation. Because scant previous research has treated rebel movements as a whole, I "cast the net widely for alternate explanations" (Bennett and Checkel 2015, 18) that may be adapted from related domains or different levels of analysis (e.g. rebel group

---

[6] With this hypothesis, the market analogy breaks down.

fragmentation). I divide existing approaches into three categories: structural explanations, social-organizational explanations, and explanations focused on state-rebel and intra-rebel interactions. I then identify two overarching problems within the extant literature on rebel movement fragmentation: conceptual and definitional disagreements for rebel fragmentation that prevent scholars from developing a common body of knowledge, and a pervasive assumption that rebel mobilization is a linear process. Following this, I argue that scholars do not adequately examine how processes at the rebel group-level of analysis aggregate to the rebel movement-level of analysis.

I then present my own theory of rebel movement fragmentation, the civilian constituency, which I outlined above. I present my main independent variables: *rebel organizational type* and *civilian grievances* and show how each affects rebel mobilization of a potential civilian constituency, and ultimately, determines a rebel movement's level of fragmentation. I conclude the chapter with a summary of mechanisms that are outside the scope of the civilian constituency theory (for example, when proxy rebel groups are directly mobilized by an external state), and a discussion of civilian grievances in this dissertation and the broader literature on conflict processes.

In Chapter 3 I begin the empirical analysis with a large-*n* cross-national study of of rebel movement fragmentation from 1945-2005 largely adapted from Mosinger (2017). I describe my data, which I take from the UCDP Dyadic dataset (Pettersson and Wallensteen 2015), the Non-State Actor dataset (D. E. Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009), the Ethnic Power Relations dataset (Vogt et al. 2015), and includes substantial hand-coding of rebel troop counts. I operationalize my dependent variable (*rebel fragmentation*) with an innovative index adapted from the study of party system fragmentation, and develop proxies for my two main independent

variables, *rebel type* and *civilian grievances*. Through a series of quassipoisson regressions, I demonstrate strong support for the civilian constituency theory's main hypotheses. Following this, I use the regression results to select cases for qualitative comparative and within-case analysis based on Lieberman's (2005) procedures. This leads me to select cases from the 1961 to 1979 Nicaraguan rebel movement (an on-lier) and two matched Syrian cases: the 1976-1982 Islamist rebellion and the 2011-present Arab Spring rebellion.

Chapters 4 through 6 present the results of a qualitative case study of the anti-Somocista rebel movement in Nicaragua from 1961 to 1979, when the FSLN overthrew Anastasio Somoza Debayle's dynastic dictatorship. The rebel movement passed through three time periods, my cases: it was initially small but unified around the vanguard FSLN (1961 to 1974), the FSLN then divided into three bickering splinter groups (1975 to 1978), only to reunify in an umbrella group (1979). Chapter 4 introduces these cases and the qualitative research design. I first discuss my data collection techniques: archival and interview research conducted during extensive fieldwork. I then discuss how I combined these data sources in a unique network dataset of FSLN commanders, showing in intricate detail how the group's civilian constituency evolved over time, and how I drew on these diverse sources and types of data to process trace fragmentation and unity in the anti-Somocista rebel movement. Following this, I operationalize and score *rebel type* and *civilian grievances* for the Nicaraguan cases, providing a starting point for the within-case process tracing in the following two chapters.

Chapter 5, the qualitative empirical core of the dissertation, examines the causes of rebel movement fragmentation. It process traces the role of civilian grievances in spurring four leadership disputes, and through them two organizational splinters, within the FSLN in the mid-1970s. I show how rising grievances transformed civilian networks into dissident networks,

engaged in anti-regime political activities, and how the FSLN sought out and incorporated these dissident networks. Once incorporated, dissident networks became *canteras*, or quarries: sources of FSLN recruits. As grievances continued to rise, new recruits flooded into the rebel group, transforming its social composition as well as the underlying balance of power between old and new FSLN leaders. As incumbent leaders weakened, new leaders, drawing support from incoming student movement and radical Christian recruits, challenged them for overall leadership of the organization. Where the challengers were stronger, they overthrew the incumbents in an internal coup, but where they were evenly matched, the organization itself split apart. By 1975, the anti-Somocista rebel movement had fragmented into three groups.

Chapter 6 examines the causes of rebel movement unity under two different values of the key independent variable: low and high civilian grievances. I show how during the FSLN's first decade, low grievances limited recruitment, preventing the FSLN's growth but helping to maintain its small, homogeneous vanguard core, with Carlos Fonseca as its consensus leader. Meanwhile, other rebel groups which attempted to mobilize independently during this period found themselves unable to expand, as the FSLN had already "cornered the market" on the potential civilian constituency. Such independent groups remained marginal, assuring that the rebel movement as a whole would remain unified. The second case in this chapter examines the reunification of the anti-Somocista rebel movement in 1978 and 1979, when rising anti-regime grievances exploded into mass insurrection. I show how the participation of broad civilian networks eroded organizational boundaries between the three FSLN splinter groups. With all three groups coordinating within the same networks of civilian collaborators, mid-level commanders began cooperating in operations and pressuring their superiors for a formal reunification. In 1979, the FSLN created an umbrella group shortly prior to defeating the Somoza regime.

Chapter 7 conducts a cross-case comparison of two Syrian rebel movements: the largely unified 1976-1982 Islamist rebellion and the 2011-present Arab Spring rebellion, almost certainly the most fragmented rebel movement in modern history. These two rebel movements were based among the same sector of the population - Sunni Muslims - raising the puzzle of their divergent outcomes. I show that during the 1976-1982 rebellion, intense sectarian grievances mobilized a broad civilian network, the Muslim Brotherhood, to participate in the rebellion, consolidating the rebels under an umbrella group. After the Islamist rebellion's failure, the al-Assad regime pursued social fragmentation as a policy of control: it banned the Muslim Brotherhood and dismantled, or coopted, not only opposition networks but civilian networks more generally. When the Arab Spring reached Syria, the intense sectarian grievances that had led to an umbrella group in 1979 instead sparked the mobilization of hundreds of distinct rebel groups due to 2011's atomized civilian constituency.

Finally, in the Conclusion I discuss the theoretical contributions and policy ramifications of my findings. I also highlight limitations in the dissertation's scope and empirics that may affect generalizability. I conclude by discussing how my dissertation contributes to bodies of knowledge about social movements, the relationship between rebel groups' organizational structure and behavior, civil war's low-information context, and network analysis.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Note: Significant portions of this chapter have been previously published in Mosinger (2017). Specifically, the above article contained most of *Section 2.4: Explaining rebel fragmentation: Civilian constituency theory*, though I expand on this material here in the dissertation.

Introduction

This study seeks to explain the level of rebel movement fragmentation in civil war, and to identify the mechanisms by which the level of rebel fragmentation changes over time. At present, scholars recognize rebel fragmentation as an important phenomenon, with serious repercussions for human security. Nonetheless, existing accounts are primarily concerned with why individual rebel groups fragment (that is, splinter), or suffer from poor internal discipline. While these phenomena are important, they make a comparatively minor contribution to overall levels of rebel movement fragmentation. Meanwhile, it is fragmentation at the movement level of analysis that is associated with important outcomes for human security: longer wars, recurring wars, and more violent wars. Thus, a comprehensive account of *rebel movement* fragmentation is necessary.

In order to construct such an account, I first review the literature on the causes of rebel fragmentation in both individual groups and (though scantly represented) in rebel movements as a whole. Then I develop a thorough conceptualization of the dependent variable, synthesizing approaches treating rebel fragmentation as a state and rebel fragmentation as a process. Finally, I present my civilian constituency theory of rebel fragmentation: simply put, rebel movements

fragment when an early-moving rebel group is unable to monopolize potential civilian support. When this occurs, violent entrepreneurs may draw on untapped civilian support to mobilize independent or splinter rebel groups. A rebel group's ability to monopolize civilian support is determined by its organizational *type*, while the potential level of civilian support is determined by *civilian grievances*, my two main independent variables.

Terms and concepts

I define a rebel movement as one or more active rebel organizations (or, interchangeably, *rebel groups*) "mobilized around a collective identity in pursuit of particular interests related to this identity in a fundamental way" (Bakke, Cunningham, and Seymour 2012, 266). This definition does not imply institutions held in common by rebel groups, but rather identities. If rebel groups share a collective identity around which their activities are organized, I consider them to be members of the same rebel movement.[7] Rebel groups within the rebel movement are distinct from each other if they possess no common hierarchical superior.[8] Rebel movements emerge when at least one rebel group mobilizes (which I code as occurring with 25 battle-deaths in a year), and continue as long as that battle-death threshold is met.[9]

---

[7] Of course, collective identities are always contested and never perfectly overlap. This necessitates judgment on the part of the researcher, and in order to align my definitions of rebel movement and of conflict, I seek out the collective identity associated with the master cleavage within any given conflict. Syria provides a difficult test of this heuristic, as rebel groups subscribe to collective identities that differ drastically in terms of secularism, Islamism, nationalism, and ethnicity. Nonetheless, currently the master cleavage should be viewed as that between the government and anti-Assadism, with other collective identities being at least in part endogenous to rebel mobilization. Thus, despite disparate group identities, Syrian rebel groups belong to a single anti-Assadist rebel movement. It should also be noted that Syria is a limit case due to the extreme organizational and ideological fragmentation of its rebel movement; the boundaries around most rebel movements are much clearer and easier to adjudicate.
[8] Whether this is the case is sometimes unclear, fuzzy, or variable, as Cunningham, et al. point out.
[9] Movements can be inactive for several years and remain the same movement. As a matter of convention I only code a new movement if ten years pass without the battle-death threshold being met.

A rebel movement is coterminous with the conflict in which it fights. That is, every civil war or internal conflict has exactly one rebel movement, and no more.[10] Following typical usage in the literature, I define a conflict not by country-year but by the central incompatibility between the government and a rebel movement, with the central incompatibility focused on the rebel movement's collective identity. Thus, two different regional secessionist insurgencies within the same state are coded as two separate rebel movements and two separate conflicts, rather than as a single fragmented conflict, because they are fighting over two *different* incompatibilities. For example, there are autonomy movements in both Papua New Guinea and Aceh in Indonesia. Though these are in the same country and concurrent, they are coded as two separate rebel movements and conflicts, because they seek autonomy for different, non-overlapping territories.[11]

What is a fragmented rebel movement? I define rebel fragmentation as the degree to which a rebel movement is internally divided into organizationally distinct rebel groups. However, this definition leaves unclear how one is to conceptualize and measure the "degree" of fragmentation. To that end, I adopt the concept developed by Bakke, Cunningham, and Seymour (2012, 266), hereafter referred to as BCS, in which rebel fragmentation is measured along "three dimensions along which movements fragment or cohere: (1) the number of organizations in a movement; (2) the degree of institutionalization across these organizations; and (3) the distribution of power among them" (266). I discuss this conceptualization more extensively throughout this chapter and throughout the dissertation.

---

[10] As a result, I often use the terms civil war or conflict in this dissertation as a shorthand for the unit of analysis (i.e., "fragmented civil war" in lieu of "fragmented rebel movement").

[11] This is an analytical distinction, but of course, in many cases there may exist considerable interdependence between separate rebel movements, both within and beyond borders.

It is also important to note that for my purposes, rebel groups may be of at least five main types: independent groups, splinter groups, merger groups, umbrella groups, and proxy groups. I consider a rebel group independent if its early core personnel did not come from a preexisting rebel group. For example, in Colombia the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) was formed in 1964 by members of the Colombian Communist Party in alliance with autonomous peasant republics established during *La Violencia*, and the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN) was formed shortly thereafter by Marxist students who trained in Cuba. Though ideologically similar, their personnel did not overlap, and thus the ELN is considered to be an *independent rebel group*. A *splinter group*, by contrast, emerges when a once nominally united group splits into two or more separate groups, often due to disagreements over strategy or internal leadership struggles. This also occurred in Colombia in 1996, when the *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo* (ERP) broke off from the EPL after an internal dispute. Both independent groups and splinter groups are ideal types; often emerging rebel groups in multi-party civil wars combine new and old leadership elements. Whether independent groups and splinter groups have similar or different causes is an empirical question that my dissertation seeks to address. A *merger group* consists of two or more previously active rebel groups which join together, eliminating separate hierarchies and therefore separate institutional identities. By contrast, an *umbrella group* consists of two or more previously active rebel groups which join together, retaining separate hierarchies that are nominally under a single coordinated command. Finally, a *proxy group* is a rebel group that is formed as the direct result of policy by an external state intervener.[12]

---

[12] Many groups commonly labeled proxy groups (such as the contra groups in 1980s Nicaragua) should be more accurately labeled independent groups. Virtually all rebel groups rely on external support at some time; the operational question is whether the main impetus for group creation came from an external power. As with all of these categories,

In referring to the mobilization of rebel groups, I adopt Charles Tilly's (1978) definition, itself adapted from Etzioni (1968), in which mobilization is "the extent of resources under the collective control of the contender; as a process, an increase in the resources or in the degree of collective control" (54). In this dissertation, group mobilization is largely understood as a process.[13] In armed conflict, relevant resources primarily consist in arms and fighters, and I use "mobilization" to signify the formation of an armed group through the collection of some minimum quantity of arms and fighters necessary to sustain conflict with the state.[14] Erstwhile rebel leaders mobilize, or found, rebel groups. While I often use impersonal language in this dissertation such as "the FARC mobilized in 1965," this should be taken to signify a process in which rebel leaders found a rebel group by gathering arms and fighters. Following social movement scholars, I understand civilian mobilization to be "a process of increasing the readiness to act collectively by building the loyalty of a constituency to an organization or group of leaders" (Gamson 1975, 54); crucially, I modify this by adding that civilian loyalty may be to a rebel movement rather than to a specific rebel organization or group of leaders.[15] Unlike rebel groups, whose mobilization requires purposive action by leaders, civilians may be mobilized by grievances, fears, rational calculations, as well as purposive actions by individuals and groups.

---

they are ideal types – a group may be some arguable mix of independent and proxy. Following my coding rubric, I only identified six unequivocal examples of proxy groups in my sample, and do not address these groups further in this dissertation.

[13] I frequently use the term "level of mobilization" to refer to the extent to which civilians are ready to act collectively for the rebel movement, a usage rooted in both Tilly's and Gamson's definitions of mobilization.

[14] Because this is difficult to observe in large-n settings, I use evidence that such a conflict is taking place (the observation of 25 battle-deaths) to proxy mobilization in quantitative research.

[15] Similarly, Meyer (2006) highlights the activation of loyalty, or mobilization as "[inducing] people to undertake activity directed to achieving some kind of outcome" (47).

Following social network theory, I use the word tie to refer to a relationship between two individuals or groups, and follow Granovetter's (1973, 1361) intuitive definition of tie "strength": "the strength of a tie is a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie." For stylistic reasons (that is, to avoid repetition), I interchangeably refer to ties as links or linkages. A network is a collection of such ties and the individuals and groups connected by them.[16]

Review of the literature: causes of rebel fragmentation

Despite growing attention in recent years, political scientists have generated many hypotheses but few full-blown theories of rebel movement fragmentation. Early efforts often inductively generated hypotheses without subsequently subjecting them to hypothesis testing. The terrain has not become much clearer in the five years since Bakke, Cunningham, and Seymour's (2012) important article rigorously conceptualizing rebel fragmentation, which helped stoke a flurry of research activity and a minor conflict processes subfield. Of that article's 109 citations on Google Scholar, only two treat rebel fragmentation as a dependent, rather than independent variable: its authors' own exploratory follow-up (Seymour, Bakke, and Cunningham 2015), and an article by this author based on research conducted for Chapter 3 (Mosinger 2017).[17] Given this lack of a clear starting point, it is necessary to cast a wide net in this literature review. I survey hypotheses that have been proposed but not adequately tested, and, seeking insights from explanations at a different level of analysis, I consider research directed at explaining why individual rebel groups fragment.

---

[16] In social network parlance, these are known as "edges" (ties) and "nodes" (individuals and groups).
[17] Some citing articles, such as Tamm (2016) treat group splintering, one component of rebel fragmentation. Lee Seymour told me he's surprised that a more comprehensive explanation for rebel fragmentation hasn't yet been proposed.

I identify three divergent approaches in the literature. First, some scholars have proposed that structural features of states and societies may explain rebel fragmentation and unity. Second, other authors focus on the role played by microlevel social and organizational factors (such as fighter recruitment and social networks) in fostering collective action during rebellion. Finally, scholars particularly focused on changes in rebel fragmentation over time have emphasized interactions among rebel groups and the state. The most promising directions synthesize or connect these different levels of analysis.

Structural features of states and societies

Initially, scholars proposed hypotheses to explain rebel fragmentation similar to common correlates of conflict onset previously advanced in several prominent econometric studies, in particular those by Collier and Hoeffler (1998, 2004) and Fearon and Laitin (2003). Despite their waning influence, cross-national regressions of conflict onset have set the tone of the academic study of war for the past decade. Collier and Hoeffler argue that greed motivates rebel groups, rather than deeply-held grievances, and thus profit-seeking rebels mobilize wherever start-up costs are low – that is, where the state is too weak to quickly annihilate rebel groups. This has in turn inspired a focus on enabling factors – in particular, national-level characteristics that favor guerrilla tactics, which allow small groups to sustain asymmetric conflict against the state, sometimes indefinitely.[18] These variables include state weakness, rough terrain, exploitable resources, state size, poverty, and ethnic diversity,[19] among a host of others. Most of these variables have likewise been suggested as causes of fragmented conflict (see, for example, Seymour, Bakke,

---

[18] In this approach, all rebels are assumed to be "greedy" while their opportunities vary from place to place; hence the focus on national-level characteristics instead of actor-level characteristics.

[19] An opposed grievance-based perspective highlights the exclusion of large ethnic groups from power. See Cederman, Buhaug, and Rød (2009), Cederman and Girardin (2007), and Cederman, Wimmer, and Min (2010).

and Cunningham (2015) and Mosinger (2017), which test most of the above), and I discuss these in turn below. The logic to this is as follows: the more that conditions favor guerrilla tactics, the more easily rent-seeking specialists in violence can organize and sustain armed groups, and therefore more armed groups should mobilize.

Harbom, et al. (2008) suggest that *weak states* may host more simultaneous rebel dyads (i.e., more fragmented rebel movements). Yet, as a special data feature introducing the UCDP Dyadic Dataset, their article engages in hypothesis building rather than empirical hypothesis testing. The authors note an increase in multi-party civil wars since the 1970s and conjecture that this is mostly due to the proliferation of weak states following decolonization in Africa and Asia. The argument implicitly extends Fearon and Laitin's findings to fragmented conflicts.

That *larger and more populous countries* are associated with increased risk of civil war onset is one of the most robust statistical findings in conflict literature, and scholars argue that this is because larger countries tend to host weaker states (Bleaney and Dimico 2011; Buhaug and Gates 2002; Fearon and Laitin 2003).[20] This hypothesis does appear, in similar form, in the scant literature on independent rebel mobilization. In his game theoretic work on rebel recruitment, Scott Gates (2002) briefly acknowledges the existence of inter-rebel competition in recruitment, and extrapolates from his model a necessary condition for the mobilization of multiple armed groups: *sufficient geographical or social distance*. As groups located too close to each other would compete for the same recruits, rival rebel groups must arise in different parts of the country.[21]

---

[20] The notion is that a large population spread over vast territories represents a substantial bureaucratic, policing, and military problem, at least to poor states such as India, Russia, or Brazil. On the other hand, it is difficult to extend this argument to wealthy countries such as the United States, Canada, or Germany. Controlling for wealth is obviously critical to this argument.

[21] Gates also suggests that "if geography is limited, a rival rebel group can distinguish itself ethnically or ideologically" (2002, 127), but does not elaborate beyond this.

Therefore, larger countries are expected to harbor more rebel groups. Similarly, more *ethnically diverse* countries should be able to support more groups. These hypotheses are plausible; however, Gates does not subject it to an empirical test. D. E. Cunningham (2006) provides another mechanism by which large states may be more prone to multiple rebel groups, by hosting more heterogeneous societies with diverse preferences.

Conversely, in his magisterial study Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America, (Wickham-Crowley 1991, 154–73) argues that weak regimes, particularly those featuring personalistic governments with a narrow social base of support, provoke a united opposition as a result of the political exclusion shared in common by lower-, middle-, and upper- class actors. Unfortunately, Wickham-Crowley provides little discussion of the specific mechanisms through which political exclusion helps diverse social actors overcome collective action problems.

Social-organizational determinants of rebel fragmentation and cohesion

Conflict research has been subject to another trend, in which scholars have deemphasized large-scale and mostly invariant structural explanations in favor of social or organizational analysis of rebel movements themselves. These accounts typically begin with individual-level microfoundations in order to explain group-level outcomes, and draw on simple rational-choice or social network theory to motivate models of rebel collective action. Jeremy Weinstein's (2007) book *Inside Rebellion* stands as an important transitional work in that it examines how variation in a commonly-cited structural variable, *exploitable resource wealth*, affects the microdynamics of rebel mobilization. Lootable resources incentivize "greedy" individuals to join rebellions and exacerbate information problems in the rebel recruitment process. Rebel recruitment patterns in turn determine group discipline and, ultimately, the number of rebel groups. Simply put,

exploitable resource wealth lowers the barrier to entry for rebel groups and encourages opportunistic group formation to capture resource rents.

At the center of Weinstein's theory is the observation that some rebel groups invest considerable time and effort into mobilizing civilian participation in rebellion, while others employ indiscriminate violence and coercion. He argues that groups lacking easy access to lootable resources must rely upon the willing support of civilians for funding and recruits, and therefore cultivate ideological or network ties to civilians. Theses rebel groups must draw on their "social endowments," that is, "distinctive identities and dense interpersonal networks that can be readily mobilized in support of collective action" (Weinstein 2007, 48–50; see also Tilly 1978). By contrast, groups with a ready source of oil, gemstones, other primary goods, or outside sponsorship ("resource endowments") can simply pay soldiers to fight for them. However, resource-rich groups are unable to distinguish between committed would-be rebels and opportunistic, rent-seeking mercenaries when recruiting soldiers. Such soldiers are more likely to be undisciplined and abusive to civilians. While a resource advantage can lower the entry costs for rebellion, opportunistic guerrillas are not incentivized and are generally unable to build a consensual relationship with civilians. Weinstein further argues that, given a resource-rich environment, greed-based, undisciplined, and therefore more brutal organizations will successfully crowd out more disciplined groups in an evolutionary competition – and crucially, that there will be many more such organizations.

Comparing Weinstein's model to another competitive, profit-oriented environment – the market – raises difficulties, however. Competition between firms is costly, and absent regulation, markets often cartelize or succumb to monopolies, which can more efficiently extract rents than multiple competing firms. Why would rent-seeking individuals organize a new rebel group, rather

than join an existing one? Why are first-moving rebel groups unable to successfully crowd out new entrants? Even more troubling, why would undisciplined, greed-based groups be able to crowd out disciplined cadres with the logistical and tactical advantages afforded by local civilian support, as Weinstein insists? Kalyvas (2007, 1147–48) points out in a critical review that corporate employees as well as salaried government soldiers are profit-motivated, yet exhibit high degrees of discipline. Logically, an opportunistic *and* disciplined rebel group should be the most competitive.[22]

Weinstein's model therefore incompletely sketches out the strategic environment confronting late-mobilizing rebel groups. The monocausal nature of Weinstein's hypothesis is untenable: resource availability determines all major aspects of a rebel organization's internal structure, its level of violence against civilians, and the total number of competing rebel organizations. Significantly, Weinstein's account may sometimes reverse the causal chain leading to greedy, predatory rebellion. As Reed Wood (2010a, 12) trenchantly observes, the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, which under Joseph Kony became the poster child of predation and brutality, only turned to rapine *after* its goal of mobilizing ethnic Acholis failed.

Weinstein does offer a simple logistic regression to test his hypothesis (2007, 330). With fewer than 100 observations drawn from the PRIO database,[23] and only four independent variables

---

[22] Indeed, purely criminal organizations such as street gangs are often extremely hierarchical and disciplined, while low-level soldiers in these organizations (who are, in Weinstein's account, "greedy") often receive extraordinarily low remuneration despite incurring very high risks. After analyzing the wage structure of a Chicago drug gang, economist Steven Levitt and sociologist Sudhir Venkatesh concluded that due to these factors, foot soldier decision-making may be "suboptimal" in a framework of economic maximization (Levitt and Venkatesh 2000, 787).

[23] The PRIO dataset (unnamed by Weinstein, but presumably the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset) does not distinguish between original groups and offshoots of original groups. Thus, Weinstein tests independent mobilization and rebel group splitting indiscriminately. Note that this dataset is very similar to the UCDP Dyadic Dataset discussed earlier, which has the same problems.

that are tested sequentially rather than together in a saturated model, the regression must be considered a plausibility probe at most. It finds that resource wealth is positively correlated with the number of rebel groups in a conflict, while GDP per capita is negatively correlated, suggesting that low state capacity may also encourage independent mobilization.[24] Contra Harbom et al., outside intervention is not statistically significant, though this may be due to the proposed changes in great power intervention strategies circa 1970.

In a direct challenge to Weinstein's economic determinism, Paul Staniland's book *Networks of Rebellion* (2014) argues that even in resource-rich environments, rebel groups prefer to draw on "social endowments" rather than "resource endowments," with very different implications for rebel discipline, cohesion, and fragmentation. He observes that rebel organizations are typically superimposed on top of preexisting civilian social networks, which furnish rebels with vital horizontal ties (that is, links between different centers of rebel leadership) and vertical ties (links between rebel leadership and local units). The extent to which a rebel group can draw on each of these two types of ties in turn pushes the group down a distinct organizational pathway. Depending on their pre-war social connections, the rebels may build one of four ideal-type institutional structures: a) an *integrated group*, with a tightly-knit central command and strong local control; b) a *vanguard group*, with a strong central command but poor control over local cadres; c) a *parochial group*, with a factious command structure dominated by local commanders; and d) a *fragmented group*, with little central or local coordination.

---

[24] Accepting Fearon and Laitin (2003) operationalization of GDP per capita as state capacity. Weinstein suggests that a higher GDP per capita represents a larger barrier to rebel recruitment as well, since groups would require more resources to lure "greedy" soldiers away from the licit economy.

Table 2-1 Prewar social bases and wartime organization (Staniland 2014, 9)

	Strong vertical ties	Weak vertical ties
Strong horizontal ties	*Integrated organization* Robust central processes Robust local processes	*Vanguard organization* Robust central processes Fragile local processes
Weak horizontal ties	*Parochial organization* Fragile central processes Robust local processes	*Fragmented organization* Fragile central processes Fragile local processes

Staniland goes beyond a static model determined by initial social ties by detailing several mechanisms by which state and inter-rebel interactions can push rebels towards different organizational outcomes. Specifically, integrated rebel groups fragment when horizontal ties weaken during mismanaged expansion or comprehensive government counterinsurgency efforts. Vanguard groups, on the other hand, often splinter as a result of decapitation, while parochial groups can either overcome fragmentation through institution-building or spiral into inter-elite feuding.

Many difficulties in Staniland's framework stem from conceptual fuzziness in his dependent variable, which he interchangeably refers to as "cohesion, control, and discipline" (2). The specific outcomes covered by Staniland's theory varies from the number of rebel factions to decision-making structures to the propensity for soldiers to follow orders in the field.[25] This fuzziness sometimes seems to result in an overlap between independent and dependent variables, and thus risks collapsing an attempted explanatory typology into a descriptive one. For example, did the Kashmiri splinter group Ikhwan-ul Muslimeen "[become] a parochial organization in large part because it was a coalition of local rural networks that were only linked to one another" (59), or is that simply the *definition* of a parochial group?

---

[25] *Cf.* Bakke, Cunningham, and Seymour (2012), whose multidimensional conceptualization of rebel fragmentation is similarly expansive but much more precisely delineated.

Yet despite these problems, in typologizing rebel organizational structures and identifying some of the pathways through which they change, Staniland has made the most significant contribution to date for our understanding of rebel cohesion and fragmentation. I often return to his ideas and terminology throughout this dissertation.

State-rebel and intra-rebel interactions

A final set of authors place greater stress on interactions between state and rebel actors, as well as those among and within rebel groups when explaining rebel group and rebel movement fragmentation. Seymour, Cunningham, and Bakke (2015) offer a thorough survey of this literature, which they divide into four overarching types of interaction: state *repression*, state *accommodation*, *external support*, the rebel *turn to violence*, and *changing demands* by opposition elites. These explanations have largely been employed to explain cases of rebel splitting, such that any possible utility for understanding independent mobilization remains underdeveloped.

State repression has received the most debate thus far. Some scholars have recently argued that state violence, tactical losses, and an uneven distribution of losses across a single rebel group encourages splitting. The most fully-fleshed out mechanism comes from Fotini Christia's (2012) *Alliance Politics in Civil War*. Drawing on a rich set of empirics from the Afghan civil war, she argues that asymmetric battlefield losses across a rebel group's constituent subgroups promote internal coups and splinter groups. In this telling, battlefield defeats cause local elites to worry about their subgroup's survival, leading "to disputes over strategy that map on to preexisting subgroup cleavages" (44). A greater number of authors cite decapitation strategies, in which state forces shatter the rebel leadership, as responsible for splinter groups. McLaughlin and Pearlman (2012a, 44) hold that the state's "repressive measures, such as jailing, exiling, or killing leaders," serves as an external shock that allows constituent subgroups to renegotiate an ethnic or nationalist

movement's "institutional equilibrium" (that is, "the distribution of power and resources" within the movement) – but only if they considered the previous equilibrium unsatisfactory. Staniland similarly argues that if the counterinsurgent state "is able to regularly arrest or kill key [rebel group] leaders, central processes will decay and perhaps collapse altogether" because "trust and cooperation will break down" (Staniland 2014, 47), with organizational splits to follow. Drawing on similar arguments as the above authors, Seymour, Bakke, and Cunningham (2015, 5) "expect repression to increase the costs of mobilization and foster internal disagreements about how to deal with these costs (DeNardo, 1985), and state forces targeting a movement's leadership may provoke intramovement competition and splits among rivals vying for power (Lawrence, 2010)."[26] Seymour, Bakke, and Cunningham (2015, 11) find statistical evidence that state repression makes rebel movement fragmentation more likely in a sample of 22 ethnonationalist movements.[27]

State accommodation, meaning negotiations, treaties, and concessions offered to rebel groups, may promote rebel splitting via a number of mechanisms. Rebels that negotiate with the state may suffer defection from hard-line spoilers (Atlas and Licklider 1999; Stedman 1997), while Walter (2006) demonstrates that states which grant concessions to separatist groups incentivize future challenges. States that accommodate give themselves a reputation for weakness. Lounsbery and Cook (2011), following the "spoiler" literature, finds that mediation efforts cause rebel groups to splinter.

Weinstein (2007) first argued that, like any other exploitable resource, *external support* may encourage opportunistic mobilization by dissident networks or splintering by rebel subgroups eager to gain a larger share of resource flows. It simultaneously lowers the start-up costs for

---

[26] Note that the first mechanism cited here resembles Christia's (2012), and that the second resembles McLauchlin and Pearlman's (2012a).

[27] Stewart points out that her proxy for repression approaches, but does not reach, statistical significance.

splinter factions, which may be much smaller and weaker than the rebel group they leave. This is especially likely when external support comes in the form of fungible goods such as funding and arms which can easily be spread among multiple groups (Sawyer, Cunningham, and Reed 2015). By contrast, non-fungible resources such as cross-border sanctuaries may encourage rebel unity by providing rebel groups with space to build deeper organization structures (Mosinger 2017).

Rebel splits or unity may also be contingent on the external sponsor's policy. Intervening states may try to foster rebel unity either as a precondition or a consequence of their support (Lounsbery 2016; Tamm 2016). Tamm (2016) argues that external sponsors may direct all their support to a single rebel leader, strengthening him and encouraging uunity around that leader. However, states can use external support not only as the carrot but also as the stick in their principal-agent relationship with rebel groups: sponsors can fund an internal rival to the rebel leadership in order to punish a wayward proxy. By altering the balance of power between contending rebel leaders – particularly when producing an evenly matched balance – external sponsors can engineer rebel splits. Lounsbery (2016), by contrast, finds no statistical relationship between external intervention and group splintering, but does find evidence that pro-rebel intervention causes rebel groups to coalesce (i.e., merge or form umbrella groups).

Stewart (2014) emphasizes the decision of some within the rebel movement to turn to large-scale or indiscriminate violence, arguing that "if a faction's support base does not find the use of violence legitimate, then it is likely to shift its support elsewhere, leaving the organization weakened and susceptible to fragmentation" (7). While this line of argument has only tentative support, there appears to be a clear relationship between conflict intensity and multi-party warfare, as discussed above. The logic of the final mechanism, changing demands within the rebel movement, is similar – as movement participants or elites articulate a novel set of political

demands, a new rebel group may split off from a preexisting group or independently mobilize to capitalize on the changed issue space, in a violent version of Downs' theory.

Overarching problems in the literature

The literature discussed in the previous section exhibits two main deficits: a lack of agreement on the meaning and operationalization of rebel fragmentation, and an implicit assumption that rebel mobilization is a linear process. I now address each of these deficits in turn.

Conceptual difficulties with rebel fragmentation

Until recently a coherent literature on rebel fragmentation had failed to emerge because conceptual and definitional disagreements had prevented scholars from asking the same question(s) as each other. Most fundamentally, scholars have treated rebel fragmentation sometimes as a state ("the movement is highly fragmented"), and sometimes as a process ("the rebel group splintered [that is to say, fragmented]"). Even within these two broad conceptualizations, scholars have employed different definitions of rebel fragmentation which they applied to different units of analysis. The brief summary that follows includes only scholars who treat rebel fragmentation as the dependent variable; when we add scholars who employ rebel fragmentation as an independent variable, the conceptual terrain becomes exponentially more fraught.

Scholars that address rebel fragmentation as a state have typically meant one of two things (and sometimes both, simultaneously): the number of groups in a rebel movement, and the internal discipline of a rebel group. Of the works already discussed, Gates (2002), Cunningham (2006), Weinstein (2007), Harbom (2008), and Seymour, Bakke, and Cunningham (2015) treat rebel

fragmentation as the number of groups in a rebel movement.[28] Both Weinstein and Staniland (2014) also incorporate intra-group discipline into their operationalization of rebel fragmentation,[29] while Staniland focuses on fragmentation within rebel groups, as opposed to rebel movements.[30] This conceptual morass has prevented the accumulation of knowledge about rebel fragmentation, because when theories are not held to explain exactly the same outcome, it is difficult to ascertain whether they compete, are complementary, or operate independently of one another. They may not be readily tested against one another to determine which theory offers the most explanatory power.

These conceptual challenges have been helpfully addressed by Bakke, Cunningham, and Seymour (2012), whose three-dimensional definition of rebel fragmentation as a state I adopt for this dissertation (see Terms and Concepts). While not all scholars have adopted their definition (Staniland [2014] is the most influential exception), their article currently has 109 citations on Google Scholar, indicating both the utility of their approach and the cottage industry of what might be termed "rebel fragmentation studies" in the last four years.[31] However, their definition is empirically demanding, as it requires researchers to code not only relatively easy to observe features (number of rebel groups), but also challenging traits (balance of power between rebel groups, institutionalization between groups). Even Seymour, Cunningham, and Bakke (2015), in

---

[28] Warren and Troy (2014) treat fragmentation as intra-movement violence, with a proliferation of groups the proposed mechanism.

[29] Kenny (2010) in an influential article maintains that these are two separate concepts that are all too often confused. He notes that empirically, group splinters often occur during periods of heightened discipline and battlefield effectiveness.

[30] And as discussed above, Staniland's treatment does not always sufficiently distinguish fragmentation as state and fragmentation as process.

[31] Nor should it be regarded as coincidental that studies of rebel fragmentation have exploded along with the Syrian civil war – the most dramatically fragmented conflict, by some measures, in recorded history.

their own follow-up article, operationalize rebel fragmentation simply as the total number of groups.[32] This dissertation breaks new empirical ground by coding size and distribution of power between rebel groups in a large data set, thereby capturing two out of three of BCS's dimensions. It also strives for a systematic treatment of rebel fragmentation that explains both states (as the dependent variable), and processes (as mechanisms) of fragmentation.

However, a serious difficulty remains: most authors treating rebel fragmentation as a dependent variable have explored a specific process by which fragmentation increases or decreases. Broadly construed, there are four organizational processes that may change levels of fragmentation: the independent mobilization of one or more rebel groups, the splintering of a rebel group into two or more distinct groups, the merging of multiple rebel groups into a single group (or single umbrella group), and the mobilization of a proxy group by an external power.[33] Moreover, *change* is not the only possible outcome; organizational processes may also *maintain* rebel movement unity or fragmentation over time. Scholars conceptualizing rebel fragmentation as a process invariably treat the individual rebel group as the unit of analysis, and are predominantly concerned with what causes rebel group splintering. Authors that fall into this category include those investigating spoilers (Atlas and Licklider 1999; Stedman 1997; Walter 2006), Lounsbery and Cook (2011), Christia (2012), McLauchlin and Pearlman (2012b), and

---

[32] They write, "[a]lthough not the only dimension of a movement's fragmentation (Bakke, Cunningham & Seymour, 2012), the number of organizations is a central indicator. Though this measure does not capture the degree to which one organization is dominant (Krause, 2013), or the size of organizations per se, existing studies of fragmentation demonstrate that multiple organizations play a key role irrespective of variation in power or size" (Seymour, Bakke, and Cunningham 2015, 8).

[33] There are other non-organizational processes that may change rebel fragmentation but fall outside the scope of this dissertation: the defeat of rebel groups by state or rival rebel forces, peace treaties between rebel groups and the state, and rebel group side-switching. I discuss these processes, and how their exclusion may bias my results, towards the end of this chapter.

Tamm (2016). Staniland (2014), as discussed above, also theorizes about state repression's role in rebel splintering.

Missing, or rare, in this literature are treatments of other types of rebel movement transformations. Discussion of the apperance of independently-mobilized groups occurs specifically, if briefly, in Gates (2002) and Weinstein (2007), while the emergence of merger and umbrella groups is described only in Lounsbery (2016) and (again, briefly) Staniland (2014).[34] Their scant appearance in the scholarly literature does not accord with their empirical importance. Table 2-2, below, presents descriptive statistics on late-moving groups (that is, that appeared after conflict onset, thereby changing levels of fragmentation) in the Non-State Actor data set. Notably, independently-mobilized rebel groups are more than twice as common as splinter groups.

Table 2-2 Late-moving rebel groups in the Non-State Actor data set

Type of group	Number	Percentage of total
Independent groups	136	57.14%
Splinter groups	62	26.05%
Merger and umbrella groups	34	14.29%
Proxy groups	6	2.52%
Total	238	100.00%

Thus, the range of "processes" treated in the scholarly literature that produce a given rebel movement fragmentation "state" is dramatically truncated. This lacuna is particularly glaring, given that splinter groups form only 26.05% of late-moving (i.e., fragmenting) rebel groups in the Non-State Actor data set.[35] These descriptive statistics suggest the need for three areas for future

---

[34] Many scholars have explored rebel group alliances – most notably Christia (2012) – but these authors have largely treated rebel groups as unitary. Alliances do not presuppose the sacrifice of autonomy necessary for group mergers or umbrellas.

[35] According to my coding. See Appendix B for more detailed coding information.

scholarship: first, a systematic treatment of rebel fragmentation as a state that is sensitive to the full range of potential processes (i.e. mechanisms) that create it; second, more attention to not only fragmentation events, but also "cohesive" events in rebel movements; and third, why rebel movements may remain fragmented or unified over time. Most tellingly, the literature undertheorizes independently-mobilized groups and umbrella groups, which together comprise about 71% of all late-moving rebel groups. Yet these group types present obverse puzzles: Why do rebel groups fail to unify, weakening the movement in the shadow of the militarily powerful state? Conversely, why do rebel groups forgo separate organizational identities in merger and umbrella groups and what factors allow them to overcome collective action problems?

How can we incorporate this literature on specific fragmentation processes into a more comprehensive theory of rebel fragmentation? First, a necessary statement on the relation between state and process, implicit in the discussion above: *a rebel movement's degree of fragmentation is the sum of all fragmentation processes that have occurred within it*. A rebel movement in which 50 groups mobilize independently is fragmented, and if they subsequently join together in a single umbrella group, it is unified. Thus, a theory of rebel movement fragmentation as a state must necessarily explain when the processes identified above are likely to occur. A comprehensive theory of rebel fragmentation will be especially valuable if the four processes discussed above result from similar causes, or are causally interdependent.[36] I argue in this dissertation that both conditions hold.

---

[36] Or rather, three processes. Proxy group mobilization is both empirically rare and, in my view, clearly belongs to a different research question: what explains external intervention in civil war. Thus, my dissertation is limited to independent groups, splinter groups, and mergers/umbrella group formation.

Mobilization as a linear process

A second deficit, not only in literature on rebel fragmentation but in conflict literature writ large, is the tacit assumption that rebel mobilization is a linear process. The title of Charles Tilly's classic 1978 work, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, best captures the contours of this assumption: anti-regime mobilization passes through a series of concrete stages of increasing collective action, up to and including revolution. Tilly did not originate this schema; rather, he inherited it from a generation of Marxist-tinged social scientists whose macrosociological works frequently interpreted political violence in teleological terms.

Another classic, Roger Petersen's (2001, 9) *Resistance and Rebellion*, similarly posits that individual participation in rebel collective action slides along an ever-increasing scale of involvement, seen below in Figure 2-1:

Triggering Mechanisms

-3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3
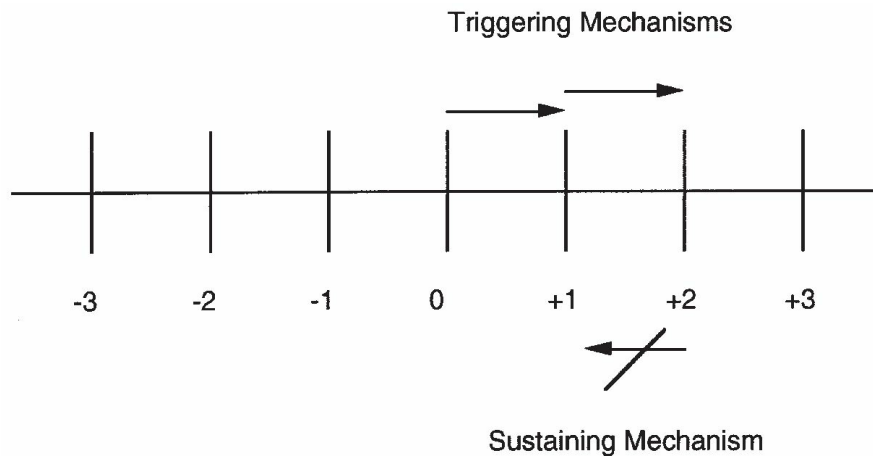
Sustaining Mechanism
Figure 2-1 Mobilization in Petersen (2001)

Petersen's contributions to the microfoundations (that is, individual-level dynamics) of rebellious mobilization are deservedly influential, and underpin much of this dissertation's theoretical foundations. Rebel groups, like all groups, are comprised of individuals, and as I

discuss in the next section, one must understand how individual-level decisions to mobilize aggregate in order to explain rebel fragmentation.

That said, in the context of rebel fragmentation, Petersen's spectrum of individual participation is incomplete. There are two directions displayed in Figure 2-1: forwards and backwards. Petersen's dependent variable, the level of individual participation in rebellion in the communities of occupied Lithuania, is expressed linearly, as a percentage of the whole. Though his diffusion model of mobilization returns discontinuities at civilian group tipping points, ultimately mobilization equates to more or less participation, given more or fewer causes of mobilization. Missing here is the sense that mobilization is heterogenous, with similar inputs affecting different segments of the mobilizing population in different manners, and producing a diverse set of dissident organizational forms. Petersen's student, Paul Staniland (2014), goes the furthest down this path, proposing that rebel organizational structures are built on vertical and horizontal ties, but his four rebel group types – fragmented, parochial, vanguard, integrated – can be readily ordered from least to most mobilized.

Any successful approach to rebel fragmentation must abandon the assumption that mobilization consists of an always-increasing readiness to act collectively. Most relevant for my purposes in this dissertation, I propose that increasing participation in rebellion (typically interpreted as successful rebel collective action by previous scholars) produces significant, new collective action problems. Resolving individual collective action problems can generate organizational collective action problems, and successful organizational-level collective action can in turn generate inter-organizational collective action problems. Attention to the interplay among these different levels of analysis forces us to acknowledge the degree to which mobilization is non-linear.

In sum, most explanations for rebel fragmentation may be divided into structural, social-organizational, and interaction-oriented camps. These early efforts have not synthesized approaches that treat rebel fragmentation as a state with others that treat it as a process. They have not aggregated theories of organizational dynamics and mobilization across different levels of analysis. Nor have scholars sketched out the strategic arena, constraints, and resources that structure interactions between the relevant actors.

Explaining rebel fragmentation: Civilian constituency theory

My theory, stated simply, is that rebel groups' civilian mobilization efforts and the depth of civilian grievances shapes a rebel movement's civilian constituency (the intervening variable), whose composition, in turn, determines whether the movement as a whole will a) be fragmented or unified at conflict onset, and b) fragment or unify over time.[37] Rebel movements tend to fragment when they recruit their civilian constituency from dissident networks only, and unify when they incorporate broad civilian networks as well. This holds for two reasons. Dissident commitment to differing identities, goals, and strategies exacerbates collective action problems within and among rebel groups. Meanwhile, when broad civilian networks (such as mass organizations, or religious, political, and pan-ethnic institutions) support rebellion, rebels can draw on cross-cutting social ties to resolve collective action problems and forge a unified rebel front.

Below, I present a stylized account of how different types of rebel groups mobilize civilian constituencies of differing sizes and compositions, how widespread grievances can either complicate or contribute to rebel mobilization efforts, and how different configurations of civilian

---

[37] This is an important point worth highlighting here: I hold that the causes of rebel fragmentation at conflict onset are the same as those that change rebel fragmentation over time. I.e., the theories holds that if *civilian grievances* are moderate at conflict onset, the rebel movement is more likely to be fragmented at birth; if *civilian grievances* rise from low to moderate after conflict onset, the rebel movement is likely to fragment over time.

constituencies ultimately determine whether an initial rebel group will face challenges from splinter groups or independent rebel groups. My civilian constituency theory can be presented as a simple network diffusion model that amends earlier influential models in the study of revolution and rebellion. Much like Petersen's (2001) conception of rebellion as a tipping game, I approach civilian mobilization as a process in which a rebel group attempts to induce civilians to participate in rebellion, and to monopolize all available civilian support. Rather than assuming that all civilians who are disaffected with the regime are equally likely to participate in rebellion given material costs and benefits, I focus on the two categories of civilians that are most relevant to the way in which rebellion develops: dissident networks and broad social networks.[38] Dissident networks comprise civilians who are disaffected with the regime and are therefore readily mobilizable by armed groups.[39] They are, as it were, 'up for grabs' – potent sources of funding, intelligence, and recruits that lower start-up costs for rebellion and provide a ready constituency for first-moving and late-moving rebel groups alike. If dissidents support an independent rebel bid or a splinter faction, they serve as a potential source of rebel fragmentation. Broad social networks include risk-averse civilians who are much less likely than dissidents to participate in rebellion; however, if mobilized, they promote rebel unity. Broad social networks provide a reservoir of 'vertical and horizontal ties' that can bridge disparate dissident networks together into a unified rebel movement (Staniland 2012b).

---

[38] Though relatively few civilians might fit into these categories, they will be the most likely to mobilize in support of rebellion. These categories also overlap, in that individual civilians can belong to both dissident groups and broad civilian networks. These categories are not simply theoretical constructs, but reflect how at least some rebel groups understood their civilian mobilization efforts. The FSLN, for example, developed a special terminology to describe these categories of civilians (*canteras, semilleros, organizaciones intermedias, redes*), and many of their internal strategic debates revolved around the appropriate mix of dissidents and broad civilian networks.

[39] They are the zero- or near-zero-threshold activists described by Petersen (2001, 272–95).

Civilian participants in insurgency

Practitioners of guerrilla warfare have long recognized the vital role that a strong civilian support base plays in sustaining rebellion, and many authors insist that non-combatant support and logistical personnel may play an even more significant role in sustaining rebellion than soldiers (Parkinson 2013, 418). Most rebel movements rely upon preexisting civilian social networks in order to mobilize widespread civilian support. As in the high-risk mobilization of activists studied by social movement scholars (McAdam 1986; Tarrow and Tollefson 1994), in the early stages of conflict preexisting social networks serve as 'mobilizing structures' that produce repeated interactions between connected individuals. These interactions facilitate the spread of ideas and norms, aid in the identification of potential activists, lower transaction costs, and ease collective action problems. A similar logic holds for the recruitment of combatants and non-combatants in internal conflict. Survey evidence from demobilized rebel soldiers in far-flung theaters of war documents how 'who you know' often matters more than expectations of pay and personal benefits for recruitment into armed groups (Arjona and Kalyvas 2009; Humphreys and Weinstein 2008).[40] Network structures also determine civilian participation in popular rebellion and even in mass violent episodes such as genocide (McDoom 2013; Petersen 2001).

However, current network models of civilian mobilization are incomplete because they truncate the possible range of civilian behaviors. Traditionally, civilian networks may either 1) support a rebel group, 2) stay neutral, or 3) support the government.[41] By relaxing the assumption that civil wars are strictly dyadic, as in Figure 2-2 below, we unveil a greater range of civilian

---

[40] See also Daly (2012).
[41] These three options mirror the spectrum of civilian action in Roger Petersen's (2001) work.

behaviors: they may 4) support one rebel group while opposing another, or 5) mobilize a new rebel group.[42] Incorporating these behaviors into network models of civilian mobilization allows for an analysis of the origins of fragmented rebel movements.
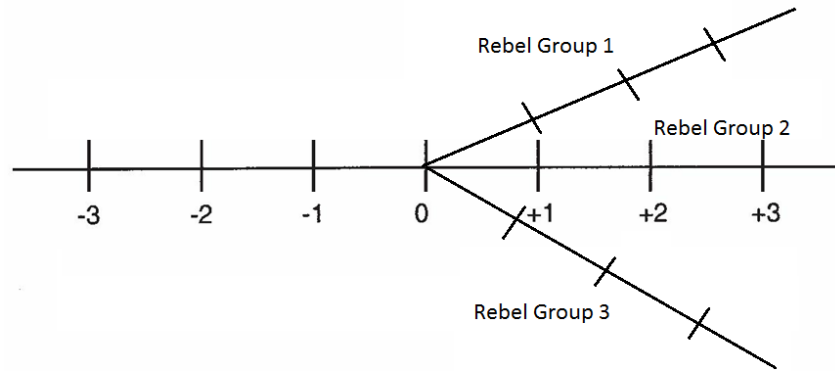
Figure 2-2 Fragmented patterns of mobilization

The dynamics of rebel mobilization can be helpfully visualized in Figure 2-3 below, where A, B, C, and D represent dissident networks.[43] The diagram represents a network diffusion model, in which participation in rebellion diffuses across social linkages (or 'horizontal ties'), represented by solid lines.[44] Where social linkages between rebels and dissident networks do not exist, rebels cannot draw on preexisting reservoirs of trust or norms of reciprocity, and are therefore much less likely to induce the disconnected dissidents to cooperate with their group.

---

[42] Compare Figure 2-2 to Figure 2-1 above from Petersen (2001, 9).

[43] My use of Venn Diagrams is also heavily inspired by Petersen's (2001) models.

[44] According to Everett Rogers (2005, 5) classic text, "*Diffusion* is the process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system." My simple model has a great deal in common with threshold models of collective action (Granovetter 1978; Granovetter and Soong 1983), and indeed, its first iteration was as a threshold model.

A rebel group's network ties
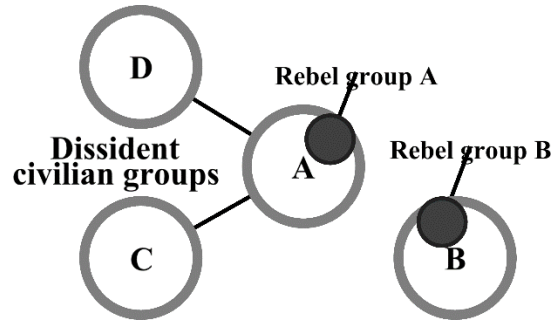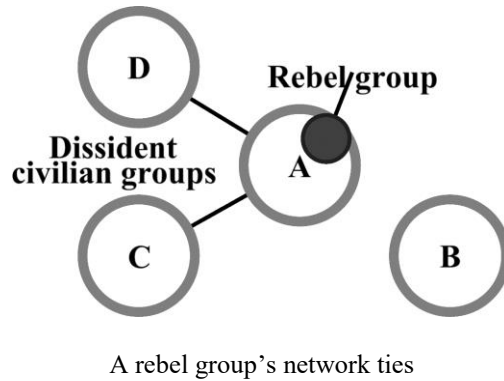
- Wartime mobilization of independent rebel factions
Figure 2-3 Rebel mobilization of civilian groups

The first-moving rebel group here is embedded within dissident network A (civilians), which is connected to groups C and D via horizontal ties. Together these three groups comprise the rebel group's *civilian constituency*, defined as a network of loyal non-combatant groups and the social ties among them, which provides logistical support, material support, and recruits to the rebel group. In Figure 2-3a the rebel group lacks social ties that might bridge it to dissident network B. Thus B is likely to remain inaccessible to the Rebel group A.

As early rebel mobilization transitions into full-fledged civil war violence, identities harden and civilian mobilization becomes increasingly challenging. During conflict rebels are increasingly forced to rely upon coercive modes of civilian mobilization (Eck 2014, 365–66). Coercion may produce compliance, but it is much less likely to generate new loyalties; on the contrary, coercion by a rebel group likely renders unmobilized civilian networks hostile not only

to the regime but to the rebel group as well. Thus, dissident networks left outside the rebel coalition (i.e., set B in Figures 2-3a and 2-3b) may produce competing, independently-mobilized rebel factions as the war progresses. Unincorporated civilian dissident networks are still groups of potential violent entrepreneurs with grievances against the government, and contain elites with strong preferences over the conflict's outcome – ingredients necessary for resolving collective action problems and launching a rebellion. Violent conflict microdynamics, such as shifts in local control and exposure to government and rebel violence (Kalyvas 2006), the balance of overall power between incumbent and insurgents (R. M. Wood 2010b), economic privations (Justino 2009), or a changing political environment, may push unincorporated dissident networks over the threshold of participation. As these dissidents lack network ties to the first-moving rebel group and may harbor antipathy towards this group, they may mobilize an independent rebel group. On the other hand, if rebel groups secure a substantial civilian constituency, dissident networks are likely to cooperate even with a rebel group they disagree with, anticipating that any independent rebellion they launched would be quickly marginalized. From the perspective of the civilian constituency theory, fragmented rebel movements emerge when first-moving rebel groups failed to build a broad constituency. Figure 2-3b illustrates this outcome.

My theory proposes a similar explanation for the splintering of rebel groups into different factions and the mobilization of independent rebel groups. Where social ties between first-moving rebels and dissident networks are weak, dissident networks may join a rebel group but are more likely to splinter in the face of adverse wartime circumstances (Christia 2012; McLauchlin and Pearlman 2012a). Where social ties are non-existent, I expect to observe independent mobilization originating among outside dissident networks. On the other hand, the first-moving rebel group may try to preempt competition from unconnected dissidents by attacking them prior to making war

against the state. In such cases, the dissident networks are likely to 'flip,' seeking protection behind the aegis of the state as pro-state militias (Kalyvas 2008; Staniland 2012a). Table 2-3 summarizes the potential outcomes.

Table 2-3 Rebel and dissident ties

Prewar ties between first-moving rebels and dissident network	Wartime role of dissident network
Strong	Rebel constituents
Weak	Splinter group
Nonexistent	Independent group
Hostile	Pro-state militia

Thus, the extent of a rebel group's civilian constituency (relative to the total population of disaffected citizens, or the *rebel movement's* civilian constituency) is a crucial intervening variable: if a single rebel group incorporates 90% of the rebel movement's civilian constituency, other rebel groups will find little support with which to mobilize and expand. By contrast, if a single rebel group incorporates a mere 10% of the movement's civilian constituency, many other groups may take root, fragmenting the movement as a whole. But what determines whether a rebel group will succeed or fail at monopolizing potential support? I argue that this is determined by the main independent variables: *rebel type* and *civilian grievances*. Rebel type measures whether rebel groups invest in civilian mobilization; presumably, those who invest more should incorporate a greater proportion of the available support. Civilian grievances determine the size and composition of a rebel movement's total civilian constituency. The following section focuses on defining these two concepts, and on developing detailed predictions of how they impact rebel movement unity and division.

Rebel type: stationary and roving rebels

> *Hypothesis 1: Rebel movements comprised predominantly of stationary rebel groups are less likely to be fragmented.*

Rebel groups cluster into distinct organizational 'types.' Weinstein (2007) distinguishes between rebels that rely on 'economic endowments' and those that rely on 'social endowments,' Staniland (2014) between internally fractured organizations built over social cleavages versus 'integrated' rebel organizations founded on overlapping social ties, and Sarbahi (2014) between 'floating' and 'anchored' rebel groups. The recognition that different rebel groups pursue opposite or complexly admixed mobilization strategies recalls Mancur Olson's (1993) division between roving and stationary bandits in state-building. Rebels must often choose between relying on coercion or investing in building consensual relationships with civilian populations. Roving rebels invest little effort into cultivating rebel-civilian ties, either because they lack access to suitable civilian networks or because of a consciously predatory strategy,[45] and therefore rarely build or retain substantial civilian constituencies.

By contrast, *stationary* rebel groups invest heavily in civilian mobilization, and as a result usually become enmeshed within civilian social networks.[46] As the relationships stationary rebels develop with civilians are iterative, they can extract more in the long run by constructing coherent institutions, providing public goods, legitimizing ideologies, and controlling territory. These represent substantial investments in civilian mobilization, lacking in roving groups. In turn,

---

[45] In rebel "state-formation," the Olsonian sequence is often reversed: groups that fail to establish stationary institutions turn to predation instead (Mkandawire 2002)

[46] To clarify, a rebel group that invests heavily in civilian mobilization is, by definition, a stationary group, even if they are not ultimately successful at it.

mobilized civilian networks proffer the institutional base insurgents need to build these robust organizations (Staniland 2012b, 148–49). As described by Sarbahi (2014, 14),

> a perfectly anchored [i.e., stationary] rebel group would originate from a preexisting political party, which had a powerful political presence in the affected territory and undertook significant political mobilization of the catchment [population] around the demands of the group for at least 2 years before the launch of rebellion.

The concept of rebel type is based on the intuitive notion that a highly capable group (such as a Maoist group dedicated to popular mobilization) will be more successful at mobilizing civilian networks than an acephalous collection of outlaws in the hills. Rebel groups which invest considerable time and effort in mobilizing popular support should maintain civilian loyalties during conflict and thereby diminish assets, including pecuniary resources, information, and recruits, potentially available to opposing rebel groups. More significantly, a stationary rebel type allows rebel groups to expand beyond their initial social base, forging stronger and more numerous network ties that can ease collective action problems among the differing sets of dissidents that comprise the rebel movement. The upshot of this is that stationary rebel groups tend to build larger and more loyal constituencies in the diffusion model outlined above. By investing in non-coercive civilian mobilization, rebels are, on balance, more likely to gain the support of civilian dissident networks and maintain their loyalty over the course of the conflict.

How does civilian loyalty shape rebel fragmentation? When roving rebels fail to organize a civilian constituency at all, rebels and civilian dissident networks have little in common beyond their opposition to the regime. Dissidents, lacking ties to the rebels and vulnerable to both state and rebel violence, may join roving rebels opportunistically, take up arms independently, or seek

reconciliation with the state in exchange for protection or selective benefits.[47] From the perspective

of dissident elites, this scenario resembles the classic stag hunt or assurance game: they may

cooperate with an existing rebel group to increase their chances of toppling the regime – and

possibly gain political power, sinecures, and kickbacks in the new government – or defect to enjoy

surer, but limited gains (i.e., of banditry, or total control over a territory or a constituency) from

launching an independent rebel group.[48] Supporting an existing rebel group is less desirable when

rebel military weakness augurs slim chances of victory, when dissident elites lack confidence that

rebels will honor wartime promises of postwar influence or selective benefits (an especially acute

problem for roving rebel groups), or when there are severe ideological differences with the existing

group. It is also less desirable if the viability and benefits of an independent bid are higher, for

example when the dissident network is sizable, has access to readily lootable natural resources or

foreign sponsorship, or when existing rebels have failed to mobilize large pools of disaffected

civilians willing to support another group.[49]

Social ties between rebel groups and dissident networks, which stationary groups

establish through civilian mobilization, help rebels ease this collective action problem in several

ways. First, a rebel group with a large civilian constituency should enjoy more battlefield success

due to greater recruitment, material provision, and informational advantages. Thus, they should

appear more likely to gain a victory over the government. Second, social ties may allow rebels to

convey information about their strength and resolve, to demonstrate reciprocity during conflict,

and to suffer an audience cost for broken commitments, increasing dissident elites' trust that

---

[47] I do not address state co-option further, but see Kalyvas (2008) on ethnic defection, Staniland (2012) on fratricidal flipping, or Driscoll (2015) on state incorporation of warlords.
[48] See especially Driscoll (2015) for a similar stag hunt, in which warlords (an extreme example of roving rebel groups) collude to install a compliant figurehead regime.
[49] I return to some of these alternative variables further on.

wartime promises will be upheld after victory. Third, social ties may allow rebel groups to draw dissident elites closer to rebel ideology through propaganda and political education, to exert pressure on unsympathetic dissident elites by recruiting their followers, or to funnel resources towards promoting new, more sympathetic dissident elites within dissident networks. Fourth, extensive social ties help rebels gather information and identify emerging dissident networks, allowing them to incorporate – or crush – dissident networks before they grow large enough to launch a viable independent bid.

The two diagrams in Figure 2-4 illustrate how rebel type operates within the civilian constituency theory. In Figure 2-4a, a roving rebel group lacks or is unable to take advantage of ties with dissident networks, fostering movement fragmentation. In Figure 2-4b, the first-moving rebel group is stationary, leading to more ties with dissident networks and less movement fragmentation.

A 'roving' rebel group   A 'stationary' rebel group
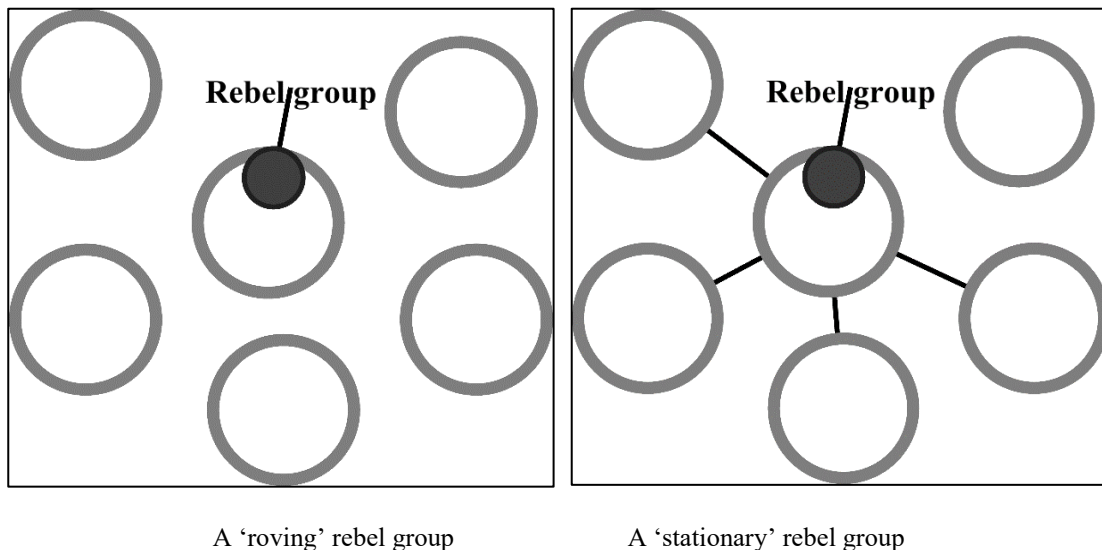
Figure 2-4 Roving and stationary rebel groups

47

Civilian grievances[50]

Not all rebel mobilization campaigns are sown in fertile ground. Many attempts at fomenting popular insurgency have fizzled out, failing to attract civilian support despite adherence to Maoist precepts or extensive mobilization tactics. Civilians, in many cases, simply cannot be persuaded to participate in rebellion against the government because they lack the requisite grievances.

Grievances, once a commonsense explanation for political violence of all kinds and rebellion in particular (see especially Gurr [1970]) were sidelined following influential econometric studies by Collier and Hoeffler (1998, 2004) and Fearon and Laitin (2003) which emphasized opportunities for rebel group survival and enrichment. Grievances are notoriously difficult to measure, as they are private knowledge held by individuals under often-repressive regimes, who therefore have every incentive to keep them private (Kuran 1989, 42). Even in widely despised regimes, a transparent public ritual of obedience and even patriotic fervor may obscure the depth of public sentiment (Wedeen 1999). However, grievances have fared quite well in statistical studies that have creatively operationalized them (among others, Buhaug, Cederman, and Gleditsch 2013; Koubi and Böhmelt 2014; Wood 2010b). Following a veritable flood of influential studies that take advantage of newly available, fine-grained data around the world, some scholars have converged once more on widespread grievances as a key impetus for rebellion (Cederman and Girardin 2007; Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug 2013; Cederman, Weidmann, and Gleditsch 2011; Cederman, Wimmer, and Min 2010, 2010; Gubler and Selway 2012; Østby

---

[50] I use the terms *grievances* and *resentments* interchangeably, as each is used, to similar or identical effect, by different authors.

2008; F. Stewart 2008). These scholars have shown that political exclusion and economic inequality, especially those centered on ethnic cleavages, strongly predict civil war onset.[51] This literature argues that grievances over exclusion and inequality are the key intervening variable explaining civil war.

What are grievances, and why do they matter for the rebel mobilization process? Following Cederman et al. (2013, 37–44), I conceptualize civilian grievances as group-level claims that politicize political and economic inequalities or perceived injustice.[52] Many different types of groups and diverse forms of inequality may lead to grievances. Ethnic resentments are potent mobilizers (Horowitz 1985; Petersen 2002), while non-ethnic economic inequalities – particularly agricultural ones – may also spur mobilization under the right circumstances (Gurr 1970; Paige 1978; Scott 1976). Bates (2008) and Mkandawire (2002) point to urban grievances related to regime mismanagement in several African cases. Petersen (2001), in his discussion of the swelling street protests that overthrew communist regimes at the end of the Cold War, argues that limited regime violence provokes resentments and serves as a focal point ("rallying cry") for further mobilization, if dissidents believe that they are sufficiently likely to escape sanction.[53] In this

---

[51] Some evidence indicates that economic inequality may also help explain non-ethnic civil war (Buhaug, Cederman, and Gleditsch 2013, 8–9). This finding should motivate researchers to revisit classic historical sociological treatises on revolution by authors such as Paige (1978), Scott (1976), Skocpol (1979), and Wickham-Crowley (1991), all of whom incorporate the role of grievances percolating through certain social and economic classes into their once-again-fresh theories. I do this at length in my own treatment of the origin and role of widespread grievances.

[52] As it would take me somewhat far afield from the intellectual goals of this dissertation, I do not rigurously operationalize and score elite "politicization," though I do present elite rhetoric in qualitative chapters as evidence that specific inequalities and injustices have gained salience. This is not to dismiss a vibrant literature: see Tezcür (2016) and Shesterinina (2016) for outstanding recent research on how elites politicize group inequalities and historical injustices to mobilize civilians.

[53] By this reasoning, overwhelming regime force, as long as it were somewhat selective, would have a demobilizing effect as potential activists would weight the likelihood of sanction as greater than their resentment and their belief in the eventual success of the anti-regime movement. Indiscriminate regime violence may push civilians to mobilize not only by increased grievances but by removing their ability to escape sanction though inaction (Kalyvas 2006; Kalyvas and Kocher 2007). My own fieldwork in Nicaragua convinces me that the fundamentally *limited* response of the

dissertation, I do not seek to determine the causes of civilian grievances or why, on some occasions but not others, they gain salience and mobilizing power. Rather, I am concerned with how their power to mobilize civilian dissident and broad social networks creates a specific constituency, with a specific configuration, for rebel movements – and its implications for rebel movement fragmantation.

From grievance to mobilization

Grievances matter for the civilian constituency of a rebel group because they help determine how many and what type of civilian networks may participate in rebellion. As group-level inequalities gain salience, causing grievances to percolate throughout a given society, many more sizable dissident networks are likely to form. Ultimately these dissident networks can produce or support many rebel groups, exacerbating the difficulty of rebel collective action. The Niger Delta offers an example of this mechanism: surveying responses to oil extraction during the 1980s and 1990s, Ikelegbe (2001, 437) argues that 'anger, frustration and hostility to the state and multinational oil corporations' motivated a groundswell of new dissident civil society groups, youth associations, and clan, regional, and ethnic organizations opposed to extractivist practices. With cooperation between dissidents complicated by intra-communal and inter-ethnic cleavages, many of these civil groups supported or mobilized as heterogeneous armed actors in the 2000s.[54]

Yet the relationship between grievances and rebel fragmentation may reverse at extreme levels, because extreme grievances render typically risk-averse broad civilian social networks

---

Somoza regime to anti-regime mobilization (despite later Sandinista glosses of the Somocista National Guard's "genocide") and the belief that by and large Somoza's government would abide by the "rules of the game" contributed to mobilization due to regime violence.

[54] Note that this runs contra the common resource conflict narrative that looting causes rebel fragmentation (see Weinstein 2007). Fragmentation in the Niger Delta preceded widespread oil bunkering, which began only after the conflict intensified.

(such as mass organizations, and religious, political, and pan-ethnic institutions) more likely to participate in rebellion. These networks supply dense and multivalent bridging ties that aid collective action between dissident networks, and thus may serve as an effective 'glue' fostering movement cohesion (Granovetter 1973; Staniland 2012b). Sara Parkinson's (2013) study of Palestinian militants in wartime Lebanon demonstrates how quotidian relationships – such as kinship, friendship, and community ties – not only determine mobilization pathways but serve a bridging role within militant organizations themselves. Critically, Parkinson's research demonstrates that the participation of civilian social networks can help to maintain the cohesiveness of militant groups even under acute violent repression, as occurred in Lebanon where 'strong, trust-based quotidian relationships formed partially redundant social networks that linked militant organizations' subdivisions after formal chains of command were severed' (Parkinson 2013, 419). Similarly, Elisabeth Wood's (2003, 92) account of insurgency in El Salvador describes the importance of individual parish priests and catechists ('a network of active intermediaries') in linking political and rebel groups to each other and to their civilian parishioners in El Salvador. If a broad network supports the rebellion, its legitimacy and social endowments may even allow it to impose leadership on a fragmented, spontaneous uprising. A classic example is the War in the Vendée during the French Revolution; initially a dispersed and locally-directed peasant uprising, refractory Catholic clergy in hiding lent the uprising shape by building 'a phantom church in the shadow of the real one' (Tilly 1964, 252).

We may expect broad civilian networks to join a rebellion only in response to extreme grievances, because most civilians, as opposed to dissidents, are risk-averse. This in turn suggests a quadratic relationship between civilian grievances and rebel fragmentation: moderate grievances should fragment rebel movements, while intense grievance can help unify them.

Hypothesis 2a: If levels of civilian grievances are low, then few dissident networks will form, and a unified (albeit small) rebel movement is more likely.

Hypothesis 2b: If levels of civilian grievances are moderate, then more dissident networks will form, and a fragmented rebel movement is more likely.

Hypothesis 2c: If levels of civilian grievances are high, then broad civilian networks are more likely to participate in rebellion, and a unified rebel movement is more likely.

The three diagrams below illustrate how civilian grievances transform a first-moving rebel movement's potential civilian constituency. In Figure 2-5a, low levels of civilian grievances present few opportunities for expansion, but the rebel movement will likely remain unified. A civilian constituency comprised of a small number of dissident networks will be homogeneous, with few internal cleavages, or it will be relatively easy for a vanguard rebel group to control (more on these mechanisms in the next section). In Figure 2-5b, high levels of civilian grievances produce large numbers of differentiated dissident networks, only some of which are socially tied to the first-moving rebel group. As the diagram suggests, this increases the likelihood of rebel movement fragmentation when the rebels take up arms, as these unconnected dissident networks may produce competing rebel groups. Finally, in Figure 2-5c, extremely high civilian grievances enable the first-moving rebel group to mobilize a broad civilian network, providing network ties to the various dissident networks, enabling collective action and inhibiting movement fragmentation. The broad social network is represented by a circle which encompasses dense and multivalent network ties.

Rebel group

Low levels of civilian grievances

Rebel group
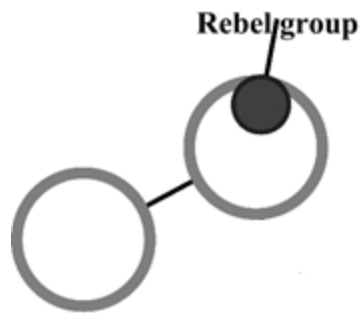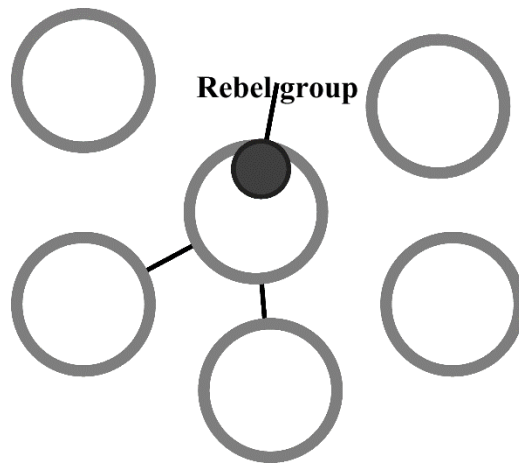
Intermediate to high levels of civilian grievances

Broad social network

Rebel group
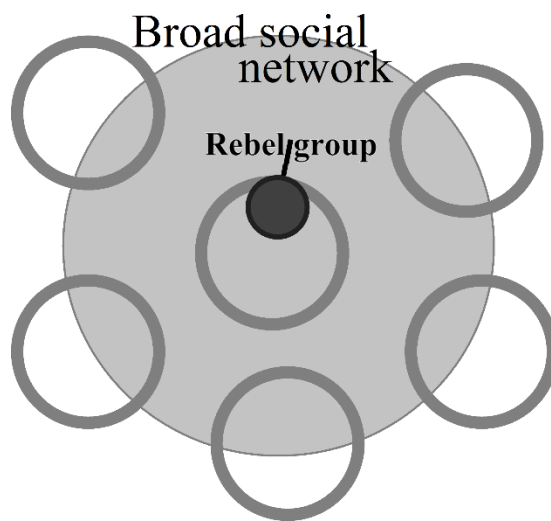
Very high civilian grievances
Figure 2-5 Grievances and civilian mobilization: the 'fragmented middle'

For the sake of conceptual sharpness, at this point it would be useful to distinguish whether rebel movement fragmentation in the theory above is caused by *increasing grievances* or the *overall level of grievances*. The answer is both: rebel groups, dissident networks, and broad civilian networks mobilize when grievances rise, as their thresholds for participation are met.[55] However, the level of grievances determines what effect rising grievances will have. At low levels of grievance, the theory expects only vanguard rebel groups to mobilize as grievances rise. At moderate levels of grievance, the theory expects dissident networks to mobilize as grievances rise, fragmenting the rebel movement. At high levels of grievance, the theory expects broad civilian networks to mobilize as grievances rise, providing means and incentives for the rebel movement to unify through an umbrella group. Throughout this dissertation, I use both "rising grievances" and "level of grievances" as appropriate, when discussing *hypothesis 2*.

I summarize the entire causal argument for grievances below, in Figure 2-6:

---

[55] To be precise, in a threshold model of collective action, rising grievances lower individual and group thresholds to act; the thresholds themselves are met if actors observe enough of their fellows participating.
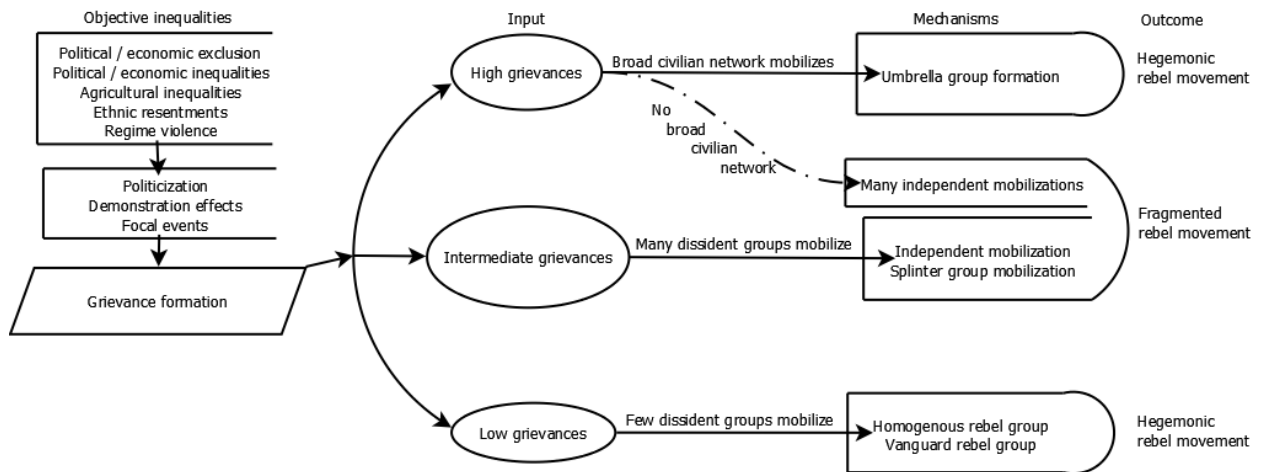
Figure 2-6 A diagrammatic representation of the role of grievance in rebel fragmentation[56]

Caveats to the theory

While the civilian constituency theory is intended to be a comprehensive and systematic account of rebel fragmentation, there are still restrictions to the theory's scope, as well as some simplifying assumptions made for the sake of parsimonious theory-building. The following section details these caveats: processes of fragmentation that fall outside the scope, and the complex relationship between grievances and mobilization.

Omitted mechanisms

The civilian constituency theory seeks account for the mobilization of independent rebel groups, splinter groups, and merger/umbrella groups, in order to explain the overall level of rebel movement fragmentation as conceptualized by BCS. I contend that these three processes account for the majority of variation on the dependent variable, though they do not account for all of it.

---

[56] Rebel type could be appended to this diagram, but not without sacrificing legibility. Rebel type's role is far more straightforward – i.e., linear – than grievances. A more stationary rebel type, by diminishing the number of unconnected dissident networks and rendering broad civilian networks more likely to mobilize, renders all mechanisms of unification more likely. Conversely, roving rebel type renders all mechanisms of fragmentation more likely.

There are two sets of processes which fall outside the civilian constituency theory's scope. I present these, and describe my strategies for avoiding bias.

First, I do not attempt to account for the origins of proxy groups entirely mobilized by external states. Such groups are empirically rare – only 6 of 401 total rebel groups in my sample – and in my view belong to a different research question: what explains external state intervention in civil war? And, what explains their choice of tactics for intervention?

Second, rebel may become less fragmented when states a) defeat individual rebel groups militarily or through effective policing,[57] b) sign a separate peace treaty with some but not all active rebel groups, or c) "flip" rebel groups to serve as pro-state militias. The first of these (military defeat) I test as a corollary of an alternative hypothesis, state capacity (H3), which I disaggregate into bureaucratic and military measures in Chapter 3. However, I do not treat the other two (peace treaties and flipping) except cursorily in this dissertation. I am confident that these omitted mechanisms will not bias my results for several reasons. First, they are less significant empirically. While more common than proxy groups, these mechanisms are far less common than the three that I do study, and typically involve less powerful rebel groups that are more susceptible to state ad rebel violence or entreaties.[58] Moreover, as these processes all lead to a decrease in rebel fragmentation, any bias in the results from their exclusion from the analysis should be *against* my hypotheses about the origins of independent and splinter groups.[59]

---

[57] Other rebel groups may also do this. In one well-known example, the Tamil Tigers unified its rebel movement in Sri Lanka by militarily defeating other rebel groups.

[58] These assertions are based on my familiarity with the universe of cases rather than a careful analysis of descriptive statistics. That said, one descriptive statistic strongly supports this statement: as noted in Chapter 3, conflicts exhibit increasing fragmentation over time, suggesting that processes of fragmentation are far more common after conflict onset than processes of unification.

[59] While this is not necessarily the case with merger/umbrella groups, it is difficult to form a hypothesis in which extreme anti-regime grievances (H2c), my explanation for umbrellas, cause rebel groups to be vulnerable to military

Grievances and mobilization

For the sake of theory-building, in the previous section I assumed a linear and unproblematic relationship between civilian grievances and the potential for rebel groups to mobilize civilians. However, mobilization is an enormously complicated subject that cannot be reduced to grievances. The literature on mobilization and collective action is robust,[60] and no monocausal account can explain mobilization in violent conflict. For example, notwithstanding the age of the hypothesis – see, among others, Gurr (1970) – and careful recent research conducted by Erik-Lars Cederman et al. (2013) and others discussed above, grievances have a mixed record of predicting civil war (the onset of mobilization), while little cross-national work has empirically studied the relationship between levels of civilian grievances and levels of mobilization within war. For many civil war microdynamics, grievances are clearly less important for most actors than self-preservation (Kalyvas 2006), while micro-level mobilization ay be geographically differentiated, often related to local cleavages disconnected from a civil war's master cleavage that is held to cause civilian grievances (Kalyvas 2003; Tilly 1964).

A brief and incomplete list of alternate variables held to drive mobilization should suffice to indicate the complexity of the subject: cost-benefit calculations, especially regarding economic resources (Weinstein 2007), employment (Berman et al. 2011), coercion (Eck 2014), political opportunity structures (Meyer 2004), resource mobilization (McCarthy and Zald 1977), inter-group norms and social structure (Petersen 2001). High levels of violence may eliminate civilian "free-riding," creating security incentives to mobilize (Kalyvas and Kocher 2007). Demonstration

---

defeat or more apt to negotiate with or fight for the state. Thus, I do not expect their exclusion to bias the results in either direction.

[60] So expansive that it boasts its own journal, Mobilization, and motivates extensive research in both sociology and political science.

effects and indications of regime weakness ay cause individuals to update their priors about the probability of victory (Capoccia and Ziblatt 2010).

Nor are politicized inequalities the only type of grievances held to spur mobilization: many grievances are politicized injustices endogenous to civil war processes such as civilian victimization (Balcells 2012; E. J. Wood 2003), or the hardening of ethnic hatreds that were not previously salient (Sambanis and Shayo 2013). Regime violence may have very different impacts at different times, places, and among different audiences. Both rebels and regime can strategically manipulate grievances (Bueno De Mesquita 2010). The social composition of rebel groups often looks similar to pro-state groups, with recruits joining whichever actor controls their communities (Arjona and Kalyvas 2009), and the division between "sides" are sometimes fluid (Kalyvas 2008; Staniland 2012a, 2012c). The agentic, discursive element in the articulation of grievances makes it difficult, *ex ante*, to predict where they will spur mobilization – lowering my framework's analytic value.

Given these complications, how should I approach the relationship between grievances and mobilization in my empirical chapters (and in particular, in my within-case analysis)? First, while I use grievances to anchor my discussion of mobilization, I remain attentive to the full range of variables held to explain mobilization in civil war, especially demonstration effects, the pursuit of economic or status gain (Collier and Hoeffler 2004), and safety (Kalyvas and Kocher 2007). Like Wood (2003) and Shesterinina (2016), I priviledge accounts proffered by my informants of their own pathways to mobilization, while critically assessing whether these accounts act as self-justifying narratives.[61] Second, given that this dissertation seeks to explain rebel fragmentation, I maintain my analytical focus on the aspects of civilian grievances and mobilization that cause

---

[61] See especially Collier and Hoeffler (2004) and Fearon and Laitin (2003).

fragmentation: the participation of dissident and broad social networks in rebellion. Assessing inequalities (and other variables held to cause mobilization) provides a valuable indication of the scale of potential civilian support for rebellion, helping to validate the proposition that unmobilized but mobilizable civilians may lend their support to different rebel groups. But it is *crucial* that observed levels of civilian mobilization map onto the predictions of the civilian constituency theory.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the state of the literature on rebel fragmentation understood broadly. I concluded that rebel movement fragmentation, though empirically common and with implications for almost every conflict outcome studied by scholars, has been inadequately theorized. I then presented my civilian constituency theory, which, by viewing rebel mobilization through the lens of threshold mobilization models, holds that rebel movement fragmentation or unity results from two factors: the rebel type of a movement's constituent rebel groups, and the level of civilian grievances.

Because the civilian constituency theory relies on assumptions about how rebel groups mobilize, if validated this dissertation would have implication far beyond explaining rebel movement fragmentation. First, it would contribute further evidence that grievances play a role in anti-regime mobilization, while at the same time showing that this role is neither straightforward nor linear. This helps us better understand the well-trod question of civil war onset, but its implications for within-conflict microprocesses are perhaps more interesting. As we shall see in Chapter 5, grievances play a predictably important role in conflict processes in combination with hard-nosed calculations of relative power by elite actors. While scholars have largely moved past the debate between "greed and grievance" in civil war, allowing that both play important roles, in

practice most scholars still focus on the role of one or the other in explaining specific conflict outcomes. This dissertation, however, integrates both ideational and material factors in the same causal mechanisms. Therefore, it does not situate itself on either side of the "greed and grievance" divide but rather seeks to specify when, why, and for whom each logic of action predominates.

3. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Note: Significant portions of this chapter have been previously published in Mosinger (2017). Specifically, the above article presented the quantitative analysis performed here and contained most of *Section 3.3: Analysis and results* and both appendices, though I expand on this material here in the dissertation.

Introduction

As discussed in the introduction, this dissertation employs a nested analysis research design (Lieberman 2005). I therefore begin with a cross-national statistical investigation of the causes of rebel fragmentation, which examines several interlinked aims. First, I compile, code, and analyze descriptive statistics on the incidence of rebel fragmentation in a sample of 159 insurgencies between 1946 and 2005 drawn from UCDP data. This requires that I resolve several theoretical and empirical issues, most notably, operationalizing rebel fragmentation, and the civilian constituency theory's main independent variables, rebel type and grievances, in a conceptually rigorous manner. Second, using regression analysis and other statistical tests, I assess these hypotheses alongside a series of competing and complementary explanations. The results of these statistical tests confirm the presence of the correlations expected by the civilian constituency theory. Rebel movements comprised of groups that are, on average, more stationary are more likely to be unified, and rebel movements in countries with intermediate levels of political and economic inequalities are much more likely to be fragmented than in countries with low or extreme levels of

inequality. These results suggest that rebel groups which invest in civilian mobilization are more likely to fom part of unified rebel movements, and that rebels' collective action problems are more severe where dissidents, but *not* broad civilian networks, mobilize.

Finally, in accordance with the methodological dictates of nested analysis, I use the results presented in this chapter to identify on-the-line and off-the-line cases for consideration as the qualitative case studies in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. These three chapters discuss the *same* rebel movement -- the at-times unified, at-times fragmented Sandinista Revolution (1961 – 1979). However, because I define my unit of analysis, or case, as a rebel movement-time period, the chapters discuss three *different* cases. I also consider two matched rebel movements in Syria in Chapter 7 – the Islamist rebellion (1976 – 1982) and the Arab Spring rebellion (2011 – present).

Regression Analysis: Hypotheses, Variable Operationalization, and Data

My analysis dataset contains 159 rebel movements comprising 401 rebel groups engaged in hostilities with a state in 1,181 movement-years between 1946 and 2005.[62] I draw my main variables for the large-n cross-national test of the civilian constituency theory from three datasets: the UCDP Armed Conflict Data (Therése Pettersson and Wallensteen 2015), the Ethnic Power Relations data set (Vogt et al. 2015), and the Non-State Actor (NSA) dataset by Cunningham, Gleditsch & Salehyan (2009a). As these datasets were all constructed on the basis of the dyadic "rebel-state" assumption challenged in the rebel fragmentation literature, they required heavy

---

[62] Country-years without a rebel movement fall outside the scope of this analysis, as, logically, there can be no rebel fragmentation without a rebel movement. Therefore, I only include rebel movement-years. Were non-conflict years included in the analysis (for example, to address concerns about selecting on the dependent variable), the analysis would only show which variables predict conflict (that is, the existence of a rebel movement), not rebel movement fragmentation.

modification before they were suitable for analysis. Specifically, these datasets feature as their unit of observation either country-year, conflict-year, or rebel group. As my unit of observation for quantitative research is the rebel movement-year – and this analysis is to my knowledge the first large-n study of rebel movement-years[63] – existing data needed to be aggregated from the rebel group-level to the rebel movement-level, or (when reported as time-invariate measures) disaggregated to record yearly measures. I discuss these modifications further below.

The civilian constituency theory aims at explaining rebel fragmentation in asymmetric conflicts or insurgencies. In this "technology of rebellion" (Kalyvas and Balcells 2010), rebel groups rely on the civilian population for (at a minimum) concealment from state forces, and (at a maximum) resources, information, and recruits. Rebels rely on civilians in asymmetric (or irregular) conflicts in order to lessen the massive gap in fighting capabilities between themselves and the state. Other types of internal conflicts begin by different processes, are fought by substantially different protagonists, host different logics of mobilization and violence, and therefore fall outside the scope conditions of this dissertation. What Kalyvas and Balcells term "conventional civil wars" typically begin when a state's military splits, and are fought between two mechanized armies with similarly high capabilities. Armies fighting conventional civil wars do not need to rely heavily on civilian support as neither concealment, information, or civilian-supplied provisions play as large a role in mechanized combat. "Symmetric non-conventional conflicts" (SNCs) are also fought between groups with similar capabilities, though in this case

---

[63] Several articles based on Cunningham's separatist movement-year dataset have a similar unit of observation (Chenoweth and Cunningham 2013; K. G. Cunningham 2011; K. G. Cunningham, Bakke, and Seymour 2012; Seymour, Bakke, and Cunningham 2015; K. Stewart 2014), though this dataset is limited to 22, rather than 171 movements, and contains both non-violent groups and movements. Also note that rebel movement-year is very similar to conflict-year, as my definition of rebel movement is that it is the total armed anti-government forces in any given conflict. The distinction between rebel movement-year and conflict-year is therefore conceptual rather than empirical.

their capabilities are low – primarily as a result of state collapse. Civilian mobilization again serves as an auxiliary, rather than primary, technology of warfare. As Balcells and Kalyvas (2014, 4) put it,

> we expect rebel groups in irregular wars to prioritize practices of recruitment that avoid alienating the civilian population—hence an emphasis on voluntary joining; in contrast, rebel groups fighting in conventional wars are more likely to rely on preexisting institutions, such as compulsory draft, whereas rebel groups fighting SNC wars are likely to privilege coercive practices, such as abductions, or rely on monetary incentives.

Finally, "sons-of-the-soil" conflicts, fought by a settler-colonial state against a small minority ethnic group, typically consist of one-sided violence on the one hand, and rearguard, relatively unorganized defensive actions on the other (Fearon 2004). While such conflicts have commonalities with more traditional insurgencies headed by well-organized rebel groups, processes of mobilization are quite different and frequently sporadic. The civilian constituency theory may explain unity and fragmentation among sons-of-the-soil rebel movements, but I do not test that possibility in this dissertation.

In order to identify conventional civil wars and SNCs in my sample, I use Balcells and Kalyvas' (2014) data set (henceforth BK) from an empirical follow-up article, in which the authors score conflict-years as conventional civil wars and SNC wars. Their data are compatible with the UCDP-PRIO collection of datasets on which I base my quantitative analysis. BK's dataset only codes technology of rebellion type for PRIO100 conflicts – that is, for conflict-years with more than 100 battle-deaths. This is problematic for my purpose, as my dataset covers movement-years with 25 battlefield deaths or more. Thus, simply overlaying BK's data on mine would create two

types of missing data: 1) many conflicts that never reached 100 battlefield deaths would not appear in my dataset at all, and 2) many movement-years would be missing where battlefield-deaths dipped below 100. Thus, I made two assumptions in order to minimize missing data: 1) that movement-years which reach 25 but not 100 battlefield deaths (i.e., conflict-years covered by my dataset but not BK's dataset) should be coded as irregular conflicts, excepting that 2) conflicts that start as one type, continue as that type unless explicitly coded as changing over time by BK.[64]

The first coding assumption is justified because combatants in conventional civil wars suffer far more battlefield fatalities on average than combatants in irregular civil wars (Balcells and Kalyvas 2014, 13), and would very rarely be expected to fall under 100 battlefield deaths. On the other hand, I do run the risk of including several SNCs that should be removed from the sample, as there is limited evidence that SNCs are somewhat less deadly than irregular conflicts. However, this risk is justifiable because irregular conflicts vastly outnumber SNCs: the BK PRIO100 dataset includes 757 conflict-years coded as irregular and only 24 conflict-years coded as SNC. While this ratio is likely lower for conflict-years with fewer than 100 battlefield deaths, the number of SNCs miscoded as irregular conflicts by assumption 1 is almost certainly very small, and unlikely to significantly bias the results.[65] The alternative – throwing out all observations with fewer than 100 battlefield deaths – would create a substantially higher risk of bias in the analysis, because it would remove most of the small rebel groups that the civilian constituency theory expects to be unified vanguard or homogenous groups, potentially truncating the dependent variable. Fearon (2004)

---

[64] In their online appendix, they list conflicts that change from one type to another, including the specific year in which they observe a change in technology of rebellion.

[65] I expect low intensity conflicts to have unified rebel groups. As even very small (fewer than 100 battlefield deaths) SNCs are more likely to be fragmented than irregular wars, miscoding SNCs as irregular wars would bias results against my hypothesis.

provides a list of sons-of-the-soil conflicts; I simply removed conflicts that appeared on this list from my sample.

Dependent variable

In order to conduct a statistical examination of the causes of rebel fragmentation, it is first necessary to operationalize the dependent variable in a manner consistent with the definitions generally accepted in the literature. As discussed in Chapter 2, rebel fragmentation is sometimes conceptualized as a process (e.g., a splintering event [(McLauchlin and Pearlman 2012a)]), sometimes as a group-level state (Staniland 2014), and sometimes as a rebel movement-level state (Bakke, Cunningham, and Seymour 2012). The dependent variable in this dissertation is a movement-level outcome: I seek to explain why rebel movements as a whole consist of few or many significant rebel groups.[66] Indeed, the descriptive statistics indicate that group-level fragmentation must be understood as a movement-level phenomenon as well: splintering events tend to cluster in the same rebel movement, an unlikely pattern if splintering were caused only by group-level characteristics.

I code rebel fragmentation longitudinally, as the degree of fragmentation in any given rebel movement is not time invariant; thus as noted above, a single rebel movement may comprise multiple cases in my analysis as its degree of fragmentation changes over time. I seek to explain both cross-movement variation, and within-movement longitudinal change (i.e., over-time variation), in rebel fragmentation. Over time, rebel movements can be unitary, fragmented, initially fragmented but eventually unitary, initially unitary but eventually fragmented, or go back and forth

---

[66] As discussed in the previous chapter, this requires a theory that is also sensitive to when rebel movements are likely to fragment, i.e. through the mobilization of independent or splinter groups, or unify, i.e. through the merging of rebel groups or creation of umbrella groups.

between unity and fragmentation; there is thus over-time variation in the score on the dependent variable for the different analytic cases associated with a particular rebel movement. I exploit the Sandinista rebel movemement's evolution over time in both my medium-n comparative analyses in this chapter and the Nicaraguan case studies in Chapters 4 through 6.

Drawing on Bakke, Cunningham, and Seymour's definition of rebel fragmentation (2012, 266), as well as classical realist theories of international relations, I conceptualize rebel fragmentation in terms of the *polarity* of a rebel movement. Such a measure would incorporate two of BCS' three dimensions: the number of rebel organizations in the rebel movement, and the distribution of power among them.[67] In order to operationalize rebel fragmentation for quantitative analysis, I therefore adopt the Laakso-Taagepera (L-T) index (Laakso and Taagepera 1979). The L-T index is defined as

$$N = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i^2} \text{ (1)}$$

where *n* is the total number of rebel groups in the rebel movement, and *p* is group *i*'s proportion of the size of the total rebel movement (measured by number of fighters). *n* is therefore the first of BCS' dimensions, and *p* is the third.

I draw on the UCDP Dyadic dataset (Themnér & Wallensten, 2015) to code *n*, the total number of rebel groups in each rebel movement, and adopt its definition for recognizing a new

---

[67] The third dimension (institutionalization between groups) is empirically demanding and not as clearly connecting to outcomes of interest, such as levels of violence and length of conflict, as the first two dimensions. I touch on institutionalization throughout this dissertation but am unable to offer a systematic theory or operationalization.

rebel-state dyad: a rebel group appears in the dataset when 25 battle-related deaths[68] are observed in combat between the rebel group and the state in any given movement-year.[69] Other common cut-offs (usually for recognizing civil war onset, not rebel group mobilization) are 100 and 1000 battle-related deaths, but 25 deaths is more appropriate to this analysis for two reasons. First, the lower threshold captures relatively minor rebel groups that would otherwise fall out of the analysis – a problem for analyzing rebel fragmentation. Second, a high threshold would truncate the analysis of conflict intensity, measured by battle-related deaths, which is one of the hypotheses. However, these measures do introduce potential bias in the result, in which fragmented conflicts may appear more intense. As rebel-state dyads are defined by 25 battle-related deaths, a unified rebel movement would be recognized with only 25 battle-related deaths, while, by definition, a movement with eight active rebel groups must necessarily have at least 200 battle-related deaths.

I draw in part on the Non-State Actor (NSA) dataset by Cunningham, Gleditsch & Salehyan (2009a) in order to measure p, rebel group i's proportion of the strength (in fighters) of the rebel movement. This dataset reports fighter numbers for a substantial portion of the rebel groups in the sample, along with other data about group types and capabilities. The coding notes usually report troop strength disaggregated by year, and I use this value where available. However, the NSA dataset suffers from a great deal of missing information on rebel troop counts, so I

---

[68] More detailed definitions from the UCDP's coding methodology helps clarify when this threshold is deemed to be met. See http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/definitions/#Battle-related_deaths for these.

[69] Five cases in the UCDP dataset were labeled as "insurgents" ("Kashmiri insurgents," "Palestinian insurgents," "Sikh insurgents," etc.), because there was so much rebel fragmentation in these cases that UCDP coders struggled to distinguish groups. This meant that they were coded as having one rebel group despite actually representing very fragmented rebel movements. I therefore re-coded these cases to avoid biasing the analysis with influential – and diametrically incorrect – observations. I followed UCDP coding rules in mind while re-coding insurgent cases. While it was difficult to confirm that the 25 battle death threshold had been met for each movement-year in the data set, I was almost always able to confirm first and last years. I also re-ran the analysis without these cases and received substantively identical results.

supplemented this source with extensive research in secondary literature. Appendix A contains a list of my codings for rebel troop counts along with a large bibliography of sources.[70]

The L-T index, originally developed in economics in order to measure the competitiveness of markets by weighting the market shares of all competing firms, and later adapted to comparative politics to measure party system fragmentation, approximates the number of *effective* rebel groups in a rebel movement.[71] In many cases, where rebel groups are roughly equal in fighting strength, the L-T index will return a value that is similar to a simple count of rebel groups. For example, in a rebel movement with two groups of 2,000 fighters each, the L-T index would return an *N* of two effective rebel groups – identical to the simple count. However, the L-T index is far superior than a simple count at capturing the dynamics of rebel movements where rebel groups differ markedly in strength. For example, where a rebel movement contains one rebel group of 2,000 fighters and another of 200, the L-T index would return an *N* of 1.2 effective rebel groups. This reflects the fact that the second group is a far inferior force than the first, and the rebel movement should be considered closer to hegemonic rather than bipolar.

Where rebel movements contain more than two groups, the L-T index captures polarity in a sophisticated way, measuring the potential balances of power between groups that could form

---

[70] It's worth elaborating on my approach to removing missing data on rebel troop counts; I was able to dramatically increase data coverage by delving into secondary literature. Most new estimates came from scholarly case studies, journalistic accounts, diplomatic correspondence, and NGO reports, and I attempted to triangulate estimates wherever possible. This is consistent with the NSA data set's use of diverse sources for rebel troop counts. I am not aware of any reason why utilizing a diversity of sources would systematically bias the counts any particular direction; all numbers for rebel troop counts necessarily come from similarly unsystematic on-the-ground estimates. I now source all troop count additions in Appendix A; the bibliography counts a total of 44 sources. I was unable to find troop counts for only 4 groups in the sample, which were present in 9 movement-years (the groups were EPDM, FARF, CNR, and EPRLF). Each of these groups were described as marginal in the secondary literature and so I subjected them to pairwise deletion. (Note that I only sought troop counts for groups present in fragmented movement-years – troop counts were not required to calculate the DV when only one group was observed).

[71] See Dowd (2015) for advocacy of a similar fragmentation index for the study of rebel fragmentation.

alliances in an unstable system (see Christia [2012] for a description of balance-of-power politics among rebel groups). Thus a rebel movement consisting of one group with a strength of 1,000 fighters and three groups with a strength of 300 fighters returns an L-T index of 2.84 effective groups. This value is intermediate between two possible competitive arrangements: first, that all rebel groups compete with each other (4 separate factions), and second, that the weaker groups balance against the stronger group (2 separate factions).[72]

While I do not disaggregate the dependent variable in the quantitative analysis into the various processes by which rebel groups fragment or unify (that is, independent mobilization, splinter group mobilization, and umbrella/merger group formation), I have coded descriptive statistics on the incidence of different mobilization pathways of rebel groups in movements that begin or become fragmented. The two rebel categories discussed in Chapter 2, independently-mobilized groups and splinter groups, account for the lion's share of politically-significant groups: my sample of 401 rebel groups from the Non-State Actor dataset contains 163 first-moving rebels, 136 independent groups, 62 splinter groups, 17 mergers, and 17 umbrella groups, and 6 proxy groups (D. E. Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009a).[73] Independent and splinter groups are highly coextensive: 75% of all splinter group mobilizations occur in movements with independent group mobilizations. These two processes are far more coextensive than could have occurred by chance, and this suggests that they stem from similar causes. The civilian constituency theory

_____

[72] Note, however, that it does not capture the possibility that all groups cooperate against the state – a not uncommon outcome. Here a measure that captures BCS's second dimension, institutionalization, would be useful.
[73] Author's coding. The coding rubric is as follows:
Coding rubric for origins of new rebel groups
Independent group = no core personnel of the new group were members of a previously active UCDP dyad
Splinter group = core personnel of the new group were members of a previously active UCDP rebel group
Merger group = two or more previously active UCDP rebel groups join together, eliminating separate hierarchies
Umbrella group = two or more previously active UCDP rebel groups join together, retaining separate hierarchies that are nominally under a single coordinated command
Proxy group = a rebel group that is formed as the direct result of policy by an external intervener

proposes that both independent and splinter group mobilization results from a large number of dissident networks in a rebel movement's civilian constituency.

How does the L-T index compare to a simple count of politically significant rebel groups for the conflicts in the sample? Figure 3-1, below, tallies the number of rebel movements in the sample in terms of their highest movement-year fragmentation score, comparing fragmentation scores measured as an L-T index with scores measured as a simple count of rebel groups. As Figure 3-1 demonstrates, the index is more stringent than a simple count – and more specific.
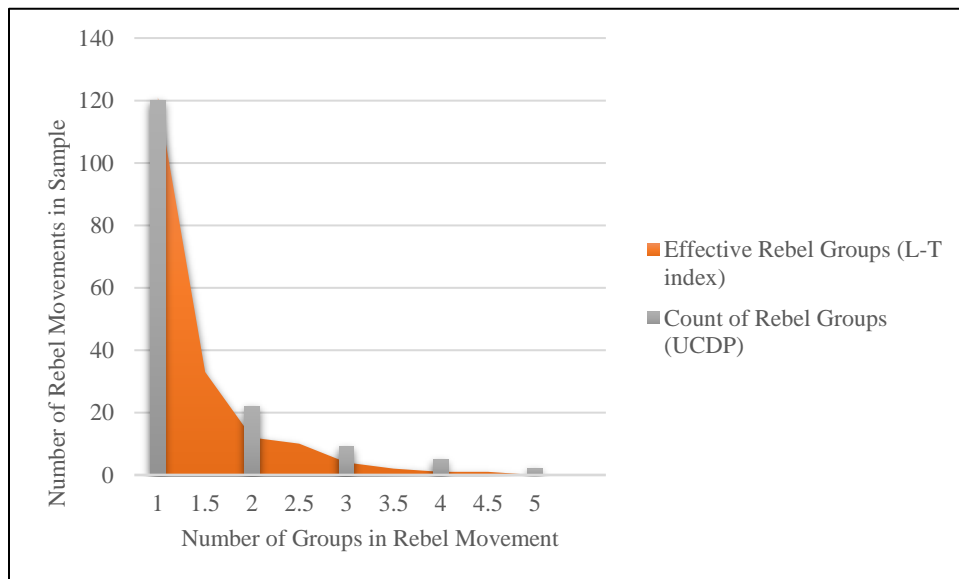
Figure 3-1 Operationalizing rebel fragmentation[74]

Afghanistan in 1984 is the most fragmented conflict-year in my dataset whether measured as a count (8) or as the number of effective rebel groups (3.84); however the latter number sheds far more light than the former on the shifting balance of power alliance system described by Christia (2012). Other major differences show how the L-T index captures the actual dynamics of rebel fragmentation. For example, UCDP counts five politically important Palestinian groups in

---

[74] Because the out-lier made the chart difficult to interpret, it does not depict Afghanistan (1984).

2002, but the L-T index of 1.73 better reflects a movement dominated by Fatah and an increasingly influential Hamas. Similarly, while four politically significant groups competed in early 1990s Kashmir (and perhaps up to 40 other minor ones), Lashkar-e-Taiba was by far the largest at that point. Kashmir's L-T index of 1.67 typifies the structure of this rebel movement more appropriately than a count of four (or 40, for that matter).
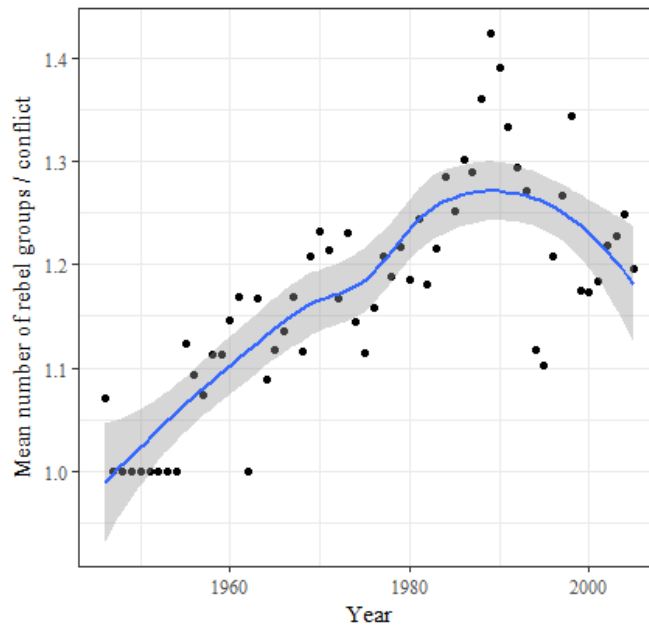
Figure 3-2 Rebel fragmentation since WWII

Figure 3-2 elucidates longitudinal trends by charting the mean number of effective rebel groups per conflict in each year since World War II. Levels of rebel fragmentation rose steadily throughout the Cold War, with a clear inflection point as the Cold War ended. Given that my dataset likely suffers from poorer coverage (due to less detailed journalistic accounts of non-Western conflicts) in its earlier years, these descriptive statistics suggest that we should be cautious when assessing the role of the Cold War in spurring or inhibiting rebel fragmentation. On the other hand, the trend since the end of the Cold War toward less fragmentation, like the trend toward less civil war in general, may have already reversed itself. The civil war in Syria demonstrated more

rebel fragmentation in 2013 than any conflict-year in the sample analyzed by this dissertation, with 4.42 effective rebel groups. Though rebel blocs have to some extent consolidated, Syria may have already earned the dubious distinction of being the most fragmented conflict in history.

Independent variables

I test 13 independent variables in this chapter. Two of them, *rebel type* and *civilian grievances*, are the main hypotheses for the civilian constituency theory. The remaining 11 may be divided into three categories: structural explanations (*state capacity, ethnolinguistic fractionalization, state size, resource wealth,* and *rough terrain*), regime type and stability (*political instability* and *democracy*), and conflict-level explanations (*state repression, external support, length of conflict,* and *Cold War*).

Rebel type

Hypothesis 1: Rebel movements comprised predominantly of stationary rebel groups are likely to be less fragmented.

This hypothesis holds that rebel movements are more likely to be unified by rebel groups that invest in non-coercive civilian mobilization. These groups will maintain civilian loyalties during conflict, thereby diminishing assets, including pecuniary resources, information, and recruits, potentially available to opposing rebel groups. With respect to Olsonian and organizational theories of insurgency, stationary rebels are expected to construct strong institutions, provide public goods to civilians, seek legitimacy through ideological persuasion, and maintain control of territory.

Rebel type is another multidimensional concept, and I choose a similar strategy as that above[75] to operationalize it: a size-weighted index of four indicators drawn from the NSA dataset. The indicators – each scored from 0 to 3 by a team of researchers based on secondary literature – are measured at the rebel group-level: 1) each group's mobilization capacity (a measure of popular support), 2) the institutional strength of the rebel command structure, 3) the extent of the rebel political wing (a roundabout way of assessing the presence of an ideological component), and 4) the extent of each rebel group's territorial control. I sum these indicators for each group in the sample, then use the following formula to create an index calculating each rebel movement's type:

$$N = \sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i (PS + CC + PW + TC)$$

(2)

The index is weighted by the size of each rebel group, such that a hegemonic rebel movement will bear a score that is relatively close to that of the dominant group. Changes in rebel type over the course of the Ugandan civil war, as various rebel groups entered and left the movement, illustrate how the index aggregates constituent groups' characteristics to create a movement-level score for rebel type (i.e., for the types of rebel groups that comprise it). In 1982, the Ugandan rebel movement received a rebel type score of 7 – slightly above average – despite being highly fragmented (L-T =1.99). This was largely due to the presence of Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA), which "activated social networks to overcome collective action problems, generated cross-ethnic group appeals as the ranks of Banyankole grew thin, and sorted activists from opportunists as it sought to overcome its resource handicap in building its guerrilla army" (Weinstein 2007, 111). The NRA also controlled territory containing 200,000 civilians

---

[75] I.e., my strategy for operationalizing rebel fragmentation.

(Weinstein 2007, 68), and maintained a political wing responsible for significant amounts of political training. The NRA received a rebel type score of 10 out of a possible 12, and by 1984 had become the only rebel group active in Uganda in the UCDP dataset. Uganda's rebel movement therefore received a rebel type score of 10 in 1984 as well. By 1986, the NRA had taken power, and by 1987, fought against a new rebellion. This movement, composed of factions descended from the unpopular overthrown regime with few organic ties to civilian networks (the UPA and UPDA), as well as the Holy Spirit Movement, an inchoate uprising directed by Alice Auma, a self-proclaimed apocalyptic prophet. The Ugandan rebel movement in 1987 was about as fragmented as in 1982 (L-T = 2.37), but received a rebel type score of only 3.36.

Civilian grievances

Hypothesis 2: Civilian grievances express a quadratic relationship with rebel fragmentation, such that rebel movements are more likely to be fragmented at intermediate levels of grievance, and more likely to be unified at high or low levels of grievance.

Grievances are among the oldest explanations for civil conflict in the political science literature (Gurr 1970). Researchers of the 'economic turn' in conflict literature attempted to use structural factors such as inequality, political rights, ethnic polarization, religious fractionalization, and ethnic dominance as proxies for grievances in cross-national regressions (see Collier & Hoeffler 2004, 588).[76] Through their analysis, they concluded that political and economic inequalities – and therefore grievances – are either inconsequential or too ubiquitous to explain

---

[76] Only the latter - that is, one ethnic group being the majority - was statistically significant in Collier and Hoeffler's analysis.

variation in civil war onset. However, these models generally have poor fit, and use national measures of individual-level inequality, such as the Gini index, that are theoretically inappropriate for explaining organized political violence carried out by ethnic groups.

Rather than measuring individual differences in wealth, several scholars have recently made a conceptual and empirical breakthrough by measuring differences in the wealth and political access of different *groups*, especially ethnic groups, as a measure of inequalities that should provoke grievances (Bartusevičius 2014; Buhaug, Cederman, and Gleditsch 2013; Cederman, Buhaug, and Rød 2009; Cederman and Girardin 2007; Cederman, Wimmer, and Min 2010; Koubi and Böhmelt 2014). Their argument is that grievances as such are unobservable, but political and economic inequalities are often (i.e., probabilistically) politicized and thus motivate grievances. While data on politicization are, as yet, difficult to collect for large-*n* research designs (though see Tezcür [2016]), these scholars argue that "horizontal inequalities" (Stewart 2008, 11) between groups can serve as proxies for grievances in regression analysis. This approach conceptually aligns with the recent focus of several authors on civilian networks as the basic building block of insurgency.[77]

Given this debate, I rely both on a measure of individual-level inequality, the Gini index,[78] and a measure of horizontal inequality, the N* index for discriminated groups (Cederman and

---

[77] While the dominant assumption for many authors is that inequality impacts rebellion by activating grievances, some also highlight other mechanisms. For example, in an ingenious working paper, Kuhn and Weidmann (2013) suggest that inequalities *within* ethnic groups aid in ethnic mobilization, because it helps produce a division of labor between activist elites and a poorer ethnic base. As I wrote in the section "Caveats to the theory" in Chapter 2, for my purposes it is more important that horizontal inequalities are correlated with mobilization, whether or not grievances are (always) the mechanism. The literature cited above provides strong evidence of such a link.

[78] Following Buhaug, Cederman, and Gleditsch (2013), I use linear interpolation to bridge missing information and extend the earliest or latest available observations.

Girardin 2007).[79] Both are reported in the EPR data set. These appear as *Gini* and *N* index* in the statistical analysis. I test Hypothesis 2 by combining these indicators with their quadratic forms, *Gini²* and *N* index ²*. Hypothesis 2 finds support where *Gini* and *N* index* are positive and significant, and *Gini²* and *N* index ²* are negative and significant.

The N* index is designed to assess the extent to which ethnic groups are excluded from and discriminated by the state, which creates strong grievances. Specifically, the measure quantifies the number of potential state-ethnic group dyads that might be formed where the ethnic group faces discrimination. It weights each dyad by the ethnic group's size as compared to the ethnic group in power, as larger groups facing discrimination are likely to view rebelling against the state as more feasible. The following function, where *r* is the relative size of ethnic group *i* and *k* "can be interpreted as a measure of how decisive combat is" (Cederman and Girardin 2007, 176),[80] calculates the N* index:

$$N^*(r, k) = 1 - \prod_{i=1}^{n-1} \frac{\{r(i)/r)\}^{-k}}{1 + \{r(i)/r\}^{-k}} \quad _{(3)}$$

A country's N* index will be especially high when a small ethnic minority holds power, and where several large ethnic groups face severe discrimination. As such, the measure is admirably suited to testing the civilian constituency theory (at least where conflicts with an ethnic

[79] According to Wimmer, Cederman, and Min's online appendix (http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/wimmer/ AppendixEthnicPolitics.pdf), discrimination means that "group members are subjected to active, intentional, and targeted discrimination with the intent of excluding them from both regional and national power... Formal discrimination legally limits access to government positions to citizens who speak a certain mother tongue, display certain phenotypical features, or are members of certain religious groups. Informal discrimination actively and intentionally inhibits individuals with certain ethnic backgrounds from rising within the ranks of government."

[80] Note that I use Buhaug, Cederman & Gleditsch (2013) modification to the N* index which only includes groups facing active discrimination rather than those merely excluded from state power. Various mechanisms may link excluded groups to rebellion; while discrimination is intuitively more likely to lead to rebellion by means of grievances.

component are concerned) because it measures both extreme grievance-causing ethnic inequalities, as well as a rough measure of the size and number of ethnic dissident groups that may challenge the regime. The quadratic variable, $N^* \, index^2$, is especially important for showing that the number of effective rebel groups is not simply correlated with the number of significant discriminated ethnic groups – that is, that dissident group heterogeneity is not the sole determinant of rebel fragmentation. A country with a very high $N^* \, index$ has a small ethnic group in power and many significant discriminated groups. A naïve theory of rebel fragmentation would hold that we may expect each discriminated group to form their own rebel group, implying a positive relationship between the $N^* \, index$ and rebel fragmentation. The civilian constituency theory proposes that this relationship reverses where the $N^* \, index$ is very high – that is, where there are very many potential discriminated group-state dyads, we will observe *unified* rebel movements. The naïve theory of rebel fragmentation would be unable to explain such a counterintuitive finding, and this outcome would be very unlikely were there not some mechanism enabling heterogeneous discriminated groups to act collectively when the state produces extreme grievances. The civilian constituency theory proposes that this mechanism is the activation of broad civilian – especially pan-ethnic – networks. Later in this chapter and in Chapter 6 and 7, I present cross-case evidence that this mechanism explains rebel movement unity where grievances are very high.

Structural explanations for rebel fragmentation

As discussed earlier, several of the commonly cited structural causes of civil war onset merit investigation as causes of rebel fragmentation, as generally speaking, similar mechanisms may logically apply both to civil war onset and to rebel fragmentation. These include a state's strength, geographic size and social diversity (Gates 2002, 127), which may limit state penetration, provide rebels with a larger recruiting base, or encompass heterogeneous preferences; exploitable

resources (Weinstein 2007, 330), which provide greater incentives for rebel groups to mobilize; and rough terrain, which provides greater opportunities for rebel groups to mobilize.

State capacity

H3: If the state is bureaucratically weak, the rebel movement is more likely to be fragmented.

State weakness is among the most commonly cited causes of civil war onset in the large- *n* literature, although several scholars contest this (see especially Thies 2010). At least three potential mechanisms might also connect state weakness to rebel fragmentation. First, as studies of civil war onset have pointed out, the absence of robust local state structures creates permissive conditions and low start up costs for the opportunistic formation of armed groups (Collier and Hoeffler 1998; Fearon and Laitin 2003). Logically, if these conditions are favorable for mobilizing a single rebel group, they may be favorable for mobilizing several (Seymour, Bakke, and Cunningham 2015, 4–5).[81] Meanwhile, strong states have several mechanisms at their disposal to suppress the mobilization of many rebel groups. They may rely on superior policing and information-gathering capacities to prevent dissidents from mobilizing into rebel groups. Once mobilized, weak rebel groups are particularly vulnerable to state counterinsurgency, as shown by the fact that 60% of rebel-state dyads in the UCDP dataset end either in military defeat for the rebels or in low activity – typically a product of effective policing (D. E. Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009b, 588). Would-be rebels competing against strong states may also be incentivized to avoid internecine quarrels, as well as to invest in more coherent organizations,

---

[81] On the other hand, one might imagine that a first-moving rebel group may rapidly gain strength where the state is weak, crowding out future challengers. There is some support for this alternate interpretation in specific circumstances; see especially H7, mountainous terrain, for evidence that a similar mechanism aids rebels in creating and maintaining a unified rebel movement.

simply as a means of self-preservation or because civilians accustomed to state public goods provisions insist on the same from rebels in exchange for cooperation (Mampilly 2011, 211).

Finally, weak states often have "strong societies" resulting from (or resisting) limited state-building (Migdal 1988): traditional local loyalties, clan leaders, ethnic and religious authorities compete with the state's agents for legitimacy and power in many states. In the event of rebellion, where the monopoly of violence by the state contracts, a panoply of overlapping local orders may emerge that challenge both state and rebel attempts at centralization.

I follow Fearon and Laitin (2003) in using lagged GDP per capita as a measure of *state capacity*, once again reported in the EPR dataset.[82] For many reasons, GDP per capita is a brute proxy for state capacity that nonetheless is difficult to improve upon: states' economic resources and their bureaucratic capacity are closely correlated and causally linked. However, GDP per capita also infringes on economic omitted variables that may be related to rebel mobilization, such as poverty rates and unemployment.[83] This variable should therefore be interpreted with caution. Therefore, I also disaggregate state capacity into measures of a) bureaucratic capacity, b) military capacity, and c) public goods provision. The first two measures are drawn from Hendrix (2010), while the others, intended to proxy public goods provision, measure the percentage of births attended by medical staff and the literacy rate.

Ethnolinguistic fractionalization

   H4: If the civilian populace demonstrates a high level of ethnic, linguistic, or

   religious fractionalization, the rebel movement is more likely to be fragmented.

---

[82] Divided by 1,000 in order to ease interpretation of this variable.
[83] These are held to increase grievances and decrease opportunity costs (Fearon and Laitin 2003).

Almost all rebel groups are built on, or attempt to build on, distinct "social bases" (Staniland 2012), preexisting civilian social networks that provide crucial stores of interpersonal trust and reciprocity, and allow for the rapid diffusion of information and collective action. Yet not all civilian social networks are equally suited to fostering rebel cohesion. Civilian social networks can be of broad scope, encompassing much of the population of an entire country, but they can also be narrow, limited to specific kinship or ethnic groups. Social networks can be unified, or riven by factions and cleavages. It follows that the more fragmented a rebel movement's constituency is, the more fragmented the rebel movement will be (D. E. Cunningham 2006, 878). However, this relationship should only apply to a subset of cases in which rebel movements are multi-ethnic. In order to test *Hypothesis 4*, I use the total ethnolinguistic fractionalization (ELF) index from each country as a whole, as reported in the EPR data set. As with the Gini index, I interpolate missing data where possible.

State size

> H5: *Populous states tend to host more heterogeneous civilian groups and more sub-group cleavages, rendering rebel fragmentation more likely.*

This hypothesis assumes that larger populations encompass more diverse preferences and heterogeneous identities (D. E. Cunningham 2006; Gates 2002; Warren and Troy 2014). The more heterogeneous a potential civilian constituency is, the more difficult collective action and coordination - a contention that dates back to Mancur Olson's (1965) work. A link between state size and fragmentation also follows from the civilian constituency theory - large and diverse civilian populations are likely to lack the requisite horizontal links that can help unify rebel movements. I operationalize *state size* using logged total population size using census population data reported in the EPR data set.

Resource wealth

　　H6: In states with exploitable resource wealth, the rebel movement is more likely to be

　　fragmented.

　　Resource wealth can lower the initial costs and raise the expected benefits of rebellion, incentivizing opportunistic rebel group formation (Fearon and Laitin 2003). Rebel groups might seek to leverage resource wealth into an initial military advantage against the state and other mobilizing dissidents by using the proceeds to recruit soldiers rapidly. However, rebel groups launched through the exploitation of lootable resources need rely little upon "social endowments" and may neglect the cultivation of a civilian base, leading to undisciplined troops and a fractious internal structure (Weinstein 2007). Both mechanisms suggest that increased resource wealth should lead a greater number of rebel groups to form. As oil production is one of the few types of resource wealth which authors have consistently linked to conflict onset (Fearon 2005; Humphreys 2005; Lujala 2010; Ross 2006; Soysa and Neumayer 2007; Thies 2010), I use oil production per capita (logged) within a given country, reported in the EPR data set, as the measure of lootable resources for large-*n* analysis.[84]

Rough terrain

　　H7a: In states with mountainous terrain, state penetration and therefore capacity

　　is limited in inaccessible areas, and thus rebel fragmentation is more likely.

---

[84] Though note many dissenters, e.g. Cotet and Tsui (2013).

H7b: In states with mountainous terrain, rebels can more easily establish territorial control and are therefore more likely to be stationary, thus rebel fragmentation is less likely.

H7c: In states with mountainous terrain, civilian groups in inaccessible areas will have dense network ties and rebellious cultures, thus rebel fragmentation is less likely.

Rough terrain – usually operationalized as the extent of mountainous areas – is the third of Fearon and Laitin's (2003) famous trifecta, and has been robustly linked to conflict onset. However, the mechanism by which it contributes to rebel mobilization is not entirely clear. In fact, there are three often-cited mechanisms, all of which would be expected to make conflict onset more likely but which would have *opposite* impacts on rebel fragmentation. Therefore, testing the relationship between rough terrain and rebel fragmentation has theoretical implications beyond this dissertation's central question: it may help clarify which of the three possible mechanisms are better candidates for explaining conflict onset.

Regime type and stability

Regime type or instability may be related to rebel fragmentation by affecting the extent and diversity of pre-conflict mobilization. In democratic or in unstable regimes in particular, diverse actors may have the opportunity to organize prior to conflict onset, leading to potentially more fragmented civil societies and rebel movements.

Political instability

H8: Rebel fragmentation is more likely in states that have recently undergone regime change.

Sudden changes in the nature of the regime are likely to upend existing institutional equilibria and impel the formation of new actors, or to incite the opposition of old ones.[85] An unstable political environment also reflects state weakness, as new institutions are rarely as robust as those that have withstood the test of time. Therefore, in states that have undergone recent changes in regime type, I expect to see a higher degree of rebel fragmentation. *Political instability* is operationalized as a dichotomous variable, scored 1 if the Polity IV score of any state has changed more than three points in a single year at some point within the three years previous to that of the particular unit being scored.

Democracy

  H9: In democratic states, the rebel movement is more likely to be fragmented.

  A democratic state is more restrained in its use of repression, and therefore may allow greater opportunity for heterogeneous dissident networks to form prior to conflict onset (Warren and Troy 2014, 10). In other words, where opposition parties and groups are legal, there should be more of them. While ordinarily this would not necessarily lead to political violence, in a civil war the existence of diverse prewar factions should lead to more factious rebel movements.

    While *democracy* is a multidimensional and contested concept, Munck and Verkuilen (2002) have shown that most aggregate measures are highly consistent with one another. Therefore, I adopt the Polity IV scoring, and set a dichotomous variable to 1 if the state's Polity IV score is 5 or above.

---

[85] See Skocpol (1979) for the classic formulation of how sudden changes, shocks, and breakdowns of the state can unleash long-dormant social forces.

Conflict-level explanations for rebel fragmentation

Several authors have recently suggested that both violent and non-violent interaction between the state and rebels, as well as between different factions within rebel movements or rebel groups, can partially explain the level of rebel fragmentation. In particular, statistical analyses of a dataset compiled by Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham of 22 separatist movements by L. J. M. Seymour, Cunningham, and Bakke (2014), and independently by Stewart (2014) have shown that high levels of violence between any set of involved actors corresponds with greater numbers of rebel groups. These findings court endogeneity, as it is unclear whether violence explains fragmentation or the other way around – or whether an omitted third variable explains both. In a related vein, Staniland (2014) shows that certain state counterinsurgency strategies (namely "comprehensive" strategies aimed both at horizontal and vertical ties within the rebels' social base) are more likely to fragment rebel groups than others.

State repression

> *H10: In states that violently repress the rebel movement, rebel fragmentation is more*
> *likely.*

Scholars debate the effect of conflict intensity on rebel fragmentation. Many argue that state violence strains rebel institutional structures and causes disagreements between sub-factions on how to distribute costs and respond to challenges (Christia 2012; Seymour, Cunningham, and Bakke 2014; K. Stewart 2014). On the other hand, (McLauchlin and Pearlman 2012a) suggest that fragmentation ensues only when there is already dissatisfaction within a rebel group about its

current institutional arrangements.[86] Whether state repression consistently leads to rebel fragmentation or its effect is contingent on the presence of weak rebel institutions, however, we are likely to observe a positive statistical relationship between state repression and rebel fragmentation.

More violent rebel movements should also be more likely to fragment. A number of mechanisms may produce this effect. First, in rebel movements riven by intra-elite cleavages, such as the Spanish Republican side famously catalogued by George Orwell as divided between anarchists, communists, and Trotskyites, among others, elite factions within a rebel group may seek to violently expel other factions and their supporters, provoking splintering.[87] Second, the decision to turn to violence itself may enflame dissension in the rebel ranks and similarly lead to fragmentation (Seymour, Cunningham, and Bakke 2014; K. Stewart 2014). This mechanism seems to have occurred when the Nigerian group Ansaru broke from Boko Haram in protest at its indiscriminate violence against civilians. Finally, increased rebel violence may be a sign of rebel institutional weakness or of alienation from its civilian base (Weinstein 2007). These characteristics are also likely to precede fragmentation.

I use data on battle-related deaths from the Battle Deaths data set, selecting the best estimate for each movement-year (Lacina and Gleditsch 2005). In order to guard against endogeneity, the counts have been logged and lagged one year.

---

[86] The idea is that exogenous shocks produce an opportunity to renegotiate rebel group institutions. If rebel sub-groups are satisfied with the distribution of costs, they cooperate to reduce total costs (i.e., against their common enemy). If they are dissatisfied with the distribution of costs, they attempt to replace rebel leadership or break away.
[87] Thanks to Bernie Grofman with pointing out this mechanism.

External support

> *H11a: If an external state materially supports a rebel movement with fungible resources, the rebel movement is more likely to be fragmented.*

> *H11b: If an external state materially supports a rebel movement with non-fungible resources, the rebel movement is less likely to be fragmented .*

Weinstein (2007) argues that external support for rebels affects conflict microdynamics much like other exploitable resources: it incentivizes opportunistic group formation, and the availability of resources from an external patron may lesson rebel reliance on a civilian constituency. As a result, more rebel groups should form, and they are more likely to be roving rebel groups. Harbom, et al. (2008) suggest that American Cold War foreign policy consisted in spreading material support among several rebel groups in order to destabilize Moscow-aligned governments, while scholarship on civil war duration points to the tendency of external support for rebels by one state to attract a commensurate intervention by another state in favor of a different proxy actor (Regan 2002). All of these mechanisms should lead to more fragmented rebel movements where external support is higher.

Yet external support must be disaggregated. Civil war battlefields may become awash with some forms of external support, such as weapons and funds, enabling mobilizing rebel groups to rapidly achieve combat-readiness (Sawyer, Cunningham, and Reed 2015, 2). Once out of the hands of the outside power, fungible resources like these lower start-up costs and may be expected to contribute to rebel fragmentation. On the other hand, forms of external support that are not so easily divisible, such as external sanctuaries, intelligence, and foreign troops, are likely to aid only the single, intended rebel group, increasing its competitiveness not only against the state but also against other rebel groups. External sanctuaries in particular may contribute rebels becoming more

stationary, for the same reason that territorial control does: they give rebels an opportunity to cultivate relationships with citizens through repeated interactions, construct rebel governing institutions, and resolve political conflicts beyond the reach of state military power. Thus, I expect a *negative* relationship with rebel fragmentation where external support is non-fungible, because rebel groups receiving non-fungible support will benefit disproportionately and be able to dominate the others.

Data on external support comes from the NSA data set (a dummy variable coded as 1 for movement-years in which at least one rebel group receives some kind of external support), and data for the disaggregated analysis comes from the UCDP External Support data set (Therese Pettersson and Themnér 2011). I rely on these two separate sources because the External Support data set only covers movement-years since 1970, while the NSA data set covers movement-years to 1945, where my overall analysis begins.

Length of conflict

H12: In a longer conflict, rebel fragmentation is more likely.

This hypothesis follows the intuitive notion that the longer a conflict lasts, the more opportunities for dissension within the rebel ranks to emerge, or for an unconnected dissident network to mobilize. However, it is not without risk of endogeneity: fragmented conflicts tend to last longer because there are fewer mutually acceptable solutions to bargaining among multiple actors. Moreover, rebel groups tend to drop out of a conflict towards the end as they succumb to state military strength. Therefore, the results from testing this variable should be interpreted with caution. I operationalize length of conflict with a logged count of years since conflict onset.

Cold War

> *H13: The Cold War tended to suppress rebel fragmentation.*

The international state system has a substantial impact on the causes and conduct of internal conflict. In the case of the Cold War, this impact is complicated and multi-faceted. As noted in *Hypothesis 12*, Harbom et al. (2008) argue that superpowers spread their external support liberally to potential proxies during the Cold War, making rebel fragmentation more likely. This strategy may have been more prominent for the United States than for the USSR, which rarely engaged in campaigns of disruption, funneling resources to Moscow-aligned communist parties and rebel groups instead. Conversely, Kalyvas and Balcells (2010) argue that the Cold War superpowers helped raise rebel capabilities vis-à-vis the state – not only through diffuse, fungible external support, but also through training, ideological cohesion, and a conduct of warfare that emphasized building a unity-encouraging civilian constituency. As they describe it, "robust insurgency is linked to the Cold War through three channels: material support, revolutionary beliefs, and military doctrine" (p. 420). In practice, external powers may – if they choose – condition support on rebel movements working towards unity, as well as aid in providing the necessary logistics for negotiations between rebel groups.

Descriptive statistics for the variables used in the quantitative analysis are as follows:

Table 3-1 Summary statistics

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Number of rebel groups	1,181	1.354	0.819	1	8
Effective number of groups	1,181	1.205	0.493	1.000	4.676
Rebel type	1,181	5.640	2.211	0.000	12.000
N* discrimination index	1,082	0.129	0.277	0.000	0.988
Gini	1,001	40.438	7.962	21.780	64.100
log GDP per capita	1,051	0.725	1.079	−2.468	3.586
External support	1,142	0.698	0.459	0	1
Ethnic fractionalization	1,126	0.529	0.265	0.005	0.902
log Population size	1,071	10.256	1.582	6.481	13.886
Oil production per capita	1,071	0.726	2.574	0.000	48.936
Mountainous terrain	1,172	2.795	1.099	0.000	4.324
Democracy	1,057	0.342	0.474	0	1
Regime change	1,077	0.164	0.371	0	1
log Battle deaths	1,134	2.933	0.741	1.301	5.176
log Conflict years	1,181	9.996	9.601	1	54
Cold War	1,181	0.662	0.473	0	1
External support - funds	764	0.037	0.188	0	1
External support - weapons	764	0.305	0.461	0	1
External support - intelligence	764	0.106	0.308	0	1
External support - troops	764	0.296	0.457	0	1
External support - territory	764	0.346	0.476	0	1
Calendar year	1,181	1,981.240	15.087	1,946	2,005

Source: Mosinger (2017)

Analysis and Results

In order to test the hypotheses of interest derived from the civilian constituency theory, as well as the eleven structural, regime, and conflict hypotheses drawn from the literature on civil war, I perform a series of quasi-Poisson regressions, reporting robust standard errors. I opt for quasi-Poisson regressions because the L-T index of effective rebel groups returns non-integer simulated count data, though robustness checks with alternative assumptions about the distribution of the dependent variable (including negative binomial and gamma-distributed regressions) return substantively identical results. Following best practices in reporting and interpreting regression coefficient statistics as recommended by Gelman (2008), I rescale all continuous variables by dividing by two standard deviations. The coefficients presented in all tables thus represent the expected change of the response when the input variable increases from one standard deviation

below the mean to one standard deviation above the mean. The goal of this transformation is to put all of the coefficients (including both continuous and binary coefficients) on a relatable scale, rendering the contribution of each coefficient to the outcome readily comparable.

Table 3-2 The determinants of rebel fragmentation

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Rebel type$_{t-1}$	−0.518***	−0.357**	−0.147		−0.560**
	(0.124)	(0.137)	(0.145)		(0.186)
N* discrimination index$_{t-1}$		0.475***	3.941***		3.995***
		(0.137)	(0.538)		(0.682)
N* discrimination index$^2{}_{t-1}$			−3.974***		−4.279***
			(0.683)		(0.881)
Gini$_{t-1}$		0.033	0.330		0.025
		(0.146)	(0.170)		(0.182)
Gini$^2{}_{t-1}$			0.029		0.563
			(0.272)		(0.293)
log GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	0.157	−0.589***	−0.851***	0.377	−1.088***
	(0.177)	(0.173)	(0.189)	(0.218)	(0.245)
External support$_{t-1}$				0.805***	0.525*
				(0.211)	(0.233)
Ethnic fractionalization$_{t-1}$	0.337	−0.222	−0.206	0.686**	0.115
	(0.181)	(0.207)	(0.240)	(0.215)	(0.249)
log Population size$_{t-1}$	−0.265	0.188	0.757***	−0.372	0.304
	(0.177)	(0.201)	(0.222)	(0.218)	(0.261)
Oil production per capita$_{t-1}$	−0.419	0.063	−0.511	−0.550	−0.331
	(0.272)	(0.238)	(0.271)	(0.316)	(0.316)
Mountainous terrain$_{t-1}$	0.145	−0.591***	−0.591***	0.103	−0.353
	(0.210)	(0.157)	(0.168)	(0.200)	(0.198)
Democracy$_{t-1}$	0.496**	1.093***	0.809***	0.934***	1.083***
	(0.157)	(0.174)	(0.174)	(0.191)	(0.207)
Regime change$_{t-1}$	0.139	0.422*	0.536*	0.267	0.668**
	(0.214)	(0.211)	(0.211)	(0.204)	(0.213)
log Battle deaths$_{t-1}$				1.389***	0.895***
				(0.204)	(0.191)
log Conflict years$_{t-1}$				0.897***	0.741***
				(0.171)	(0.196)
Cold War$_{t-1}$				−0.117	−0.487
				(0.200)	(0.249)
Constant	−1.672***	−1.896***	−1.087***	−2.056***	−1.377***
	(0.077)	(0.082)	(0.145)	(0.104)	(0.183)
Observations	1,032	969	969	965	904

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Source: Mosinger (2017)

Overall, the results of the statistical analyses strongly support the hypotheses derived from civilian constituency theory, and are consistent with several other hypotheses as well.[88]

In Model 1 in Table 3-2, above, I test *Hypothesis 1*, rebel type, along with structural and regime variables, and find that it exerts, by a small margin, the largest effect size in the theoretically expected direction. In other words, more "stationary" rebel movements – those comprised of rebel groups that mobilize civilians, build coherent organizations, engage in political and ideological work, and control territory – are on average less likely to be fragmented. In Model 5, the full model, a rebel movement with a weighted average rebel type score of 7.85 (or one standard deviation above the mean) is expected to have .56 fewer effective rebel groups than a rebel movement with a rebel type score of 3.43 (one standard deviation below the mean). However, in Models 2 through 4, as I add the variables for the other independent variable at the heart of my theory, embedded in *Hypotheses 2*, Gini, N* index, Gini^2, and N* index^2, the effect size decreases and statistical significance disappears. This is not surprising, as rebel type and grievances are both proxies for different underlying factors that affect the size and composition of a rebel movement's civilian constituency.

N* index and N* index^2 demonstrate the most sizable and robust impact on rebel fragmentation. In Model 2 I test only the linear components of the grievance variables, Gini and N* index. Gini does not rise to either substantive or statistical significance, in alignment with a long literature reporting little impact on conflict onset and dynamics by measures of *individual-level* economic inequality (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). The linear term N* index is statistically

---

[88] Note that these hypotheses are supplementary, rather than competing. Some of them, such as non-fungible external support and mountainous terrain, are held to affect rebel fragmentation by modifying the extent to which rebel groups can build civilian constituencies, and thus confirmation of these hypotheses should be interpreted as corroborating evidence for the mechanisms postulated by the civilian constituency theory.

significant with a moderate substantive impact, demonstrating that in general, rebel fragmentation is likely to be greater where there are many populous discriminated ethnic groups and minority ethnic groups are in power. These conditions are cited by many scholars as heightening ethnic resentments (Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug 2013; Petersen 2002), and thereby spurring rebel group mobilization – an intuitive cause of rebel fragmentation. N* index^2 in Models 3 and 5 tests the *counterintuitive* implication of civilian constituency theory: that extreme grievances engender not extreme rebel fragmentation, but rather rebel unity. The results are striking: the combination of N* index and N* index^2 express a more statistically significant and substantively larger effect on the outcome than any other variable in the full model, providing strong evidence that the relationship between the N* index and rebel fragmentation is curvilinear. In specific terms, we would expect to observe 2.09 *more* effective rebel groups at one standard deviation below the mean (N* = .406) and 1.564 *fewer* expected at one standard deviation above the mean (N* = .9), both compared to N* = 0. The quadratic functional form is plainly visible in Figure 3-3:[89]

---

[89] Please note that neither x-axis nor y-axis in Figure 3-3 are scaled. The way in which the N* index is calculated bounds it between 0 and 1. As a result, Figure 3-3 is readily interpretable: the x-axis shows how many additional effective rebel groups are predicted for each value of N* index.
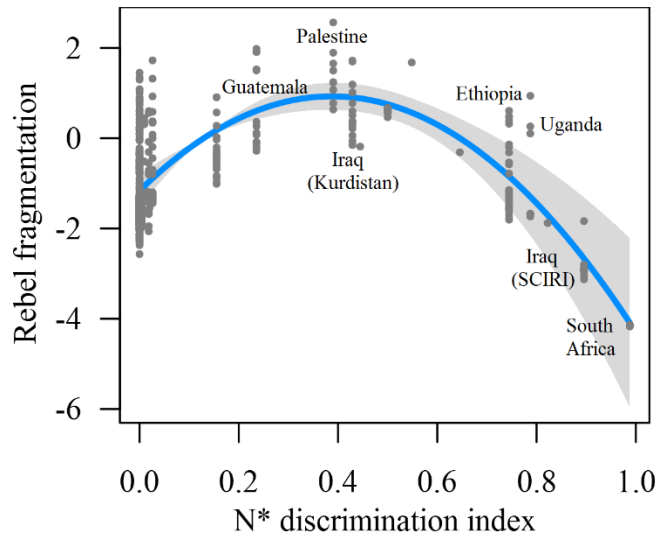
Figure 3-3 Partial residuals plot of N* index

Source: Mosinger (2017)

As can be seen, rebel fragmentation rises along with widespread ethnic discrimination, but this relationship reverses itself at high levels of discrimination. This suggests that ethnically heterogeneous rebel movements, facing a deeply discriminatory government, are better able to resolve their collective action problems than relatively homogenous rebel movements facing a moderately discriminatory government. This pattern would be difficult to explain without civilian constituency theory, but is predicted by the theory. At moderate levels of discrimination, only dissident networks that are strongly committed to distinct identities and ideologies mobilize, while at high levels of ethnic discrimination, risk-averse broad social networks mobilize as well, enabling pan-ethnic cooperation.

Several of the cases highlighted above demonstrate these mechanisms. The Iraqi Shi'a rebel movement from 1982 to 1996, for example, "may be viewed as a reaction to an aggrieved majority reacting to minority rule" (Cline 2000), reflected by an exceptionally high N* index. Its hegemonic rebel group, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) was built on top of the pre-existing networks of the Shi'a Dawa Party and influential Shi'a ayatollahs – in

other words, it was composed of a broad civilian network in firm control of its armed wing, the Badr Brigades. Though not a very successful rebel group in military terms due to withering repression by Saddam Hussein's regime, SCIRI remained unified even in defeat and exile.

An even clearer example comes from South Africa, which, with the highest N* discrimination index (N* = .99) in the sample, exemplifies a movement in which broad social networks were 'tipped' into active resistance against the government long before violent confrontation began. By the 1960s, the ANC had become the leading organization of a broad anti-apartheid social movement, coordinating trade unions, church groups, women's groups, as well as student and other civic organizations.[90] Though the ANC was not the first group to initiate guerrilla warfare against the South African government (the splinter Pan Africanist Congress did so a year before Nelson Mandela founded the ANC's armed wing in 1962), its near-total hegemony within the rebel movement was never seriously challenged by the PAC or the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

By contrast, Guatemala's middling score on civilian grievances (2, and an N* index of .24) well represents a country with substantial agricultural inequalities and severe discrimination against Mayan peoples, yet offset by a competitive authoritarian electoral system. These grievances (alongside the example set by the Cuban Revolution) had led to the continuous mobilization of guerrilla groups since 1960. However, the unexpected victory of a civilian 'reformist' presidential candidate in 1966 defused popular mobilization efforts and split the left (Gott 1971, 66–73). Hence, by the late 1970s there existed an active and highly fragmented guerrilla movement – but no broad popular movement. The guerrilla groups, the MR-13, its

---

[90] See especially Walshe (1971) for the early ANC's early emergence from church and tribal networks, and Seekings (2000) for its leadership within a broad popular movement.

successor the FAR, PGT, EGP, and ORPA, were divided by ideology and tactics, and each had emerged from or latched onto a distinct dissident base: reformist junior army officers, the Communist political party, agricultural workers, and Mayan Catholic activists (Fried et al., 1983: 287–291). A popular movement would eventually develop as increasing authoritarianism and indiscriminate government violence 'tipped' nation-wide peasant and Catholic Action networks; in turn the Committee of Campesino Unity (CUC) and the popular Church played a major role in brokering the formation of the rebels' URNG umbrella group in 1982 (Althoff 2014, 84–88, 98–100). This case demonstrates both major mechanisms in *Hypothesis 2*: how intermediate levels of grievance spur the proliferation of dissident and rebel groups, and how extreme grievances mobilize broad civilian networks whose social linkages foster rebel unity

These results – and examples – are striking. Nonetheless, there are at least two potential critiques of the findings, one methodological and one substantive. First, it may be argued that the strong negative coefficient for N* index[2] is overly influenced by a relatively small number of potential outliers with great leverage (such as Iraq [SCIRI] and South Africa). Second, the variable testing economic grievances, Gini, failed to demonstrate any relationship with rebel fragmentation, suggesting either that economic grievances do not matter, or that some omitted variable related to ethnicity rather than grievances explains rebel fragmentation. To address these potential critiques, I reexamine the sample using different operationalization of ethnic and economic grievances.

Table 3-3 Alternative grievances from Buhaug, et al. (2013)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Positive horizontal inequality (PHI)$_{t-1}$	1.054***	0.936***			1.124***
	(0.166)	(0.215)			(0.196)
Positive horizontal inequality (PHI)$^2{}_{t-1}$		0.071			
		(0.078)			
Negative horizontal inequality (NHI)$_{t-1}$			−1.724***	−2.401***	−1.523***
			(0.474)	(0.594)	(0.419)
Negative horizontal inequality (NHI)$^2{}_{t-1}$				0.613*	
				(0.244)	
log GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	−0.140	−0.115	0.657**	0.638*	0.111
	(0.202)	(0.206)	(0.253)	(0.256)	(0.253)
External support$_{t-1}$	0.585**	0.594**	0.868**	0.901**	0.575*
	(0.214)	(0.218)	(0.273)	(0.276)	(0.258)
Ethnic fractionalization$_{t-1}$	0.197	0.221	0.707**	0.745**	0.057
	(0.198)	(0.203)	(0.257)	(0.260)	(0.259)
log Population size$_{t-1}$	−0.383	−0.359	−0.078	−0.024	0.009
	(0.210)	(0.215)	(0.290)	(0.296)	(0.276)
Oil production per capita$_{t-1}$	−0.765*	−0.957**	−0.666	−0.740	−0.694*
	(0.304)	(0.368)	(0.399)	(0.413)	(0.287)
Mountainous terrain$_{t-1}$	−0.140	−0.157	0.028	0.050	−0.302
	(0.167)	(0.169)	(0.210)	(0.215)	(0.205)
Democracy$_{t-1}$	0.956***	0.943***	0.820**	0.832**	0.812**
	(0.213)	(0.216)	(0.290)	(0.298)	(0.284)
Regime change$_{t-1}$	0.264	0.278	0.362	0.346	0.466*
	(0.181)	(0.185)	(0.234)	(0.237)	(0.224)
log Battle deaths$_{t-1}$	0.894***	0.916***	1.430***	1.431***	0.949***
	(0.179)	(0.183)	(0.206)	(0.209)	(0.208)
log Conflict years$_{t-1}$	1.222***	1.207***	0.676**	0.664**	0.986***
	(0.207)	(0.210)	(0.236)	(0.238)	(0.244)
Cold War$_{t-1}$	−0.016	−0.031	0.037	0.078	0.071
	(0.168)	(0.171)	(0.215)	(0.218)	(0.201)
Constant	−2.074***	−2.099***	−2.173***	−2.309***	−2.142***
	(0.103)	(0.109)	(0.144)	(0.165)	(0.130)
Observations	965	965	965	965	965

Note: $^*p<0.05$; $^{**}p<0.01$; $^{***}p<0.001$

Source: Mosinger (2017)

Table 3-3 tests alternate indicators for grievances developed by Buhaug et al. (2013). The first alternative indicator, positive horizontal inequality (PHI), is defined as the mean per capita income for richest ethnic group / country-level GDP per capita. In simpler terms, PHI captures how much wealthier than average is the wealthiest ethnic group. Intuitively, I expect wealth concentrated among a single ethnic group to produce diffuse, moderate grievances: all ethnic groups in the state may resent a concentration of wealth, but concentration of wealth rarely impinges enough upon the lived experiences of most individuals and groups to produce acute grievances. As a result, dissident networks are far more likely than broad civilian networks to

mobilize when confronted with concentrated wealth, and rebel fragmentation is more likely when one ethnic group is considerably wealthier than average.

The second alternative indicator, negative horizontal inequality, is defined as the mean per capita income for poorest group / country-level GDP per capita – in other words, how much poorer than average is the poorest ethnic group? Intuitively, the firsthand experience of extreme poverty should be much more likely to engender extreme grievances than the knowledge that another group is wealthy. To sum up: a concentration of wealth (PHI) is expected to generate broad but diffuse grievances among the larger part of the population, complicating collective action, while a concentration of poverty (NHI) is expected to generate grievances among a narrow, relatively homogenous population, which may more readily overcome collective action problems.

The results are just as striking as the N* index above. As can be seen from the full model (Model 5), PHI is associated with fragmented rebel movements and NHI associated with unified rebel movements. Both results are significant at $p = .001$, and are substantively the two most influential variables tested. Models 1 and 3 demonstrate that the results are not an artifact of collinearity (in this case, that a common process generates both PHI and NHI). It is very clear that rebel movements fragment where wealth is concentrated and are unified where poverty is concentrated. Economic grievances have a clear and substantial impact on the microdynamics of civil war – a major finding for the econometric conflict literature. While these results are limited to ethnic conflicts

Returning to Table 3-2 we can observe that Fearon & Laitin's (2003) famous trifecta – weak states, rough terrain, and lootable resources – have differentiated impacts on rebel fragmentation. A lower GDP per capita is associated with more fragmentation, except in Models 1 and 4 where Gini index is dropped from the model. This suggests that state weakness may only

matter under certain conditions and that bureaucratic and military mechanisms, rather than economic ones, are responsible for the association. Rough terrain, on the other hand, is associated with rebel unity, suggesting that 'local knowledge' – and perhaps the tightly-knit societies that develop in rugged terrain – facilitate unity more than does state inaccessibility. In support of this interpretation, I show that rough terrain predicts a more stationary rebel type in Appendix B. Oil resources, by contrast, demonstrate little relationship with rebel fragmentation and may also be associated with higher rebel type.

Table 3-4 Disaggregated state capacity measures

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Bureaucratic quality	−0.174	−0.867**			
	(0.308)	(0.265)			
Military spending per capita	−2.205***		−0.809**		
	(0.435)		(0.288)		
Medical staff at birth	1.140*			−1.368***	
	(0.479)			(0.257)	
Literacy rate	−1.069**				−1.582***
	(0.405)				(0.204)
Ethnic fractionalization$_{t-1}$	−0.254	−0.078	0.430	0.018	−0.071
	(0.289)	(0.263)	(0.222)	(0.196)	(0.209)
log Population size$_{t-1}$	2.187***	0.952**	0.105	−0.444*	−0.281
	(0.479)	(0.322)	(0.301)	(0.212)	(0.220)
Oil production per capita$_{t-1}$	1.574**	−0.495	0.056	−0.061	0.095
	(0.543)	(0.530)	(0.291)	(0.273)	(0.235)
Mountainous terrain$_{t-1}$	−1.424***	−1.097***	0.058	−0.263	−0.189
	(0.318)	(0.276)	(0.200)	(0.170)	(0.166)
Democracy$_{t-1}$	1.604***	0.845**	1.138***	1.310***	1.275***
	(0.336)	(0.285)	(0.232)	(0.235)	(0.222)
Regime change$_{t-1}$	0.827**	0.396	0.566*	0.418*	0.575**
	(0.310)	(0.320)	(0.221)	(0.201)	(0.201)
log Conflict years$_{t-1}$	1.637***	0.836***	0.895***	1.176***	1.589***
	(0.303)	(0.240)	(0.202)	(0.192)	(0.209)
Cold War$_{t-1}$	0.258	−0.019	0.058	0.107	0.063
	(0.212)	(0.220)	(0.179)	(0.165)	(0.166)
Constant	−2.605***	−2.322***	−1.905***	−1.875***	−1.961***
	(0.232)	(0.196)	(0.110)	(0.101)	(0.107)
Observations	425	460	829	969	937

$^{*}p<0.05$; $^{**}p<0.01$; $^{***}p<0.001$

Source: Mosinger (2017)

Table 3-3 offers a closer look at the effect of state capacity, though the quantitative analysis of course cannot clarify which mechanisms are most influential. I disaggregate state

capacity into measures of a) bureaucratic capacity, b) military capacity, and c) public goods provision. The first two measures are drawn from Hendrix (2010), while the others, intended to proxy public goods provision, measure the percentage of births attended by medical staff and the literacy rate. These are drawn from World Bank data. The results show that all measures are individually associated with lower rebel fragmentation. In combination, it is difficult to distinguish among these variables because they demonstrate high levels of intercorrelation, with each other and with GDP per capita. Nonetheless, there is very limited evidence that the public goods provision aspect of state capacity is most significant.

Table 3-5 Disaggregating external support (1970-2005)

	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
External support - funds$_{t-1}$	0.718***	0.668***				
	(0.166)	(0.153)				
External support - weapons$_{t-1}$	0.479**		0.602***			
	(0.179)		(0.175)			
External support - intelligence$_{t-1}$	−0.040			−0.059		
	(0.234)			(0.255)		
External support - troops$_{t-1}$	−0.219				0.056	
	(0.411)				(0.447)	
External support - territory$_{t-1}$	−0.767***					−0.433*
	(0.182)					(0.184)
log GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	−0.453**	−0.365*	−0.207	−0.274	−0.270	−0.333
	(0.173)	(0.168)	(0.175)	(0.183)	(0.184)	(0.183)
Ethnic fractionalization$_{t-1}$	−0.081	−0.041	−0.139	−0.013	−0.013	−0.002
	(0.190)	(0.184)	(0.188)	(0.192)	(0.193)	(0.189)
log Population size$_{t-1}$	0.345	0.291	0.366	0.113	0.112	0.036
	(0.199)	(0.186)	(0.197)	(0.184)	(0.185)	(0.178)
Oil production per capita$_{t-1}$	−0.379	−0.486	−0.573	−0.661	−0.663	−0.666
	(0.352)	(0.372)	(0.380)	(0.413)	(0.417)	(0.398)
Mountainous terrain$_{t-1}$	0.021	−0.034	0.079	−0.030	−0.034	−0.055
	(0.147)	(0.145)	(0.154)	(0.160)	(0.159)	(0.155)
Constant	−1.499***	−1.459***	−1.444***	−1.398***	−1.398***	−1.404***
	(0.083)	(0.083)	(0.084)	(0.084)	(0.084)	(0.082)
Observations	757	757	757	757	757	757

$^*p<0.05$; $^{**}p<0.01$; $^{***}p<0.001$

Source: Mosinger (2017)

Support for rebel groups by external governments and more rebel fragmentation were also associated in Model 5. However, different forms of external support are not interchangeable. The results in Table 3-5 provide strong evidence in favor of Sawyer et al.'s (2015) division of external support into fungible and non-fungible varieties and demonstrate non-fungible external support's

association with substantially less fragmented rebel movements. This result suggests a different role for civilian constituencies in conflicts with substantial external intervention. In this expanded story, constituencies may operate as an intervening variable linking fungible resources to fragmented rebellions and non-fungible resources to unified ones where external support is present.

Other variables also produce some theoretically interesting results. The relationship between rebel fragmentation and democracy is especially robust, in line with the findings of other authors. Unsurprisingly, we observe a high probability of rebel fragmentation in high intensity conflicts. Increased rebel violence may be a sign of rebel institutional weakness or of rebel alienation from their civilian base, characteristics which likely precede fragmentation, while government violence may drastically strain rebel constituencies and institutions.

In sum, the empirical results offer strong evidence consistent with the main components of civilian constituency theory, *viz.* stationary rebels build unified rebel movements while civilian grievances express a curvilinear relationship with the probability of rebel fragmentation. Space limitations prevent a full presentation here of the robustness checks and diagnostics that were performed. The results are largely robust to alternate specifications and different operationalizations of independent variables.

Case selection for qualitative analysis

In the next section, I follow Lieberman's (2005) and Seawright's (2016) strategies for case selection in multi-method research to justify the selection for analysis of three cases (rebel movement-time period) in Nicaragua, as well as two matched cases in Syria.

Qualitative case selection

This section discusses the analytic gain of focusing the qualitative analysis on one rebel movement comprising three analysit cases in Nicaragua– the Sandinista Revolution (early 1970s – 1979) – and two rebel movements (each an analytic case) in Syria – the Muslim Brotherhood uprising (1976 – 1982) and the Arab Spring uprising (2011 – present). I also justify shadow cases in Guatemala, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan, and identify several other borderline cases that may furnish evidence of specific key mechanisms.

As this dissertation employs a nested analysis, the selected cases had to meet a variety of criteria (Lieberman 2005, 447). First, I used a matching technique in accordance with most similar systems comparison to identify cases with the potential to be analytically useful: I sought rebel movements whose degree of fragmentation had changed over time such that I could engage in longitudinal comparison, and countries that had hosted multiple rebel movements, at least one of which was unitary (defined as a rebel movement with only one major rebel group) and one of which was fragmented (defined as a rebel movement with three or more major rebel groups).[91] A major rebel group is defined as possessing at least 1/3 the resources or manpower of largest rebel group. This strategy allows me to control for (or at least, minimize the variability of) a large number of potentially confounding structural variables, such as geography, GDP / capita, and ethnic fractionalization.[92] I also sought rebel movements (located in countries) in which which the independent variables of central theoretical interest – rebel type, grievances, and civilian social network participation – vary over space and time. If the variables of interest do not prove to be

---

[91] See Gerring (2006, 134).
[92] These variables do matter – however, they are of lesser theoretical interest and have already been assessed to some degree through statistical techniques. I also intend to investigate their impact in the qualitative research through between-country comparisons.

causally related to rebel fragmentation, then a comparison of the matched cases may reveal other variables with differing values in each case. These may be investigated in turn. Thus, matched cases offer more leverage both for theory testing and, potentially, theory building.

The selection criteria yielded the following post-1960 cases:

Latin America

- Nicaragua: Sandinista Popular Revolution (unified) / Contra War (fragmented)

- Guatemala: Pre-1982 (fragmented) / URNG (unified)

- Borderline Cases

    1. El Salvador: pre-1980 (fragmented) / FMLN (unified)

        1. *why borderline*: pre-1980 phase is extremely low-intensity, only 1979 qualifies as civil war in the UCDP data set

Middle East

- Syria: 1979 - 1982 Muslim Brotherhood uprising (unified) / Syrian Civil War (fragmented)

- Afghanistan: 1979 – 1996 "all-out civil war" (fragmented) / Taliban vs. Northern Alliance (united)

    1. *Note*: analyzed by Fotini Christia (2012) – convincingly – through a neorealist lens; the Northern Alliance best understood as a particularly durable alliance rather than a unified rebel group

        Borderline Cases

- Palestine: periods of extreme fragmentation / periods of PLO dominance esp. 1990s (unified)

    1. *why borderline*: a very unusual conflict, low generalizability, many definitional issues, unclear whether PLO dominance truly constitutes a unified rebel movement

- Iraq: Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq insurgency (unified) / 2003 - present civil war (fragmented)

  1. *why borderline*: US invasion a massive exogenous shock, thus cases do not match well

  Asia

- Cambodia: Khmer Rouge insurgency (unified) / 1980s Cambodian civil war (fragmented)

- Sri Lanka: JVP uprising (unified) / Tamil insurgency (fragmented)

  1. *note*: JVP uprising was very short, and these rebel movements took place among different ethnic groups in different parts of the island, mitigating the value of the matching method

- Sri Lanka: Tamil insurgency (fragmented) / LTTE rebellion (unified)

- India: 1990 Naxalite insurgency (fragmented) / 2004 merger into CPI-M (unified)

  Borderline Cases

- India: Sikh insurgency - BKI (unified) / Sikh insurgency post 1986 (fragmented)

  1. *why borderline*: I couldn't find enough information about the various rebel groups to confirm this coding

- Indonesia: Darul Islam, Permesta, PRRI insurgencies (fragmented) / OPM insurgency (unified)

  1. *why borderline*: the earlier insurgencies are best understood as three separate (though diplomatically linked) rebel movements rather than a single rebel movement

- Philippines: Moro conflict - MNLF insurgency (unified) / Moro conflict - post 1990 (fragmented)

1. *why borderline*: MNLF and then MILF dominate the movement - making this not particularly fragmented

   Africa

- Nigeria: Niger Delta conflict (fragmented) / Boko Haram insurgency (unified)

   Borderline Cases

- Ethiopia: multiple potential cases

   1. *why borderline*: multiple concurrent yet interrelated ethnic insurgencies make defining separate cases and determining levels of fragmentation extremely difficult

   However, I must also evaluate whether the regression is "robust and satisfactory" (Lieberman 2005, 437) to determine whether the small-*n* analysis will serve a theory-testing role (if the regression is good) or a theory-building role (if the regression is poor). I then need to determine which of these cases are "on-liers" – that is, a case that is well-predicted by the statistical model – and, if the statistical model's fit is unsatisfactory, which are "out-lier" cases that can help me identify omitted variables, superior proxies for theoretical constructs, or alternative hypotheses. A regression may be deemed inadequate for one of two reasons: because the model proves to be a poor fit for the observed data, or because it does a poor job in explaining a substantively important case (Lieberman 2005, 440). Diagnostics show the model to be a reasonably good fit for the overall sample, suggesting I am mainly looking for on-liers. However, I will show that when analyzing the fit of specific cases, the model fails to predict two crucial cases: Afghanistan (1980 – 1996) and Syria (2011 – present).

   Submitting the cases outlined above to a quantitative analysis in order to determine whether cases are "on-liers" or "out-liers" with regard to my statistical model entailed calculating the standard deviations of the residual of each movement-year's Laakso-Taagepera index of rebel

fragmentation.[93] This allowed me to identify cases whose outcomes were well predicted by the model. Of the cases that clearly met the matching criteria, only the Guatemalan case exhibited *no* movement-years with residuals more than one standard deviation from the mean. Two other cases had one or two movement-years with residuals over one standard deviation from the mean: Nicaragua (1.89 and 1.71) and Cambodia (1.69 and 1.16). However, for both of these cases the vast majority of their movement years are well-fitted by the model.[94]

Turning to the out-liers, the Sri Lankan and Indian Sikh insurgencies returned movement-years with residuals over 2 standard deviations from the mean (Sri Lankan: 5.63, 3.08, and 3.05; Indian: 3.95 and 2.19). Afghanistan and Syria could not be assessed with the full model due to missing data on some of the variables, but when tested with the civilian constituency model, Afghanistan (with a maximum residual standard deviation of 9.21 in 1984) and Syria (7.19 in 2013) were shown to be the largest and third largest outliers in the sample, respectively.[95] Due to its contemporary substantive importance, Syria's case merits further scrutiny. The statistical model predicted approximately average levels of rebel fragmentation for both Syrian civil wars (e.g. the predicted rebel fragmentation was 0.44 standard deviations above the mean for the Muslim Brotherhood uprisings and .14 above the mean for the current civil war), while observed rebel fragmentation in the current war is the highest in the dataset (L-T = 4.42 in 2013). Despite extremely high grievances during both conflicts (an N* index of .974, the 6th highest in the sample),[96] the current Syrian civil war exhibits an exceptionally high level of rebel fragmentation.

---

[93] I also calculated the predicted value of the L-T fragmentation index for each movement-year, which help me double-check that large residuals were the products of poor predictions rather than outlier values of the observed dependent variable.

[94] For example, seven out of nine movement-years of the Nicaraguan Contra War are well-predicted by the model – a high proportion.

[95] The second largest was Indonesia.

[96] Note that the current Syrian civil war began after 2005 and thus doesn't appear in my earlier analysis – I extend the analysis temporally for the purposes of case selection.

Thus, Syria is a deviant case: the civilian constituency theory predicts that such high grievances should activate broad civilian networks and produce a relatively unified rebel movement. Explaining this deviance is important both from a substantive perspective (Syria's civil war has had a major impact on international politics and is the single most visible example of rebel fragmentation), and from a theoretical perspective (the deviance indicates an omitted variable in the statistical model).

To summarize, the matched cases in Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Cambodia, are "on-liers," while the matched cases in Sri Lanka, the Indian Sikh insurgency, Afghanistan, and Syria are outliers; Nigeria could not be tested due to data missingness. Many of the cases listed above have major drawbacks. For Guatemala, Cambodia, Syria, and Afghanistan, there is some ambiguity regarding the extent of rebel unity during the *unified* phase. In most of these cases, the unified rebel movement may be better understood as an alliance of factions with varying degrees of formality and hierarchical integration.[97] With Nigeria, the matched rebel movements took place among different ethnic groups in non-overlapping geographical areas of the country, limiting (though not obviating) the value of the matching method. From a practical perspective, in-country fieldwork in Syria, Afghanistan, and Nigeria would be either prohibitively dangerous or limited to areas that are distant from current conflict zones. This leaves the Nicaraguan cases as the only "on-lier" matched cases that meet the strictest set of selection criteria, justifying Nicaragua serving as the main field site for this dissertation, as its main "on-line" matched case.

With the diagnostics and the analysis of on-lying and off-lying cases in hand, the next task is to determine whether the statistical model should be considered "robust and satisfactory." Lieberman offers two criteria that the statistical model must satisfy. First, the model must fit the

---

[97] Of these four, Syria and Guatemala may be called unified with the most justification.

data well, as judged by statistical goodness-of-fit tests. The diagnostics presented in the previous section indicate that this criteria is met. Second, the model should be able to explain substantively important cases:

> The location of specific cases with respect to the regression line may strongly influence one's satisfaction with the model. For example, a scholar may feel unsatisfied with a model that cannot explain a case perceived to be of great significance within the scholarly literature (e.g., the French revolution in the study of revolutions), or the identification of an outlier case may immediately suggest a new theoretical specification with potentially broader application. If a scholar enters the research project with specific hunches about seemingly anomalous outcomes, analysis of the actual-versus-predicted-scores plot may demonstrate that one or more cases are indeed outliers that may warrant more theoretical attention. (Lieberman 2005, 440)

Given this criteria, the statistical model is robust but not entirely satisfactory. The Afghan and, in particular, the Syrian cases are among the most politically salient and empirically pronounced examples of rebel fragmentation in the entire population of cases. That they are somewhat anomalous is not surprising, given that they are both "extreme" cases with unusually high scores on the dependent variable (Gerring 2006, 101–5). However, the model also fails markedly at within-country validity in both Afghanistan and Syria, in that it predicts somewhat *more* rebel fragmentation during movement-years that were observed to be unified, as compared to movement-years that were observed to be fragmented. This suggests an omitted variable, an inadequately operationalize theoretical construct, or an alternative theory must be considered. As the statistical model is unsatisfactory, one of these two off-liers should be selected for theory-building small-*n* analysis.

To conclude this discussion, I will offer some "specific hunches" about what might explain the anomalous outcomes in the Syrian cases. My operating hypothesis is that the Muslim Brotherhood (the major Sunni broad social network) served to unify the rebel movement in the 1976 – 1982 uprising, while the interbellum disarticulation of the Muslim Brotherhood by the Asad regime has led to extreme rebel fragmentation in the current war. This hypothesis derives from my social network model, but is not captured by the proxies used in my large-n statistical model. The statistical model is based on the hypothesis that civilian grievances increase rebel fragmentation, but very high levels of grievances reduce rebel fragmentation by "activating" broad social networks – that is, that civilian grievances express a curvilinear relationship with rebel fragmentation. However, the main broad social network was destroyed in Syria; thus this mechanism may not have been able to take place there. This suggests an omitted variable in the Syrian case which should be generalizable to all cases:

H14: In the absence of any cross-cutting broad social networks, civilian grievances

will express a positive, monotonic relationship with rebel fragmentation.

While I also have hunches about the Afghani cases, they are not nearly as theoretically interesting. I suspect that, as in Syria, the 1980 – 1996 phase of extreme fragmentation is partly due to a lack of broad social networks across Afghani ethnic groups, while the post-1996 semi-unified Northern Alliance phase is best explained by balancing behavior against the Taliban.[98] It is also important to note that, though more proximate in time, these two phases are not nearly as strongly matched as the Syrian cases. The two Afghan cases are distinguished by type ("all-out-war" in Fotini Christia's phrase vs. a fairly static territorial war), by the heavy involvement of

---

[98] See Christia (2012) for an excellent treatment of balancing behavior in the Afghan civil war.

foreign powers in the first phase (the Soviet invasion and the American provisioning of the Mujahedeen movement), and suffer from extreme interdependence between the two cases. Each of these caveats undermines the analogy with an experimental method that motivates case matching. By contrast, with the Syrian cases it is far simpler to isolate a single independent variable that varies between cases – the existence of a broad social network – though there are certainly important differences between the Syrian cases as well.[99]

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented a series of cross-national statistical tests that lend support to the civilian constituency theory. Specifically, they show that more stationary rebel movements are, on average, composed of fewer effective rebel groups (are less fragmented). I also use a weak instrument as evidence that this relationship is not the result of reverse causation; rather, rebel movements that embrace ideologies emphasizing the construction of a civilian constituency prior to conflict onset are less likely to be fragmented over the course of conflict. The statistical tests presented in this chapter also demonstrate a complex relationship between two types of grievances – political ethnic grievances and economic ethnic grievances – and rebel fragmentation. Widespread ethnic discrimination is associated with greater rebel fragmentation up to a certain point, and greater rebel unity past that point – a quadratic relationship. Meanwhile, diffuse economic grievances are strongly associated with rebel fragmentation, while concentrated economic grievances are strongly associated with rebel unity. Both results make little sense from a naïve perspective holding that grievances aid or inhibit collective action. However, if the level

---

[99] The most important difference is likely to be the existence of a distributed and polycentric transnational jihadist network that recruits and fundraises via the internet and sends recruits to foreign theaters of war.

of grievances determine the composition of a rebel movement's civilian constituency, these are the theoretically expected results.

I also analyzed the universe of cases studied in the large- and medium-n studies to select typical and deviant cases exhibiting variation on the dependent variable. The case selection criteria yielded five cases: Nicaragua (1961-1974, 1975-1978, and 1979) and Syria (1976-1981, and 2011-present). In the next chapter, I turn to the within-case investigation of rebel fragmentation in the Nicaraguan cases.

APPENDIX A. CODING SOURCES FOR REBEL TROOP COUNTS

The dependent variable, effective number of rebel groups, relies on data of rebel troop counts in order to be calculated. The Non-State Actor dataset contains a large quantity of missing data on rebel troop counts. As such, I have supplemented these data with additional sources, following the general guidelines for estimating rebel troop counts in the NSA dataset.

Afghanistan
Hezb-Islam 1983: 8000[100]
Hezb-i Islam 1988: 9500[101]
Hezb-i Wahdat: 8000[102]

Algeria
MNA 1955 - 1957: 4000[103]
FLN 1955 - 1957: 9000

Angola
UNITA 1970: 3000[104]
1974: 2000[105]

---

[100] *Asia Yearbook, 1983.* (Far Eastern Economic Review Ltd., 1983), 105.

[101] Barnett R Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 200.

[102] Kamal Matinuddin, *The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-1997* (Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press, 1999). HiW is listed at 86,000 in the NSA case notes and is coded as 116,000 in the data set. Both are likely mistakes and/or typos. While a strong group, the historiographical literature agrees that HiW was somewhat smaller than HiH, Jumbish, and Jamiat. The only number I can find is 8000, combining two factions, in 1997. This appears to be a far more reasonable coding than 116,000.

[103] Rabah Aissaoui, "Fratricidal War: The Conflict between the Mouvement National Algérien (MNA) and the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) in France during the Algerian War (1954–1962)," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 39, no. 2 (August 1, 2012): 235, doi:10.1080/13530194.2012.709701.

[104] W. Martin James, *A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990* (New Brunswick, N.J., U.S.A.: Transaction Publishers, 1992), 96.

[105] Thomas Collelo, D.C.) American University (Washington, and Foreign Area Studies, *Angola: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress : For sale by the Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O., 1991), 210. I adopt these values over the UCDP estimates in some cases to keep the within-case sources equivalent.

1976: 9000

1984: 15000

1990: 6500[106]

FNLA 1972: 10000[107]

1974: 10000

1976: 22000

MPLA 1974: 10000

1976: 27000

Argentina

Montoneros 1975 - 1977: 3500[108]

ERP 1975 - 1977: 1500

Burundi

Frolina 1997: 1000[109]

Cambodia

KFUNFS 1979: 20000[110]

Chad

Second Liberation Army 1971: 2000[111]

FAP 1977: 2000

FAN: 4000

FAT 1982: 3500[112]

---

[106] Irving Louis Horowitz, *Cuban Communism.* ([Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co., 1970), 562.

[107] Ibid., 45.

[108] María José Moyano, *Argentina's Lost Patrol: Armed Struggle, 1969-1979* (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 1995), 104.

[109] UN Secretary-General, "Report of the Secretary-General on Burundi," 2004, 3, http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Burundi%20S2004210.pdf.

[110] N Ganesan, Ramses Amer, and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, *International Relations in Southeast Asia: Between Bilateralism and Multilateralism* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2010), 93.

[111] Tom Cooper, Albert Grandolini, and Arnaud Delalande, *Libyan Air Wars: Part 1: 1973-1985*, 2015, 34, 40.

[112] Mario Joaquim Azevedo, *Roots of Violence: A History of War in Chad* (Australia: Gordon and Breach, 1998), 84.

MOSANAT 1989: 3000 (claimed)[113]

FNT 1992 - 1994: 500[114] ("was said to number several hundred people.")

Colombia

EPL 2004: 1000[115]

El Salvador

FPL 1979: 1750[116]

ERP 1979: 2000

Ethiopia

EPRP 1977: 47000[117]

Haiti

Lavalas 2004: 3000[118]

Indonesia

PRRI: 2000[119]

Iraq-Kurds

KDP-QM 1976-78: 10000 (claimed)[120]

Ivory Coast

---

[113] "African Concord," *Concord Press of Nigeria* 2, no. 28–39 (1988): 18.

[114] Minorities at Risk, "Chronology for Southerners in Chad," 2010, http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/chronology.asp?groupId=48302.

[115] James Ciment, *World Terrorism: An Encyclopedia of Political Violence from Ancient Times to the Post-9/11 Era* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2011), 204.

[116] Sean Anderson and Stephen Sloan, *Historical Dictionary of Terrorism* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 172–173.

[117] Chris Prouty, Eugene Rosenfeld, and Thomas Leiper Kane Collection (Library of Congress. Hebraic Section), *Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1981), 160.

[118] "Power Shift In Haiti Puts Rights at Risk," *Washington Post*, March 6, 2004, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A36889-2004Mar6_2.html.

[119] James Mossman, *Rebels in Paradise; Indonesia's Civil War.* (London: Cape, 1961), 111.

[120] National Foreign Assessment Center, "The Kurdish Problem in Perspective," 1979, 18, http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/89801/DOC_0000626727.pdf.

MPIGO: 3850[121]

Myanmar

CPB-RF 1970: 500[122]

Mujahid Party 1948-1950: 500[123]

RPF 1973 & 1977: 30[124]

ALP 1977: 250[125]

SSRA 1976: 200[126]

Peru

MIR 1965: 100[127]

ELN 1965: 30

Serbia

Serbian irregulars 1992 - 1995: 27500[128]

Sri Lanka

LTTE 1985: 2000[129]

[121] Nicolas Florquin and Eric G Berman, *Armed and Aimless: Armed Groups, Guns, and Human Security in the ECOWAS Region* (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2005), 242; Gérard Aivo, "Le statut de combattant dans les conflits armés non internationaux: étude critique de droit international humanitaire" (Bruylant, 2013).

[122] Alex P Schmid et al., *Political Terrorism a New Guide to Actors and Authors, Data Bases, and Literature* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1988), 514. Jongman puts an upper bound of 500 on the Red Flag faction in 1961, with numbers declining afterwards

[123] "Arakan Research Centre: Burma's Western Border as Reported by the Diplomatic Correspondence," accessed December 16, 2015, http://arakanresearchcentre.blogspot.com/2011/11/burmas-western-border-as-reported-by.html.

[124] Shwe Lu Maung, *Burma, Nationalism and Ideology: An Analysis of Society, Culture, and Politics* (Dhaka: University Press, 1989), 43.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Bertil Lintner, *Burma in Revolt: Opium and Insurgency since 1948* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

[127] Michael F Brown and Eduardo Fernández, *War of Shadows the Struggle for Utopia in the Peruvian Amazon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 93, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.03606. The ELN had one foco to MIR's three. While Héctor Béjar attests that at its lowest point the foco fell to 13 guerrillas, 30 is a good estimate for its stronger moments.

[128] William Glenn Robertson, Lawrence A Yates, and U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, *Block by Block the Challenges of Urban Operations* (Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 2003), http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS59226. ("Estimates of Bosnian Serb irregular strength vary between 20,000 and 35,000 throughout all of Bosnia")

[129] M. R Narayan Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka, from Boys to Guerrillas* (Delhi: Konark Publishers, 1994).

Sudan

NDA 1996 - 2000: 3500[130]

Uganda

WNBF 1996: 2000[131]

Yemen

FLOSY 1964 - 1967: 1200[132]

NLF 1964 - 1967: 7000[133]

I was unable to find troop count estimates for the following rebel groups:

EPDM in Ethiopia (3 years)

CNR in Chad (3 years)

FARF in Chad (1 year)

EPRLF in Sri Lanka (2 years)

Data sources for "insurgents" cases

In cases where, instead of named groups, the NSA dataset identifies an insurgent movement (i.e., 'Kashmiri insurgents,' 'Sikh insurgents,' 'Pattani insurgents') or "groups" (i.e., 'non-PLO groups'), I relied on secondary literature to distinguish significant rebel groups.

---

[130] Abdel Salam Sidahmed and Alsir Sidahmed, *Sudan* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 63–64. There's some ambiguity to this actor. The UCDP Dyadic dataset codes it as the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), an umbrella group in which the SPLM/A participated. The NSA dataset codes it as a "faction of SPLM," and offers no further information in the codebook. I'm going to favor the UCDP dataset and assume that it refers to the non-SPLM/A members of the National Democratic Alliance.

[131] Jacob Bercovitch, Judith Fretter, and Jacob Bercovitch, *Regional Guide to International Conflict and Management from 1945 to 2003* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2004), 106, http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=419523.

[132] Time Inc, *LIFE* (Time Inc, 1967), 99.

[133] Victoria Clark, *Yemen: Dancing on the Heads of Snakes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 80; Jonathan Walker, *Aden Insurgency: The Savage War in Yeman 1962-67.*, 2014, 76, http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=1931675.

Israel – Palestine

Fatah   1967: 500[134]

1968: 2000[135]

1970: 4750

PFLP   1967: 350[136]

1968: 400

1969: 1000

1970: 1500

1971: 950

1972: 300[137]

PLF/PLA 1967: 200[138]

1968: 400

1969: 1000

1970: 1250

PF-GC 1968: 150[139]

1970: 250[140]

PDFLP 1969: barely a few dozen[141]

1970: 250[142]

Sa'iqa 1970: 500

ALF 1970: 250[143]

PLO: 6000

Rejectionist Front: 1500 (estimate from summing member groups)

---

[134] Yazīd Ṣāyigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State the Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1997), 177, http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=431243.

[135] Ibid., 181.

[136] Ibid., 177.

[137] Ibid., 303.

[138] Ibid., 177. Using ratio of fighters at Karama.

[139] Ibid., 229.

[140] Ibid., 263.

[141] Ibid., 204.

[142] Ibid., 255.

[143] Ibid., 263.

al-Aqsa Martyr's Brigade 2002 - 2004: 500[144] ("a few hundred members")

Popular Resistance Committees 2006: 500[145] ("several hundred operatives")

India – Kashmiri insurgents

JKLF: 2500[146]

HuJI: 500 - 700[147]

HM   1990: 6000[148]

2002: 1500[149]

HuM: 300[150]

LeT: "Several thousand;" will assign 3000

MJC: 5000[151]

JeM: "several   hundred"   (will   assign   500)

Thailand – Pattani insurgents[152]

PULO: 100

BRN: 500

GMIP:100

---

[144] Bureau of Public Affairs Department Of State. The Office of Website Management, "Chapter 6 Foreign Terrorist Organizations," Report (Department Of State. The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs., July 31, 2012), http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2011/195553.htm.

[145] Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Popular Resistance Committees (PRC) Terrorist Organization 2006-2007," 2008,
http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Palestinian/Pages/The%20Popular%20Resistance%20Committees%20Terrorist%20Organization%202006-2007.aspx.

[146] Christina S Furtado, "Inter-Rebel Group Dynamics: Cooperation or Competition the Case of South Asia" 2007, 111.

[147] Marsha Crenshaw, "Mapping Militant Organizations: Pakistan," accessed June 5, 2015, http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/maps/view/pakistan_un. First attack in 1990, 650 soldiers dead in 2002 .

[148] Furtado, "Inter-Rebel Group Dynamics," 113.

[149] South Asia Terrorism Portal, "Hizb-Ul-Mujahideen," accessed June 5, 2015, http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/hizbul_mujahideen.htm.

[150] Furtado, "Inter-Rebel Group Dynamics," 111–113.

[151] Best guess from adding member organizations in Furtado 2007.

[152] Zachary Abuza, "A Breakdown of Southern Thailand's Insurgent Groups," *Terrorism Monitor* 4, no. 17 (September 8, 2006), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=893; Human Rights Watch, "No One Is Safe: Insurgent Attacks on Civilians in Thailand's Southern Border Provinces" 19, no. 13 (August 2007), https://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/thailand0807/index.htm; Sascha Helbardt, "Deciphering Southern Thailand's Violence: Organisation and Insurgent Practices of BRN-Coordinate," 2011. Note that estimates vary greatly between different sources; however, all sources agree that BRN was substantially larger than PULO or GMIP.

India – Sikh insurgents[153]

KCF: 3910

BTF: 1862

Babbar: 1676

KLF: 1552

[153] Martha Crenshaw, ed., *Terrorism in Context* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 394. I've extrapolated group size from Crenshaw's enumeration of sub-groups to calculate fragmentation (KCF: 63, BTF: 30, Babbar: 27, KLF: 25) using the total strength of 9000 listed in the Non-State Actor data set.

APPENDIX B. ROBUSTNESS CHECKS

Figure 3-4 Correlation matrix
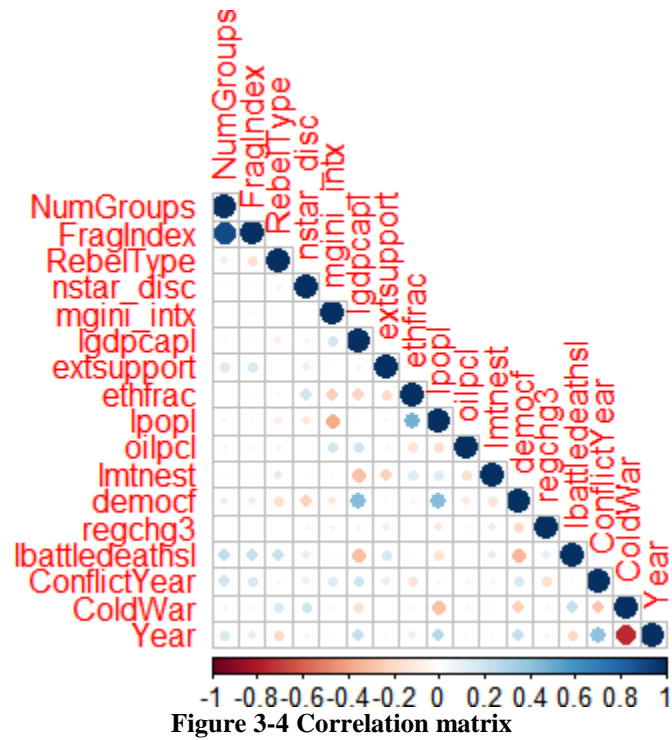
Figure 3-4 above reports bivariate correlations among the variables used in the main analyses in this chapter. Collinearity is low among all theoretically important variables, and not worringly high among structural variables such as Gini coefficient, democracy, and population size.

Table 3-6 Calculating McFadden R^2 for model goodness of fit

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Rebel type$_{t-1}$	−0.542***	−0.378*	−0.152		−0.554**
	(0.133)	(0.148)	(0.158)		(0.204)
N* discrimination index$_{t-1}$		0.579***	3.926***		3.838***
		(0.154)	(0.571)		(0.705)
N* discrimination index$^2_{t-1}$			−3.764***		−3.875***
			(0.667)		(0.855)
Gini$_{t-1}$		−0.080	0.227		−0.013
		(0.172)	(0.191)		(0.201)
Gini$^2_{t-1}$			0.168		0.652*
			(0.294)		(0.319)
log GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	0.219	−0.512**	−0.765***	0.436	−0.928***
	(0.181)	(0.190)	(0.212)	(0.224)	(0.273)
External support$_{t-1}$				0.835***	0.543*
				(0.239)	(0.264)
Ethnic fractionalization$_{t-1}$	0.406*	−0.164	−0.115	0.739**	0.189
	(0.194)	(0.239)	(0.281)	(0.234)	(0.295)
log Population size$_{t-1}$	−0.479**	−0.048	0.536*	−0.537*	0.181
	(0.183)	(0.217)	(0.254)	(0.229)	(0.294)
Oil production per capita$_{t-1}$	−0.613	−0.127	−0.670	−0.715	−0.496
	(0.397)	(0.363)	(0.381)	(0.440)	(0.420)
Mountainous terrain$_{t-1}$	0.136	−0.567**	−0.607**	0.106	−0.387
	(0.213)	(0.178)	(0.190)	(0.208)	(0.221)
Democracy$_{t-1}$	0.537***	1.137***	0.831***	0.983***	1.056***
	(0.162)	(0.190)	(0.193)	(0.200)	(0.234)
Regime change$_{t-1}$	0.132	0.430	0.533*	0.283	0.685**
	(0.225)	(0.236)	(0.237)	(0.216)	(0.234)
log Battle deaths$_{t-1}$				1.311***	0.808***
				(0.215)	(0.213)
log Conflict years$_{t-1}$				0.911***	0.736**
				(0.195)	(0.226)
Cold War$_{t-1}$				0.011	−0.364
				(0.210)	(0.262)
Constant	−1.692***	−1.910***	−1.166***	−2.058***	−1.463***
	(0.087)	(0.096)	(0.151)	(0.120)	(0.201)
Observations	1,032	969	969	965	904
Log Likelihood	-570.785	-458.001	-438.034	-490.070	-392.588
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,159.571	938.002	902.069	1,004.141	819.176
McFadden R^2	0.145	0.314	0.343	0.265	0.412

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 3-6, above, calculates McFadden R^2 values to assess goodness of fit for the main regression in this chapter. In order to calculate pseudo-R^2, it was necessary to carry out a regular Poisson regression, which required integer count data on the dependent variable (rebel fragmentation). This sacrifices granularity and accuracy, but substantive results are nearly identical and the McFadden R^2 values attest to a strong overall fit. All models with quadratic indicators for grievances outperform Model 4, with only conflict variables.

Table 3-7 Lagged DV and regional dummies

	Lagged DV		Regional dummies				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Rebel type$_{t-1}$	−0.157	−0.500**	−0.600***	−0.586***	−0.520**	−0.638***	−0.502**
	(0.166)	(0.175)	(0.180)	(0.173)	(0.176)	(0.174)	(0.178)
N* discrimination index$_{t-1}$	2.387***	3.699***	3.815***	3.967***	4.300***	4.929***	4.109***
	(0.527)	(0.644)	(0.648)	(0.615)	(0.675)	(0.692)	(0.661)
N* discrimination index^2$_{t-1}$	−2.405***	−3.969***	−4.102***	−3.950***	−4.953***	−5.000***	−4.688***
	(0.582)	(0.760)	(0.768)	(0.697)	(0.858)	(0.779)	(0.820)
Gini$_{t-1}$	0.266	−0.057	−0.152	−0.388	0.005	0.061	−0.013
	(0.206)	(0.223)	(0.242)	(0.250)	(0.226)	(0.219)	(0.229)
Gini^2$_{t-1}$	−0.009	0.604	0.708*	0.044	0.530	0.035	0.497
	(0.298)	(0.321)	(0.333)	(0.362)	(0.316)	(0.361)	(0.326)
log GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	−0.566**	−1.015***	−0.977***	−1.430***	−0.896**	−0.698*	−1.355***
	(0.217)	(0.260)	(0.271)	(0.278)	(0.286)	(0.272)	(0.299)
External support$_{t-1}$	0.278	0.501*	0.487*	0.870***	0.434*	0.734***	0.479*
	(0.186)	(0.205)	(0.215)	(0.238)	(0.209)	(0.222)	(0.212)
Ethnic fractionalization$_{t-1}$	0.028	0.077	0.049	0.269	−0.154	−0.021	0.046
	(0.179)	(0.211)	(0.223)	(0.224)	(0.232)	(0.216)	(0.216)
log Population size$_{t-1}$	0.306	0.286	0.296	0.307	0.696*	0.177	0.677*
	(0.233)	(0.245)	(0.261)	(0.252)	(0.302)	(0.254)	(0.308)
Oil production per capita$_{t-1}$	−0.113	−0.305	−0.214	−0.020	−0.320	0.110	−0.501
	(0.253)	(0.287)	(0.301)	(0.294)	(0.297)	(0.297)	(0.318)
Mountainous terrain$_{t-1}$	−0.164	−0.396*	−0.346	−0.841***	−0.345	−0.436*	−0.475*
	(0.158)	(0.177)	(0.179)	(0.207)	(0.181)	(0.183)	(0.187)
Democracy$_{t-1}$	0.584*	1.082***	1.033***	1.170***	1.038***	1.123***	1.113***
	(0.234)	(0.240)	(0.253)	(0.248)	(0.247)	(0.244)	(0.248)
Regime change$_{t-1}$	0.590**	0.647**	0.739***	0.664**	0.600**	0.541**	0.643**
	(0.183)	(0.201)	(0.213)	(0.205)	(0.205)	(0.202)	(0.206)
log Battle deaths$_{t-1}$	0.451**	0.886***	0.959***	0.852***	0.857***	0.825***	0.842***
	(0.160)	(0.172)	(0.179)	(0.169)	(0.173)	(0.166)	(0.175)
log Conflict years$_{t-1}$	0.500**	0.733***	0.705***	0.688**	0.767***	0.661***	0.798***
	(0.183)	(0.199)	(0.205)	(0.212)	(0.202)	(0.199)	(0.208)
Cold War$_{t-1}$	−0.255	−0.433*	−0.540**	−0.651***	−0.331	−0.563**	−0.399*
	(0.151)	(0.186)	(0.193)	(0.192)	(0.193)	(0.185)	(0.190)
Rebel Fragmentation$_{t-1}$	1.095***						
	(0.079)						
Western		−15.526					
		(746.319)					
Eastern Europe			−2.136				
			(1.280)				
Latin America				1.720***			
				(0.300)			
Sub-Saharan Africa					0.737*		
					(0.288)		
North Africa and Middle East						−1.437***	
						(0.378)	
Asia							−0.612*
							(0.266)
Constant	−1.673***	−1.975	−1.501***	−1.511***	−1.235***	−1.158***	−1.308***
	(0.151)	(27.174)	(0.187)	(0.176)	(0.182)	(0.173)	(0.177)
Observations	904	904	904	904	904	904	904

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Source: Mosinger (2017)

In Table 3-7, I test whether the independent variables of interest are robust to the addition of a lagged dependent variable and regional dummies. The N* discrimination index is robust to the addition of the lagged dependent variable. Rebel type and GDP per capita maintain their coefficient directions but no longer reach statistical significance. The results of the regional dummies are interesting and overturn common assumptions about rebel fragmentation: controlling for the major variables of interest, Latin America is associated with the most fragmented rebel

movements while MENA countries are associated with the least fragmented rebel movements – at least prior to 2006.

Table 3-8 Tests for endogeneity

	Dependent variable				
	Rebel type		Rebel fragmentation		
	OLS		glm: quasipoisson link = log		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Communist or Secessionist	0.414** (0.153)	−1.317*** (0.167)			
log Battle deaths$_{t-1}$	0.575*** (0.159)	1.189*** (0.159)			
log Battle deaths$_{t-3}$			1.126*** (0.176)		
log Battle deaths				1.487*** (0.172)	
log Battle deaths$_{t+3}$					1.189*** (0.180)
log GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	−0.120 (0.172)	−0.002 (0.184)	0.322 (0.210)	0.367 (0.195)	0.292 (0.206)
External support$_{t-1}$	0.241 (0.161)	0.827*** (0.211)	1.041*** (0.267)	0.803*** (0.223)	1.062*** (0.255)
Ethnic fractionalization$_{t-1}$	0.355* (0.166)	0.616*** (0.183)	0.579** (0.216)	0.709*** (0.203)	0.682** (0.213)
log Population size$_{t-1}$	−0.623** (0.202)	0.068 (0.224)	−0.328 (0.256)	−0.380 (0.226)	−0.501* (0.249)
Oil production per capita$_{t-1}$	0.369* (0.153)	−0.126 (0.321)	−0.817* (0.408)	−0.560 (0.332)	−0.840* (0.402)
Mountainous terrain$_{t-1}$	0.832*** (0.153)	0.306 (0.163)	0.234 (0.180)	0.093 (0.166)	0.291 (0.182)
Democracy$_{t-1}$	−0.140 (0.194)	1.151*** (0.226)	0.956*** (0.244)	0.970*** (0.221)	0.773** (0.248)
Regime change$_{t-1}$	−0.253 (0.185)	0.315 (0.183)	0.143 (0.208)	0.317 (0.188)	0.361 (0.206)
log Conflict years$_{t-1}$	−0.079 (0.147)	0.924*** (0.192)	0.670* (0.285)	0.984*** (0.196)	1.307*** (0.225)
Cold War$_{t-1}$	0.298 (0.156)	0.210 (0.171)	0.002 (0.187)	−0.143 (0.176)	−0.232 (0.186)
Constant	5.660*** (0.068)	−2.105*** (0.104)	−1.935*** (0.145)	−2.100*** (0.111)	−2.025*** (0.126)
Observations	965	965	687	967	696
R^2	0.120				
Adjusted R^2	0.109				
Residual Std. Error	2.072 (df = 952)				
F Statistic	10.831*** (df = 12; 952)				

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Source: Mosinger (2017)

The regressions in Table 3-8 test two possible sources of reverse causality: first, they assess whether rebel fragmentation causes a lower rebel type (because numerous competing rebel

groups may make it more challenging to build a civilian constituency) and second, whether rebel

fragmentation causes high levels of violence rather than the reverse.

In order to improve causal inference regarding the role of rebel type, I create a dummy

variable, coded as 1 for communist and secessionist insurgencies, to serve as a weak instrument

for rebel type. Rebel goals are largely chosen prior to conflict onset, and are therefore unlikely to

be caused by rebel fragmentation. However, scholars have found evidence that communist

(especially Maoist) and secessionist rebel groups build more robust organizations, provide more

public goods, and rely more on non-coercive relations with civilians (Mampilly 2011; M. Stewart

2015). Thus, communist and secessionist insurgencies should predict a higher rebel type, yet

should be otherwise largely exogenous to the dependent variable, rebel fragmentation.[154] As can

be seen in Model 1, communist and secessionist insurgencies are indeed associated with a higher

rebel type. Model 2 confirms that communist and secessionist insurgencies are associated with

dramatically less rebel fragmentation. These two models in combination provide strong evidence

that rebel type causes rebel fragmentation, though I do not reject some degree of endogeneity.

With respect to conflict intensity, I lag battle deaths by three years, zero years, and lead

by three years to see if the relationship changes. Effect sizes do not change substantially when the

variable is lagged or led, and therefore conflict intensity appears inextricably endogenous. This

may be because UCDP battle death data is often (though not always) averaged over the length of

conflicts. However, my theoretical prior is that conflict intensity does indeed both cause and result

---

[154] It should be noted that communist and secessionist insurgencies are a weak instrument rather than a strong instrument, because they may affect rebel fragmentation through mechanisms other than a higher rebel type. In particular, external support from Cuba and the Soviet Union, or neighboring rivals in the case of secessionist insurgencies, may help rebel movements unify. However, as external support is largely associated with increased fragmentation in other models, this danger is low. Nonetheless, I cannot reject the possibility that the instrument is associated with the error term and therefore do not run an instrumental variable regression.

from rebel fragmentation. High levels of violence strain rebel institutional structures: "comprehensive counterinsurgency" by the state can cut network ties (Staniland 2014) or create costs that lead to disagreement between rebel elites (Christia 2012; McLauchlin and Pearlman 2012a). Meanwhile, rebel fragmentation can provoke inter-rebel competition and outbidding that increases violence (K. G. Cunningham, Bakke, and Seymour 2012).

Table 3-9 Random effects on conflict and calendar year

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Rebel type$_{t-1}$	−0.238		−0.616*
	(0.308)		(0.310)
N* discrimination index$_{t-1}$	4.493**		4.498**
	(1.477)		(1.487)
N* discrimination index^2$_{t-1}$	−4.240**		−4.411**
	(1.598)		(1.582)
Gini$_{t-1}$	−0.231		−0.753
	(0.421)		(0.441)
Gini^2$_{t-1}$	−0.383		−0.146
	(0.535)		(0.540)
log GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	−0.441	−0.613	−1.006
	(0.615)	(0.572)	(0.636)
External support$_{t-1}$	1.132***	1.276***	0.990**
	(0.340)	(0.335)	(0.365)
Ethnic fractionalization$_{t-1}$	−0.440	0.663	0.197
	(0.763)	(0.737)	(0.785)
log Population size$_{t-1}$	1.200	−0.338	−0.029
	(0.753)	(0.707)	(0.775)
Oil production per capita$_{t-1}$	0.578	0.383	0.695
	(0.460)	(0.335)	(0.481)
Mountainous terrain$_{t-1}$	−0.909	−0.195	−0.508
	(0.677)	(0.634)	(0.672)
Democracy$_{t-1}$	0.110	0.744	0.569
	(0.677)	(0.605)	(0.636)
Regime change$_{t-1}$	0.304	0.079	0.252
	(0.282)	(0.218)	(0.280)
log Battle deaths$_{t-1}$		0.768***	0.780**
		(0.233)	(0.245)
log Conflict years$_{t-1}$		0.928**	1.085**
		(0.310)	(0.383)
Cold War$_{t-1}$		0.424*	−0.121
		(0.212)	(0.277)
Constant	−3.524***	−4.931***	−3.287***
	(0.617)	(0.616)	(0.731)
Observations	940	965	904
Log Likelihood	-361.372	-398.034	-343.335
Akaike Inf. Crit.	754.745	824.068	724.669
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	832.279	892.278	815.999

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 3-9 tests the robustness of results with random effects on conflict and calendar year. As can be seen, the results are largely robust, though rebel type again does not reach significance in Model 1.

4. THE NICARAGUAN REVOLUTION

Introduction

This chapter and the following two present the first three case studies: three time periods during a Nicaraguan rebel movement (1961-1974, 1975-1978, and 1979), which eventually overwhelmed the Somoza dynasty (1936 – 1979). I thus define my case, or unit of analysis, as a *rebel movement-time period*. These cases exhibit variation in the outcome of interest – i.e., we observe both rebel unity and fragmentation – as well as the full range of variation on a key independent variable, civilian grievances. The *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* (FSLN) – the rebel movement's principal actor – was initially unified, splintered into three feuding organizations in 1975 to 1976, and reunified in 1979. Meanwhile, grievance-driven mobilization grew from sporadic acts by anti-regime dissidents in the late 1950s to mass popular uprisings in 1978 and 1979.

These case studies are organized as follows. In this chapter I introduce the cases in more detail, present the qualitative research design and data, and score the dependent and independent variables thus situation the cross-case comparison and the within-case causal analysis in Chapters 5 and 6. In Chapter 5, I process trace the causes of the FSLN's splintering leading to its fragmented "second period" from 1975 to 1978. In Chapter 6, I do the same for the FSLN's two unified periods, its "first period" from 1961 to 1974, and its "third period" in 1979. Thus, the case studies are organized by differing values on the dependent variable rather than chronologically.

I begin this chapter with a brief overview of the FSLN's political history. I discuss my methodology, define my cases, and outline my use of process tracing for causal analysis. I then

turn to data collection, detailing archival and interview research conducted during fieldwork from X to Y in Nicaragua, as well as my methods for constructing a network dataset of the FSLN's principal militants. Next, I briefly summarize how the civilian constituency theory's main variables, *rebel type* and *civilian grievances* interact to produce rebel fragmentation or unity, then operationalize and score each variable in turn. Finally, I introduce three competing hypotheses: *external support*, *state violence*, and *ideological / strategic disagreements*.

Brief Introduction to the FSLN

Here I offer a brief overview of the FSLN's political history in order to provide context for empirical analysis. Like similar militant leftist organizations from Guatemala to Argentina, the FSLN first surfaced as part of a guerrilla wave that swept through Latin America following the 1959 Cuban revolution (Wickham-Crowley 1991, 139). Out of all the groups inspired by the Cuban revolutionaries, only the FSLN replicated its success, overthrowing Nicaragua's dynastic Somoza dictatorship in 1979. It was founded in 1961 by four former members of the *Partido Socialista Nicaragüense* (PSN), Noel Guerrero, Carlos Fonseca, Tomás Borge, and Silvio Mayorga, all veterans of short-lived guerrilla columns from 1959 and 1960 (Díaz Lacayo 2010, 673–84). By 1963, Carlos Fonseca had assumed control of the organization, and endowed it with the name and iconography of a little-remembered Nicaraguan rebel from the 1920s and 1930s, General Augusto Sandino (Fonseca Amador 1985). The FSLN initially attempted to follow Che Guevara's *foco* strategy,[155] raising guerrilla columns at Raití-Bocay in 1963 and Pancasán in 1967 in Nicaragua's mountainous north (Instituto de Estudio del Sandinismo 1985). Both columns were crushed by the Somocista National Guard with major loss of life. In response, the FSLN developed

---

[155] For more on Guevara's *foco* strategy and its historical evolution, see Childs (1995).

a strategy of *guerra popular prolongoda* (prolonged people's war) in 1967 which emphasized the "accumulation of forces in silence," that is, building civilian loyalty and organizational strength prior to combat with the government. The FSLN, despite its setbacks in the *campo* (rural regions), thrived in urban settings, where it organized an intricate cellular organizational structure with a collective leadership.[156]

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the FSLN gained two valuable civilian constituencies: revolutionary students and radical Christians. The FSLN focused on building support in Nicaragua's universities and high schools as early as 1963 (Ortega Saavedra 2004, 146). It gained hegemonic control over Nicaragua's student politics in 1969: an FSLN-controlled student organization, the *Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario* (FER), won the student elections at the nation's flagship university, the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua* (UNAN) in León, and would dominate student government at all major universities from that point until end of the revolution (Ruchwarger 1987, 10). Through its control over the FER, the FSLN cultivated a large and potent pool of dissidents, and potential student leaders were recognized and channeled into the rebel organization proper.[157]

The FSLN welcomed and actively fostered links to radical Christian groups as the spread of Liberation Theology throughout Latin America made for a temporary rapprochement between Catholicism and Marxism. The Sandinistas often used religious symbolism in their literature, as in one 1969 communiqué: "Two thousand years ago, there was a redeemer who described his brothers as the persons who did the will of one in heaven, from whom proceeded justice and truth…

---

[156] Turcios, Oscar, "Acerca de las celulas," in IES, Colección Dirección Nacional Histórica, 113–16.
[157] Omar Cabezas, an FSLN leader, vividly describes his own recruitment through the FER in an interview with Stephen Kinzer (1991, 63—64).

Augusto César Sandino also called brothers the ones who accompanied him with their rifles in the resistance against yankee aggressors."[158] The *Movimiento Cristiano Revolucionario* (MCR) served to link progressive Christians to the Sandinista cause in much the same way that the FER had linked students.

By 1974, the FSLN possessed growing politico-military structures in Nicaragua's two largest cities, Managua and León, and, at last, a durable guerrilla column in the Segovia mountains. Meanwhile, a popular reaction to a December 1974 military operation demonstrated how deepening anti-regime grievances were leading even everyday citizens to support the Sandinistas. After an FSLN commando squad stormed a regime official's Christmas party, taking dozens of hostages, they negotiated for safe conduct for a flight to Cuba (Wheelock 1979). Crowds of jubilant well-wishers followed the FSLN convoy to the airport, flashing victory signs and shouting "Viva Sandino!" (Wheelock 1979, 53).

Yet Christmas 1974 would be, for the time being at least, a high-water mark. In 1975, the FSLN fragmented into three different bitterly-feuding splinter factions, also called *tendencias* (tendencies): the *Guerra Popular Prolongada* (FSLN-GPP, or GPP), the *Tendencia Proletaria* (FSLN-TP, or TP), and the *Tendencia Insurreccional* (FSLN-TI, or TI). Fragmentation proved costly. Security measures within the now-fragmented rebel movement broke down as a result of the split, and several important leaders, including Carlos Fonseca, were killed by the National Guard in 1976 and 1977 (Blandón 2013; Ramírez 1990). The following chapter, Chapter 5, analyzes the causes of the FSLN's fragmentation from 1975 to 1978.

The three-way split, though acrimonious, was not permanent. After the assassination of civil opposition leader Pedro Joaquín Chamorro in January 1978, anti-regime mobilization spread

---

[158] "Proclama del FSLN," 1969, in Fonseca (1982, 267), quoted by Foroohar (1989, 119).

through Nicaragua like a "prairie fire" (Kuran 1989). In a context of widespread urban revolt, mid-level commanders from all three FSLN factions began cooperating with one another, even as factional leaders remained hostile. Eventually, the FSLN's factions reconciled in March 1979, creating a National Directorate with three commanders representing each faction. Chapter 6 analyzes the FSLN's reunification in 1979, as well as how the organization kept the Nicaraguan rebel movement unified from 1961 to 1974.

Methodology

Chapters 5 and 6 each contain one or more case studies – that is, a "detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events" (George and Bennett 2005, 5) – a particular time period in the history of the Nicaraguan anti-Somoza rebel movement. (I define a case as a "rebel movement-time period.") By rebel movement, I mean all Nicaraguan anti-Somocista rebel groups. Thus, while the FSLN and its splinter groups dominated this rebel movement as well as my analysis, the FSLN is not the entire rebel movement: two marginal rebel groups, the FARN and the MAP-ML attempted to mobilize independently and form part of the movement as a whole. Each case exhibits a different level of rebel movement fragmentation: a unified period (1961-1974), a fragmented period (1975-1978), and a second unified period (1979) – the score on the dependent variable thus varies across cases and over time. However, comparison over time can only establish correlation: whether rebel fragmentation varies with rebel type and civilian grievances as expected.[159] It does little to

---

[159] As I note later in this chapter, in the Nicaraguan case, fragmentation varies as expected with civilian grievances, but not with rebel type.

establish a *causal* relationship. I thus utilize within-case process tracing to test causal mechanisms between my main variables of interest and rebel fragmentation.

Analytic Methods – Process tracing

Even in the relatively parsimonious framework put forward in the civilian constituency theory, rebel movement fragmentation results from a complex array of factors whose causal effect is held to cross different levels of analysis. Civilian grievances, for example, may originate in macroprocesses (state-level structural inequalities, large-scale regime violence, or even international diffusion of demonstration effects) which trigger individual-level emotions (anger), motivating mobilization at both the individual- and meso-level (that is, the mobilization of networks of individuals). The mobilization of civilian networks and rebel groups at the meso-level, in turn, cause rebel fragmentation, a macro-level outcome. This complex account cannot be demonstrated merely by showing an expected correlation, such as that established in Chapter 3's large-*n* analysis. I therefore turn to process tracing to establish whether the civilian constituency theory operates through the expected "sequential processes within a particular historical case" (George and Bennett 2005, 13).

As Beach and Pedersen put it, "[i]n process-tracing, we theorize more than just X and Y; we also theorize the mechanism between them" (Beach and Pedersen 2016, 49). Thus, I specify these sequential process, or causal mechanisms,[160] leading from each value of the independent variables observed in the case to each observed level of rebel fragmentation (the dependent variable). For example, the causal mechanism leading from (*stationary rebel type*, *moderate*

---

[160] I understand causal mechanisms as "ultimately unobservable physical, social, or psychological processes through which agents with causal capacities operate, but only in specific contexts or conditions, to transfer energy, information, or matter to other entities" (George and Bennett 2005, 137).

grievances) to *fragmented rebel movement* is specified in a series of steps: 1) grievances mobilize a new dissident network; 2) the dissident network is incorporated into a rebel group; 3) the dissident network supports a new rebel leader over an incumbent leader in the group; 4) the new rebel leader challenges the incumbent rebel leaders. Finally, 5) if the challenger and incumbent are evenly matched, the leadership dispute ends in an organizational split, fragmenting the rebel movement. This sequence, which I refer to as the commander constituency change mechanism, is the topic of Chapter 5, where I trace these steps over the course of four leadership disputes within the FSLN.

Chapter 6, which discusses two cases characterized by rebel movemenet unity, presents two causal mechanisms. The first, leading from (*stationary rebel type*, *low grievances*) to *unified rebel movement*, has four steps: 1) grievances mobilize few dissident networks, 2) dissident networks are incorporated by first-moving rebel group, 3) second-moving rebel groups fail to expand, leaving the rebel movement unified. The second, leading from (*stationary rebel type*, *high grievances*) to *unified rebel movement*, has three steps as well: 1) grievances mobilize broad social networks, 2) broad social networks allow mid-level commanders from different rebel groups to cooperate, 3) factional leaders lose control of mid-level commanders, which 4) incentivizes them to form an umbrella group. I generate and test observable implications for every step in these posited causal processes.

In sum, process tracing moves beyond a correlational approach by carefully testing whether a causal sequence unfurled within a given historical case. The method is flexible enough to contribute to both deductive and inductive theory-building, as well as hypothesis testing (Bennett 2010). While the causal sequences presented in Chapters 5 and 6 were partially generated and fully tested within the Nicaraguan case, I sought, as much as possible, "to build a generalizable

theoretical explanation [by use of] empirical evidence, inferring that a more general causal mechanism exists from the facts of a particular case" (Beach and Pedersen 2016, 3).

Data collection methodology

Process tracing requires that I approach each step in a mechanism as if it were a tiny research design, collecting "diverse and relevant evidence" to demonstrate the causal 'glue' linking the steps together (Bennett and Checkel 2015, 27). This section details my sources of data, and my collection techniques for two main types of data collected during fieldwork: archival and interview research. I then discuss how I combined these data to produce a network dataset of FSLN commanders.

Archival research

I consulted four archives over the course of my fieldwork in Nicaragua, all located in Managua. First and foremost, I spent three months at the *Instituto de Historia Nicaragüense y Centroamericana* (IHNCA, formerly the *Instituto de Estudio del Sandinismo*), located at the *Universidad Centroamericana* (UCA). Beyond IHNCA, I consulted the *Biblioteca Nacional* "*Rubén Darío*" (BNRD) located at the *Banco Central Nicaragüense*; the *Biblioteca Enrique Bolaños* (BEB); and the *Archivo Municipal de Managua* (AMM). Unfortunately, the most useful archive of all, the *Centro de Historia Militar* (CHM) where almost all historic internal FSLN documents are stored, has been off-limits to foreign and most domestic researchers since the early 2000s. I made several attempts to gain entry to the CHM, which is located on a military base in Managua. The soldiers on duty instructed me that the only way to gain entry was through a personal letter addressed to Julio César Avilés Castillo, the commanding general of the Nicaraguan Armed Forces. I did submit a letter, but never received a response from General Avilés Castillo.

The IHNCA houses extensive collections of primary source literature, such as FSLN propaganda from the 1960s and 1970s and missives dedicated for public consumption, and an extensive *hemeroteca* (a newspaper archive) containing all daily editions of Nicaragua's premiere newspaper, *La Prensa*, since 1960 and the FSLN newspaper *La Barricada* from the 1979 onwards.[161] Especially useful, as I detail further on, were the IHNCA's collection of biographical material on FSLN commanders, as well as a nearly complete collection of memoires and testimonials by FSLN militants (and political and labor leaders). I used both extensively to construct the FSLN network dataset, while many of the memoires and testimonials were rich in information that I used to construct causal process observations.

In assessing the quality of evidence gained from memoires and testimonials, I used a similar critical approach to that detailed in the section further on titled *Memory, politics, and interviews*: I always took into account the political / factional position (past and present) of the memoirist, and the era in which the memoire was written (along with the official narratives current in that era).

As government archives with little material directly related to the pre-government FSLN, the BNRD and BEB were less helpful, although each contained structural accounts of Nicaraguan society written shortly after the Sandinista victory, in which the new masters of Nicaragua attempted to tally all of the social forces within the country. Though rarely cited in this dissertation, these documents provided invaluable context that helped me gain a deep understanding of the case. The AMM supplied a dozen additional testimonials of combatants who joined the 1978-1979 insurrection which had been collected as part of a project to install plaques and memorials in

---

[161] I employ cover pages from *La Prensa* as data to score grievance-causing focusing events later in this chapter. *La Barricada*, through its post-Revolution interviews and martyrologies, was a rich source of biographical information for constructing my network dataset.

neighborhoods across Managua. Though obviously not an unbiased source, these testimonials provided an additional window into the mindset of those mobilized during this late stage.

Interviews

I also conducted 31 interviews in Nicaragua with 28 individuals, among whom were 10 high-ranking FSLN commanders. Table 4-1, below, reports descriptive statistics on the categories of interviewees. Detailed information on every interview, including date, length, and mode of recording of each interview, and current occupation of informant, are reported in Appendix C:

Table 4-1 Interview descriptive statistics

		Total	Percentage
	Male	21	75%
Gender	Female	7	25%
	Younger than 60	15	54%
Age	60 or older	13	46%
	Managua	17	61%
	Segovias	6	21%
	León	3	11%
Location	Other	2	7%
	Professional	17	61%
Occupation	Non-professional	11	39%
	FSLN commanders	10	36%
	FSLN rank-and-file militants	6	21%
	FSLN collaborators	4	14%
	Dissident network leaders	4	14%
War-time role	Academics	4	14%
	FSLN-GPP	8	57%
	FSLN-TP	2	14%
FSLN faction	FSLN-TI	4	29%

The summary statistics reveal several points about my interview methods. First, most of my informants were over fifty, and nearly half over 60. This is hardly surprising considering that

my dissertation treats events that occurred over forty years ago, but it does raise issues of memory, which I discuss in the following section. Second, that my sample was 75% male is not surprising given the typical composition of armed rebel groups, but it's worth pointing out that the FSLN promoted many female commanders, a distribution reflected in my interviews. I interviewed three female commanders (out of ten total), while all six rank-and-file militants interviewed were male. Third, while I sought geographic variety in my interview locations, Nicaragua's capital Managua is overrepresented. This is because my research focused in large part on elite decision-making within the FSLN, and most current and former FSLN elites live in Managua nowadays, even though they may have originated elsewhere. This bias towards elite interviewing can also be seen in the professional occupations of 61% of my informants; additionally, many benefitted economically from their years as rebels (and a few of them benefitted a great deal). I discuss my informants' war-time roles and factional membership below, along with my sampling strategies.

Sampling strategy and frame

This section "[r]eport[s] the universe of actors relevant to the study, broken down by subsets to demonstrate a sample frame that draws on a variety of networks and perspectives based on theoretically motivated considerations."[162] War-time role was the most important subset that guided my interview sampling strategy, and I sought informants who played a diversity of roles within and connected to the FSLN. This includes, above all, FSLN commanders, many of whom proffered detailed information on the elite decision-making that led to the rebel movement's fragmentation; FSLN collaborators and rank-and-file militants, who helped me understand how deep divisions in the FSLN went and how they were overcome; and dissident network leaders,

---

[162] Bleich and Pekannen in Mosley (2013).

who helped me understand when, how, and why dissident networks chose to align themselves with the FSLN. In short, I sought perspectives from the top, middle, bottom, and outside of the FSLN's organizational structure.

With respect to interview research, my fieldwork had two phases marked by different sampling strategies. For the first six months, I focused on non-elite interviews, both to collect data and to develop a rich contextual understanding of the cases before turning to elite interviews. During this stage I employed snowball sampling, successfully starting independent "snowballs" in Managua/Estelí, Jinotega, and León. From these three networks, which in terms of contemporary politics were loosely oppositional, pro-FSLN, and neutral, respectively, came most of my interviews of FSLN collaborators and rank-and-file militants. These interviews reached what Bleich and Pekannen (2013) call "saturation": they were similar enough to one another as to provide few additional data relating to the outcomes under study.

From this point until the end of my fieldwork, I focused on elite interviews, seeking out high-ranking FSLN commanders and dissident network leaders. My sampling strategy for this was quite different: using my network dataset (discussed below) I made a list of 58 living elite FSLN commanders and dissident network leaders, sorted by their rank within the FSLN and its three splinter factions. Of these, I was able to contact 16; and of these, 10 agreed to be interviewed (a *response rate* of 62.5%). I noticed a pattern both for individuals whose contact information could not be tracked down, and for those who rejected (or avoided) interviews: they tended to be economic beneficiaries of Nicaragua's current Orteguista regime. As a result, I was only able to interview two elites with a pro-Ortega orientation, despite significant efforts spent tracking down

such interviews.[163] FSLN elites that are currently in the political opposition were generally much more forthcoming and willing to interview. I discuss how this may bias responses below; however, I will note here that Daniel Ortega played very little role in the FSLN's fragmentation and reunification.

A main goal with elite interviews was to seek commanders from all three FSLN factions: the FSLN-GPP (8 informants), the FSLN-TP (2 informants), and the FSLN-TI (4 informants). These raw totals are not good indicators of the quality of data collected. Though I was only able to interview two members of the FSLN-TP (each interviewed twice), they were from highest leadership echelons and were able to give me first-hand accounts of the events in question, as well as walk me through their own decision-making processes. My understanding of the organizational split leading to the creation of the FSLN-TP is therefore the richest in empirical detail. Several FSLN-GPP commanders were able to provide accounts of their faction's leaders and second-hand perspectives on elite decision-making. Meanwhile, interviewed members of the FSLN-TI knew relatively little about the decision-making of their faction's leaders. Thus, interviews pertaining to the FSLN-TI were the farthest from "saturation."

Interviews were conducted under condition of anonymity as per my human subjects requirements, though a slender majority of informants told me they had no problems being identified. Nonetheless, I do not do identify informants – particularly as a handful of informants

---

[163] At the time of this writing, Daniel Ortega was president and had been since 2007; he also led Nicaragua between 1979 and 1990. One of these pro-Ortega elites was incredibly helpful and considerate, but the other took down my personal information and began interrogating me about my family, to the extent that I became uncomfortable and ended the interview. I didn't make an effort to contact certain elites that were extremely close to the regime despite their important roles in the events under study. For example, I was warned not to contact Humberto Ortega by a journalist who had sought an interview and found herself tailed by a black van for the rest of her time in Nicaragua.

who told me they didn't need anonymity at the start of interviews later expressed misgivings about how forthright they had been in later conversations. 21 of 31 total interviews (68%) were recorded. In eight, I took notes, mostly because the informant asked me not to record them,[164] but on a couple of occasions because an interview arose organically when I did not have my audio recorder with me. On two similar occasions, I took supplementary notes immediately after returning home from an interview.

While the interviews were not semi-structured, for rebel commanders and militants they followed a common pattern. First, I would ask about the informant's mobilization pathway, asking how they explained their opposition to the regime, detailing what concrete steps they took towards mobilization, and how they heard of and came to join the FSLN. I asked about the informant's experiences upon joining, and their attitudes to FSLN goals and ideological positions. Finally, I asked informants to narrate their experiences of the 1975-1976 split and the 1978-1979 reunification, along with their understanding of the causes of each. Because the events at the heart of our interviews occurred almost 40 years ago, and because many of them treat historical topics that are, even today, politically sensitive, a few words on memory, politics, and fieldwork are in order.

Memory, Politics and Interviews

Whenever a social scientist enters the field to conduct interview-focused research, she must grapple with thorny issues of memory and intention. Such problems are compounded when the field site is one of former or present conflict: memories may be too distant to accurately recall, too stressful to recount, or deliberately distorted by informants. Nonetheless, previous interview-

---

[164] One informant, who had suspiciously rejected an audio recording at the start of the interview but warmed up to me over the course of it, told me at the end, "Why didn't you record this? It would have been a big help!"

based research into civilian mobilization during rebellion has met considerable success at excavating remembered events, even when those events occurred at a half-century remove.

In their respective discussions of fieldwork methods, both Roger Petersen (2001) and Elisabeth Wood (2003, 33–34) draw upon psychological literature which finds that violent or traumatic events leave behind especially vivid memories in their wake.[165] Their subsequent research confirms this, uncovering a surfeit of detail about long-ago incidents. Petersen, for example, interviewing Lithuanian immigrants many decades after their participation in uprisings against Soviet and Nazi occupations, was able to reconstruct complicated social networks and isolate how mobilization diffused through them over time. Significantly, he found that interview evidence was consistent between informants and with documentary evidence. Even those who had played "ignoble" roles, such as a Soviet collaborator, were frank and forthcoming about their experiences.[166] Indeed, this may be an *advantage* of studying distant events, where raw emotions and incentives to obfuscate for the purpose of self-preservation or -promotion have faded.

Like all forms of evidence-gathering, interviews present trade-offs between depth and breadth, or accuracy and applicability. The researcher must therefore evaluate the evidentiary value of data collected through interactions with human participants with great care. Whenever possible, I looked for corroborating documentary evidence that supported claims made by informants. Where documentary evidence was unavailable, I focused on establishing inter-informant reliability. And in all cases, but especially where I had to rely on the testimony of a

---

[165] Wood's discussion of memory in fieldwork draws on reviews of the psychological literature by Bradley (1994) and van Oyen Witvliet (1997), and points specifically to a study by Bornstein, Liebel, and Scarberry (1998).
[166] Similarly, Laia Balcells (2012), interviewing elderly Spanish informants in 2006 about their political views held prior to the Spanish civil war (1936 - 1939), found that invaluable data could be retrieved even at the absolute edge of memory.

single individual, I remained attentive to the haziness of memory (is the informant struggling to recall events?) and to motives that may affect the accuracy of recollection.

Many informants in diverse research projects struggle to accurately recall specific discourses from thirty years ago and some project current political attitudes and identities backwards. Nonetheless, it must be kept in mind that most of my informants were active participants in rebellion, an activity for which they risked their lives on a daily basis. As discussed earlier, these sorts of events tend to leave enduring memories. Laia Balcells' 2012 study on how civilian victimization impacted prewar political identities during the Spanish Civil War is a case in point. Her interviewees' average age was eighty-four in 2007 when the interviews were conducted, and Balcells questioned them about the strength of political loyalties held as far back as seventy-one years previously during adolescence or young adulthood (317). Rather than dull memories, she found that the *vividness* of memories was a substantial problem:

> some interviewees were initially reluctant to talk about that period, some expressed deep emotions when talking about their experiences (e.g., crying), and some did not let me record their testimony due to shame or fear of reprisals. In fact, fear was quite common among the interviewees. (317)

While interviews regarding events that occurred over thirty years ago do risk measurement error and reporting bias, these earlier studies lend me a degree of confidence that informants can, in general, recall temporally distant events accurately. In the interviews conducted during my fieldwork, informants often told me stories that were startling in their clarity, but struggled to recall other details when I pushed our dialogue towards events that interested me. On these occasions, informants were typically forthcoming about when they were struggling to recall something, telling me that they weren't sure, that they can't remember, or that this was their best

guess. Such honest statements of doubt not only allowed me to discount the evidentiary value of hazily remembered details, they also increased my confidence in details presented as factual by the same informants. By contrast, I came to regard some informants who always had a quick answer to questions about distant events as potentially less reliable.

I also used my familiarity with what might be termed the "official narratives" (in plural) in order to assess the reliability of informants' statements. As noted above, the FSLN was in power through the 1980s and one faction of it – Daniel Ortega's faction – has been ruling again since 2006. During both periods, the FSLN promoted a historical memory of its revolutionary campaign that painted itself in the best light. In the 1980s the official narrative papered over the factional dispute; in the 2000s the official version has magnified "El Comandante" Daniel Ortega's role (and that of his current political allies) in the revolution.[167] One Nicaraguan friend of mine has made a habit of sending me pages from contemporary Nicaraguan high school history textbooks which report, she says, "not much that's true."[168] My familiarity with the official narratives from both the 1980s and the 2000s and the contours of contemporary Nicaraguan politics, which comes from living in Nicaragua for a substantial amount of time, have also helped me judge my informants' reliability.

My research project treats events that are not part of the official narratives. As a result, I have become highly attuned to when informants substitute historical fact for ill-fitting "official" details. I tried to judge why informants do so. In some cases this bias may have arisen because the official version became common knowledge, in others because the informant did not wish to criticize or sought to praise the party in power. On the other hand, I had to keep in mind the

---

[167] Daniel Ortega's contribution to the FSLN's 1979 victory was far less than that of leaders he subsequently out-politicked, including his own brother Humberto. See especially Le Lous (2016).
[168] Facebook message with UCA history graduate student, 6/1/2017.

opposite problem when interviewing members of the opposition: their testimony may have been biased out of a desire to criticize the FSLN, or certain members of it. Thus, in all interviews, I sought to locate my informants' position within the contemporary political panorama and to properly discount statements that have contemporary political import. Informants were almost always glad to offer their current political views, often without them being requested.

Due to these past and present politics, an honest accounting of the factional dispute – by all accounts one of the most embarrassing phases of the FSLN's history – has not been carried out. In her meticulously researched biography of FSLN founder Carlos Fonseca, Mathilde Zimmermann (2000, 165) lamented that "[s]urviving participants have consistently refused to discuss the factional battles." FSLN-TP leader Luis Carrión told fellow *comandante* Mónica Baltodano in a much more candid 2010 interview, "These things are not spoken of openly," that is, they are the revolution's dirty laundry.[169] The result of this public silence is a historiographical gap, in which the way the FSLN explained its divisions to the world in 1978 (ideological and strategic differences) was projected backwards to explain how the divisions began in 1975. Ideological and strategic differences, after all, while embarrassing, are commendable inasmuch as they entail commitment to a higher good. In contrast, the explanation that I put forward (drawing on input from many FSLN *comandantes* in frank interviews from 2015 to 2017) is that the factional dispute originated in power struggles between FSLN elites, which cannot be glossed as commendable.

The long stretch of time between the events under study and the present has helped to de-politicize them: both political distance between most FSLN commanders and the party's current Ortega-dominated iteration, and the moderating influence of age towards youthful passions, clearly

---

[169] Interview with Luis Carrión in Baltodano (2010c).

allowed many of my informants to speak plainly about events that may have been verboten earlier: "History isn't all rose-colored," one FSLN commander warned me about the factional dispute, "but there are still people who, when they speak of this, try to care for a certain image even though they have an opinion that's different from what they're saying."[170] Moreover, embarrassing dynamics weren't necessarily clear to the idealistic young revolutionaries at the time, who may have told themselves a noble story to explain away the FSLN's factional dispute. With the wisdom of age – and political distance – its true dynamics can be analyzed, both politically and psychologically harmless to participants: "Now that I'm older I can understand that maybe there were issues of power [*cosas de poder*]. I know these power struggles are inherent to any human organization, and revolutionary organizations are no exception. It's difficult to tell this to people. Although people know this, they're not fools (laughs)."[171] Given shifts in private and public incentives, it is unlikely that a study such as this one could have been carried out much earlier, when chipping away at revolutionary mythologies would have met far more resistance.

Network dataset

In order to test the causes of rebel fragmentation in the Nicaraguan rebel movement, I have constructed an original network dataset of commanders (*comandantes*) and political leaders (*dirigentes*) in the FSLN and its splinter groups. The dataset contains biographical information and data on each included individual's links to other individuals and to familial, dissident, and educational networks. I use this dataset in Chapter 5 to calculate the relative strength of the FSLN's

---

[170] Author interview on 1/19/2017 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).
[171] Author interview on 12/12/2016 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.

constituent dissident networks, which, I argue, explains when rebel organizations succumb to leadership struggles and organizational splits.

The data to construct the dataset were generated during three months of extensive archival research conducted at the *Instituto de Historia de Nicaragua y Centroamérica* (IHNCA) in Nicaragua. Typically, rebel group internal structures are opaque to researchers: to prevent infiltration by regime agents and damage when collaborators defect, guerrilla warfare requires compartmentalization of information about chains of command. Nor can clandestine rebel networks be easily reconstructed after conflict. As the modal rebel group fails to take power and surviving combatants may face state retaliation during the post-war period, former rebels often lack the resources or motivation to divulge wartime command structures in detail. As a result, conflict researchers have largely relied on interviews with combatants, selected via non-representative snowball sampling, to gather partial data on rebel networks. In the Nicaraguan cases, however, meticulous historical records were compiled by the Sandinista government after the FSLN's victorious revolutionary campaign. Drawing on those information sources, my dataset is able to depict the internal structure of each insurgent group at far greater levels of detail than occurs in other conflict studies.

I employed dozens of primary and secondary sources to construct the dataset, relying on, *inter alia*, a large collection of biographies of FSLN commanders compiled to provide reading material for a 1980 literacy campaign, 27 memoirs of former combatants, almost all of whom were commanders or political leaders across all three factions, and 12 collections of combatant interviews. The memoires and interview collections were published between 1978 and 2015, providing an opportunity to compare how answers to similar questions and descriptions of the same events (often told by the same commanders) have changed over time, as both collective

memories of the revolution and commanders' relationships with the FSLN evolved.[172] To assure data reliability, I triangulated these data using dozens of interviews with surviving field commanders conducted over an additional six months of fieldwork spread out over two years. I discuss dataset construction in more detail in Appendix D.

The network dataset contains 144 FSLN commanders, an extraordinary level of granularity for a rebel movement that, for most of its existence, counted on fewer than a hundred members (both commanders and rank-and-file militants). In 1977, a year after the factional dispute analyzed in Chapter 5, Humberto Ortega reports that the FSLN had "a little more than a hundred" combatants (Ortega Saavedra 2004, 315); my network dataset contains 90 individuals in 1977.[173] At the beginning of the final uprising in 1978, the FSLN had (according to one interviewee) at most 500 members;[174] but this was likely a significant overcount based on each faction's desire to project strength at that time.[175]

I coded the date upon which each commander joined the FSLN, the date upon which they ceased activity (usually through being killed in action), their factional membership in 1976 and 1978 (as several militants switched factions prior to the final uprising), and *at least* one network connection immediately prior to joining the FSLN (a dissident network for most, otherwise a

---

[172] In general, the frankest descriptions of the factional disputes came in interviews immediately after the FSLN's triumph (Alegría and Flakoll 1982), before a public narratives had had an opportunity to coalesce, and those given very recently (Baltodano 2010c), long after the FSLN's political consensus had crumbled.
[173] Most rank-and-file FSLN militants in 1977 would later serve as commanders in the 1978 and 1979 uprising in which thousands participated; hence the dataset's high coverage of not just commanders, but combatants.
[174] Author interview on 12/12/2016 with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.
[175] For example, when trying to convince external supporters to lend more aid, FSLN leaders routinely inflated – often grossly so – their military capabilities. Sergio Ramírez (2015, 122) writes in his memoires that, when the Venezuelan president Carlos Andrés Pérez met with him to discuss military aid to the FSLN, he "had gone to see a president in name only of a guerrilla army of 1200 men that wasn't really more than eighty." Eighty is likely nearly as underinflated as 1,200 is overinflated, but the TI certainly had far less than 1,200.

personal connection to an FSLN member, a university, or a high school). Commanders were excluded from the dataset when collecting this information was not feasible, which occurred primarily for obscure or short-time members whose impact on the outcomes of interest were minimal. Exclusion of these commanders should not bias the findings in favor of or against any hypothesis.[176] Because the data are longitudinal, they paint a picture of the FSLN's social composition for every year between 1961 and 1979.

Operationalizing dependent and independent variables

This dissertation seeks to explain *rebel movement fragmentation*, the dependent variable. The civilian constituency theory posits two independent variables, each of which impacts civilian mobilization and therefore determines the level of rebel movement fragmentation. First, rebel movements comprised of rebel groups with a *stationary rebel type* incorporate more civilian dissident networks, depriving a ready constituency for independently mobilizing rebel groups. Thus, these rebel movements are less likely emerge already fragmented, or to fragment over time, than rebel movements comprised of rebel groups with a *roving rebel type*. Second, *civilian grievances* trigger more, and more heterogeneous, dissident networks to oppose the regime, creating a larger civilian constituency for independently mobilized or splinter rebel groups. Thus, as civilian grievances grow, rebel movements are more likely to emerge already fragmented, and to fragment over time, than rebel movements where civilian grievances are lower. Yet if civilian grievances grow strong enough to trigger a broad social network to participate in rebellion, rebels may be able to bridge distinct civilian constituencies, forming an umbrella group (decreasing

---

[176] This is all the more so because the intervening variable calculated from this dataset, Eigenvector centrality, only takes into account nodes (that is, commanders) with connections. Thus, excluding commanders without known connections will not change the Eigenvector centrality at all.

fragmentation). In this section, I describe each of these variables in more detail. I operationalize them and score them for each of the three time periods – my cases – of the Nicaraguan anti-Somoza rebel movement. Finally, I introduce three additional competing hypotheses.

Scoring rebel fragmentation (outcome)

I code the dependent variable (effective number of rebel groups) longitudinally. I use my network dataset, which achieves a high degree of coverage and records which FSLN faction combatants joined, in order to estimate troop counts for the FSLN factions. No available source, other than my dataset, estimates the relative size of the three FSLN factions. The proportions reported in my dataset are also consistent with interview data; an FSLN-TP leader confirmed to me that the TP was somewhat smaller than the GPP or TI, as reported in my dataset.[177] I use secondary sources to identify non-FSLN rebel groups and estimate their troop counts.[178] These secondary sources were selected based on availability: they are the only estimated troop counts for these groups that I am aware of. Estimates of troop counts for clandestine revolutionary organizations in secondary literature are always sparse and likely based on essentially impressionistic evidence from participants or historians; correspondingly, the effective number of rebel groups calculated below should be taken as a rough estimate rather than an exact statistic.

---

[177] Author interview on 6/24/2016 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

[178] I take troop counts from the first year that a splinter or independent group appears. I take FARN's troop count from Casanova Fuertes (2013a, 159–68) and Ortega (2004); both sources refer to six FARN combatants, compared to 44 FSLN combatants in my dataset for 1968. My dataset contains 21 FSLN-TP combatants in 1975, compared to 61 FSLN combatants. In 1976, my dataset records 29 FSLN-GPP combatants, 21 FSLN-TP combatants, and 29 FSLN-TI combatants. Finally, in 1979 I use a low-end estimate of 6000 FSLN combatants (Vilas 1985), compared to 150 combatants in the MAP-ML's *Milicia Popular Anti-Somocista* (MILPA) units (Bitácora Marxista-Leninista 2015). There were two additional tiny militant groups, the Conservative Party extremist splinter *Movimiento del 11 del Noviembre* (11-N) and the Liga Marxista Revolucionaria (LMR) that fought in the insurrection, but unlike the MAP-ML, they did so under FSLN command and thus do not constitute independent rebel groups .

I calculate the dependent variable with the same formula presented in the previous chapter, as a Laakso-Taagepera index. I reproduce this formula here:

$$N = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i^2}$$ (1)

where n is the total number of rebel groups in the rebel movement, and p is group i's proportion of the size of the total rebel movement (measured by number of fighters). Figure 4-1, below, shows the effective number of rebel groups over time in Nicaragua from 1961 to 1979.

Year		Effective number of rebel groups
1961-1967	FSLN	1
1968-1972	FSLN / FARN	1.22
1973-1974	FSLN	1
1975	FSLN / FSLN-TP	1.6
1976-1978	FSLN-GPP / FSLN-TI / FSLN-TP	2.91
1979	FSLN / MAP	1.05

Figure 4-1 Fragmentation map of the Nicaraguan rebel movement (1961 – 1979)

It is important to note that this fragmentation map captures several elements that are frequently omitted from analyses of the Nicaraguan rebel movement. First, in order to capture organizational developments far below the radar of typical historiographical accounts, I have

lowered the battlefield death threshold to code a rebel-state dyad from 25 to 1.[179] In particular, this allows me to include failed attempts at independent rebel mobilization, such as the FARN, as well as relatively marginal groups, such as the FSLN splinter MAP-ML, which organized anti-regime militias in 1979. Both groups are routinely omitted from accounts of the Nicaraguan rebel movement, yet understanding why they failed to mobilize large groups competing with the FSLN is essential for explaining why rebel movements may remain unified. Furthermore, the FSLN's own post-revolutionary accounts minimized its bitter division into three feuding factions, the FSLN-GPP, the FSLN-TP, and the FSLN-TI, a revisionist historiography that nonetheless colors most extant treatments of the Nicaraguan rebel movement.[180] Acceptance of FSLN "spin" extends to the UCDP Dyadic data set, which codes a single rebel-state dyad (FSLN-Nicaragua) for the years 1975-1978.

Rebel type (independent variable) – hypothesis and scoring

Hypothesis 1: Rebel movements comprised predominantly of stationary rebel groups are less likely to be fragmented.

Hypothesis 1 holds that rebel groups which invest in mobilizing a sizeable civilian constituency prior to or during civil war (that is, stationary groups) are less likely to splinter and

---

[179] Leaving the battlefield death threshold at 25 would eliminate the FARN (I am only aware of one death connected to this group) and it would likely push back the FSLN-TP's first year to 1976 or 1977, depending on how civilian deaths are attributed. Neither change would greatly affect the scoring of the dependent variable. There are other very small groups that defected from the FSLN meeting this fatality threshold, but they are not included as they are not *named* groups. It is difficult to determine at this reserve whether they fought for political demands or simply devolved into criminal groups. One example is a small group of campesinos following Catalino Flores, a former FSLN member.
[180] See especially Zimmermann (2000) where, writing about the factional dispute, she claims somewhat defensively that, unlike in other Latin American revolutionary movements, "[t]he differences expressed by the various tendencies of the FSLN from 1972 onward were debated within a single organization and with a common political framework." In terms of a common political framework, she has a point, but the three factions were completely organizationally distinct, as I will show.

are less likely to face outside challenges from independently mobilized rebel groups. Thus, rebel movements in which stationary groups predominate are more likely to be unified. The preliminary large-*n* statistical evidence is consistent with this hypothesis. Yet this analysis is incomplete without a more concrete conceptualization of rebel type, as well as examination of several potential causal pathways by which civilian mobilization might affect a rebel movement's unity and fragmentation.

In conceptualizing and measuring rebel type, I focus on four attributes that reflect rebel group investment in civilian mobilization: (1) whether rebel groups seek to cultivate ties to dissident and broad civilian networks, (2) whether rebel groups have a programmatic ideology along with the means to disseminate their ideology,[181] (3) whether a rebel group has the organizational infrastructure to incorporate civilian support, and (4) whether it has territory that is secure from government violence in which to build institutions and relationships with civilians.[182] That is, I further disaggregate *rebel type* into four sub-dimensions, focusing on the rebels' *investment in social ties*, *ideology*, *institutional strength*, and *territorial control*. These four sub-dimensions are comparable to my quantitative index of rebel type in the previous chapter, allowing for a conceptual deepening permitted by within-case qualitative research.[183] I score each of these components dichotomously, *present* or *not present*, as well as longitudinally (scored for each of the three time periods 1961-1974, 1975-1978, and 1979), at the rebel group-level – that is, for the

---

[181] See Thaler (Thaler 2017, 7–8) for a discussion of programmatic ideologies, which focus on "long-term goals that extend beyond taking power to the transformation of socioeconomic and political relations."

[182] While research on rebel organization (Weinstein 2007) and ideology (Sanín and Wood 2014) suggest these as central factors, there may be others factors derived inductively during fieldwork.

[183] For comparison, my quantitative index used indicators of "1) each group's mobilization capacity (a measure of popular support), 2) the institutional strength of the rebel command structure, 3) the extent of the rebel political wing (a roundabout way of assessing the presence of an ideological component), and 4) the extent of each rebel group's territorial control." See Chapter 3.

FSLN and its factions.[184] If zero through two dimensions are *present*, I score a rebel group as *roving*. If three or more of these dimensions are *present*, I score a rebel group as *stationary*.

Overview of the FSLN's rebel type score

The FSLN and each of its three splinter groups were scored as *stationary* for every time period in this study. This scoring reflects the FSLN reputation as a paradigmatic rebel group for its commitment to civilian mobilization: it invested heavily in forging social ties with dissident and civilian networks; it enunciated a broad, inclusive, and nationalistic ideology; and it self-consciously built strong internal institutions. Each of its splinter groups, the FSLN-GPP, FSLN-TI, and FSLN-TP retained these traits during the second period (1975-1978). The only dimension of rebel type in which the FSLN did not excel was territorial control: only at the very end of their conflict with the Somoza regime, in 1979, had the group strengthened sufficiently to wrest control of territorial from the government. Table 4-2, below, reports the full scoring of rebel type across all groups within the rebel movement over all time periods.[185]

---

[184] Insufficient data were available to score the marginal rebel groups FARN and MAP-ML systematically, though I do consider their social ties and ideology in Chapter 6 to the fullest extent possible.
[185] This scoring is consistent with that used in Chapter 3's large-*n* analysis. Based on the formula in Chapter 3 and the Non-State Actor dataset (Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009), the FSLN received a rebel type score of 10 (out of a possible 12).

Table 4-2 Scoring rebel type across four dimensions

	Investment in social ties	Ideology	Institutional strength	Territorial control	Total (out of 4)	Rebel type
Period 1: 1961-1974						
FSLN	Present	Present	Present	Not present	3	Stationary
Period 2: 1975-1978						
FSLN-GPP	Present	Present	Present	Not present	3	Stationary
FSLN-TP	Present	Present	Present	Not present	3	Stationary
FSLN-TI	Present	Present	Present	Not present	3	Stationary
Period 3: 1979						
FSLN	Present	Present	Present	Present	4	Stationary

The lack of variation portrayed in Table 4.2 suggests that rebel type cannot explain rebel movement fragmentation during the second case (1975-1978), reducing its theoretical utility. Although rebel type cannot explain variation on the dependent variable across the Nicaraguan cases, this should not be taken to mean that it had no bearing on the outcome. In Chapter 6, I analyze causal process observations linking stationary rebel type to both cases of rebel movement unity (1961-1974 and 1979). Specifically, from 1961 to 1974, the FSLN's exceptional strength in forming strong social ties with all available civilian dissident groups left attempts to mobilize an independent rebel group (the FARN) starved of recruits, marginal, and vulnerable to minimal amounts of state policing. During the insurrection of 1978 and 1979, the FSLN's policy of forming alliances with conservative social forces helped spur broad social networks such as the Catholic Church to provide logistical help to the rebels. Meanwhile, their national organizing efforts paid off, helping to weave and activate an interconnected network of high school students. Even when the FSLN itself fragmented, its stationary rebel type helps explain why it succumbed to splintering, rather than being challenged by an independent mobilization (i.e., because it had absorbed heterogeneous dissident networks).

Nonetheless, though the FSLN's stationary rebel type does help us understand the outcome, it does not fully explain the variation across cases. As a consequence, rather than report my detailed scoring of rebel type here, I place it in Appendix E following this chapter, and focus here on *hypotheses 2a*, *2b*, and *2c*, that low and high levels of civilian grievances cause rebel movement unity and middling civilian grievances cause fragmentation. As I shall demonstrate, *hypothesis 2* (civilian grievances), rather than *hypothesis 1* (rebel type), successfully explains variation on the dependent variable in the Nicaraguan cases.

Civilian grievances

The civilian constituency theory hypothesizes that as civilian grievances intensify, rebel movements are likely to become more fragmented. This is because grievances motivate risk-takers among the civilian population to form dissident networks, and many heterogeneous dissident networks may provide the social basis for multiple rebel groups.[186] Rather than cooperate with existing rebel groups, dissident networks may choose to "go their own way," mobilizing independent groups or, if incorporated into existing rebel groups, support breakaway splinter factions (see Chapter 5). Where civilian grievances are low, rebel groups are likely to remain unified. Few dissident networks will form and there will thus little chance of an independent mobilization. However, in this case the rebel movement should remain small, homogenous, and weak: a rebel vanguard. For this reason, low grievances should be associated with unified but small rebel movements.

This leads to a pair of matched hypotheses:

---

[186] C.f. to Olson's (1965) famous dictum that collective action is easier for small, homogeneous groups than for large, heterogeneous groups.

Hypothesis 2a: If levels of civilian grievances are low, then few dissident groups will form, and a unified (albeit small) rebel movement is more likely.

Hypothesis 2b: If levels of civilian grievances are moderate, then more dissident groups will form, and a fragmented rebel movement is more likely.

The relationship between grievances and rebel fragmentation is not linear, however. While moderate grievances can cause collective action problems, intense grievances can help rebels overcome their collective action problems by spurring the participation of broad civilian social networks in rebellion. Broad civilian networks provide extensive social linkages that can connect otherwise disparate dissident networks and rebel groups. The statistical evidence presented in Chapter 3 supports this hypothesis.

H2c: If levels of civilian grievances are high, then broad civilian networks are more likely to participate in rebellion, and a unified rebel movement is more likely.

In scoring civilian grievances, I confront a serious measurement challenge. Grievance are private information, held by individuals who, in repressive dictatorships, have incentives to falsify or obfuscate their true preferences (Kuran 1989). The distribution and intensity of grievances throughout society is this difficult to gauge, and may only be roughly inferred when they have reached a point that they cause civilian mobilization. As Kuran points out, this is why sudden explosions of anti-regime mobilization in seemingly stable Soviet bloc countries took expert observers by surprise: civilian grievances built invisibly to a boiling point, until a trigger set off cascading mobilizations. Thus, the measurement challenge: underlying civilian grievances are held to explain subsequent civilian mobilization, yet absent other indicators the presence of civilian grievances can only be inferred, and only *post hoc* by from subsequent civilian mobilization.

156

Though I do not pretend to have solved this measurement problem, I do present a case-specific strategy for increasing confidence in our ability to accurately measure grievances and to establish a causal link between specific grievances and subsequent civilian mobilization. I score grievances by identifying *focusing events* which triggered long-resented injustices and inequalities, thus producing grievances. The temporal proximity of focusing events to subsequent civilian mobilization establishes a strong correlation. When this is combined with actors' claims that they have mobilized in response to grievances triggered by specific focusing events, we increase our confidence that the relationship between the focusing event and subsequent mobilization is indeed *causal*.

Several examples will help illustrate the causal relationship between focusing events, the heightened grievances they trigger, and subsequent civilian mobilization. The 2011 Tunisian revolution is widely regarded as being triggered by the suicide by self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi, which resonated with deeply felt, widespread experiences of economic inequality and regime corruption (Honwana 2013, 1–2). Protests – previously rare in Tunisia – began the day of Bouazizi's self-immolation. The temporal proximity of Bouazizi's act and protests, alongside the self-claims of protesters, affirms a causal relation between the focusing event, heightened grievances, and subsequent civilian mobilization. In many cases – as in Nicaragua – civilian mobilization may increase in a stepwise fashion after a series of focusing events. For example, historiography of Poland's Solidarity Movement documents its expansion after several focusing events, including price hikes in July 1980, the 1984 murder of the Solidarity-supporting priest Jerzy Popiełuszko by regime agents, and a 40% increase in food prices in February 1988 (Goodwyn 1991). These events, and claims about them by political entrepreneurs, brought regime

repression and economic failure to the foreground for citizens, leading to grievances and near-immediate increases in civilian mobilization.

In order to score civilian grievances, I asked informants to explain the origins of their emotional opposition to the Somoza regime, and listened carefully to the specific grievances they cited to explain their participation (or non-participation) in political action, as well as their explanations for why these grievances gained salience when they did.[187] These questions were open-ended; I did not ask them to name events. Nonetheless, almost all my informants did name specific events in order to explain their pathway towards mobilization. My informants' self-reported grievances clustered around four distinct focusing events: a) the 1959 Cuban revolution, b) the 1967 massacre of an opposition political protest on Managua's Roosevelt Avenue, c) regime corruption and callousness in response to the 1972 Managua earthquake, and d) the assassination of Conservative opposition figure Pedro Joaquín Chamorro.

Having identified these events, I next sought to establish that they were quickly followed by significant increases in civilian and militant mobilization in Nicaragua (thus establishing a correlation). The events cited by my informants were in close agreement with periods of increased civilian mobilization identified in the secondary literature and the descriptive statistics on FSLN recruitment from my network data set, reported on in Figure 4-2, below.[188] Finally, in order to increase our confidence that the relationship between the focusing events and subsequent mobilization was indeed causal, I observed mobilizing actors' own claims. Do dissident networks,

---

[187] In this I adhere to Adcock and Collier's (2001) exhortation to use context-specific indicators, especially given that case studies of conflict remind us that grievances are often ideosyncratic, contextual, and "subjective."
[188] See especially Booth (1985) for an account of how focusing events led to increased civilian mobilization in Nicaragua.

for example, cite the focusing event as the reason for their formation or increased anti-regime political activity?

Having provided evidence of a causal relationship between focusing events, heightened grievances, and subsequent civilian mobilization, I then score the extent of civilian mobilization. First, I seek to establish which civilian networks initiated political or militant activity in the immediate aftermath of a focusing event. I then score the extent of civilian mobilization based on the *threshold for risk-taking* for civilian networks mobilized by that focusing event. I sort civilian networks into *zero threshold*, *low threshold*, and *high threshold*. Zero threshold networks consist of first movers who will take risky action even when no others take action. Radicals, zealots, agitators, saints, and terrorists are examples of zero-threshold actors. Low threshold networks include student groups, social-patriotic groups, and some religious networks (Quaker, salafi Muslim) fit into this category (Petersen 2001). Finally, high threshold networks include economic groups, conservative religious institutions, and most broad civilian networks, which rarely undertake anti-regime activity.

I employ the following rubric, in Table 4-3, below, to score the extent of civilian mobilization. The rubric's scope should be understood as limited to weak states; strong states are unlikely to permit militant activity no matter the depth of civilian grievances. I score mobilization as *insignificant* if only zero threshold actors are engaged in anti-regime political activity.[189] I score mobilization as *low* if I observe zero threshold networks initiate militant anti-regime activity and low threshold networks initiate political activity after a focusing event. I score mobilization as *moderate* when low threshold networks initiate militant activity and high threshold networks

---

[189] Note that "anti-regime" is not the same as "opposition." Democracies, for example, feature opposition parties at all times, but these rarely oppose the democratic regime.

initiate anti-regime political activity. Finally, I score mobilization as *high* if all types of civilian

networks are participating in militant activity, a state that may resemble mass insurrection.

Table 4-3 Scoring rubric for civilian mobilization

| | Anti-regime activity by civilian networks | | |
	Zero threshold	Low threshold	High threshold
Insignificant mobilization	Political activity	No activity	No activity
Low mobilization	Militant activity	Political activity	No activity
Middling mobilization	Militant activity	Militant activity	Political activity
Intense mobilization	Militant activity	Militant activity	Militant activity

In the section that follows I address each of the four focusing events in turn. I present an

overview of each event, as well as exemplary quotes from interviewees or primary source

documents expressing grievance stemming from the event. I then turn to historiographical sources

to determine which civilian networks mobilized politically or militantly in response to each

focusing event. I characterize these networks as zero, low, or high threshold, and use the rubric in

Table 4-3 to score the extent of civilian mobilization following each focusing event.

Scoring grievances

Four discrete focusing events in Nicaragua triggered civilian grievances and spurred four

periods of heightened anti-regime mobilization, both by rebel groups and in civil society as a

whole. Table 4-4, below, reports my scoring of civilian grievances (the focusing events) and the

resulting extent of civilian mobilization. I briefly address the relationship between these four

events and FSLN recruitment, and then discuss each event in depth, providing the evidence on

which my scoring is based.

Table 4-4 Scoring civilian grievances and mobilization

Year	Grievance-triggering focusing event	Extent of civilian mobilization
1959	Cuban revolution	Low
1967	Roosevelt Avenue massacre	Moderate
1972	Managua earthquake	Moderate
1978	Assassination of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro	High

Figure 4-2, below, along with a discussion of the FSLN's four recruitment cohorts in Chapters 5 and 6, relate these focusing events to discrete episodes of rebel recruitment. In Figure 4-2, there is a close temporal relationship between grievances and heightened FSLN recruitment. Recruitment spikes after the 1959 Cuban revolution and the 1967 Roosevelt Avenue massacre (though with the latter, there is a one-year lag: in 1968, students joined the FER, and in 1969 that student cohort began arriving in the FSLN). Recruitment ticks up again after the December 1972 Managua earthquake, and (in contrast with previous recruitment cohorts, which were based in León and Estelí) most recruits in this period are from Managua. Recruitment lags during the FSLN's bitter factional dispute in 1976 and 1977. After Pedro Joaquín Chamorro's January 1978 assassination,[190] FSLN recruitment explodes far beyond the chart's capacity to depict: the rebel organization likely had at least 1,000 members (a ten-fold increase) by the end of 1978, and as many as 5,000 trained combatants by their victory in July 1979.

---

[190] In Figure 4-2, I locate Chamorro's assassination in 1977 to ease interpretation.
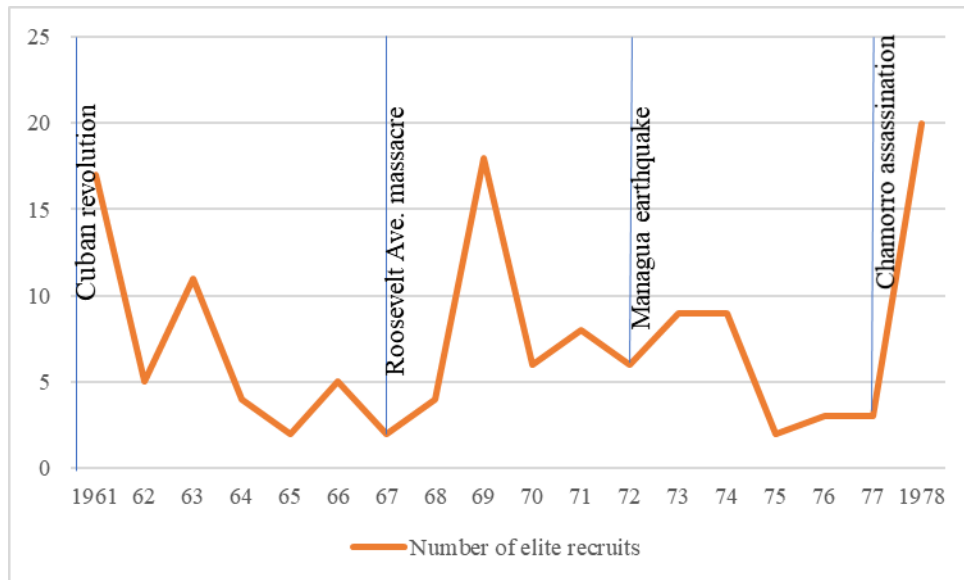
Figure 4-2 Grievances and FSLN recruitment

The Cuban Revolution (1959)

In January 1959, Fidel Castro's rebels, the *Movimiento 26 de Julio* (M-26-7), marched into Havana, overthrowing Cuba's Batista regime and sending shockwaves through Latin America. The Cuban revolution served as a "demonstration effect" for low-threshold actors throughout the region: it "redefined revolutionary possibilities... a new generation of revolutionary intellectuals had their hearts and minds shaped in a new ideological crucible and soon attempted to move down 'The Cuban Road'" (Wickham-Crowley 1991, 139). As with other waves of regime contention from 1830 to 2011, an "iconic event" led to the rapid diffusion (or contagion) of anti-regime mobilization (Capoccia and Ziblatt 2010). Within five years of the stunning events in Cuba, significant guerrilla activity had begun in a half-dozen Latin American countries, including Nicaragua. Carlos Fonseca himself, then a near-anonymous student, travelled to Cuba in February 1959, which biographer Mathilde Zimmermann (2000, 9) considered "the crucial turning point in

Fonseca's political evolution." He would write shortly after, in a letter to a friend, "We are the *fidelista* generation."[191]

Demonstration effects bring long-tolerated inequalities to the foreground and motivate action through a variety of interrelated transnational mechanisms. First, they tempt "discontented sectors" to revise their priors about the likelihood of success: "The precedent of a foreign success can acquire disproportionate importance and suddenly reshape political actors' assessments of opportunities and risks" (Weyland 2010, 1150, 1152). Just as important, the form and symbolic content of anti-regime challenge also spreads, reshaping the *cultural repertoire* of collective action among regional challengers (Tilly 1978, 151–59, 224–25). In the case of Latin America, the guerrilla *foco* as a technology of rebellion and, after Castro's regime tilted towards the Soviet bloc, Marxist-Leninism as a political ideology were adopted as the form and content of struggle.[192] Finally, the Cuban revolution may have increased the salience of specific inequalities that anti-Somoza political actors capitalized upon, particularly political and economic exclusion.

The evidence that the Cuban revolution inspired a wave of contentious mobilization (including the FSLN itself) is overwhelming. Organized anti-regime activism had not started in 1959, and opposition to Somoza's authoritarian rule was largely limited to licit and illicit activity within the framework of Nicaragua's historic Liberal and Conservative Parties. Most notably, a conspiracy led by members of the Partido Liberal Independiente (PLI, formed by dissidents from Somoza's Partido Liberal Nacionalista [PSN]) assassinated Anastasio Somoza García in 1956 (Alegría and Flakoll 1982, 181). The Cuban revolution's influence was apparent in sudden contentious mobilization both within and outside that framework, as well as in the form of struggle:

---

[191] Carlos Fonseca Amador to Compañero Denis, 17 Sept. 1960, IES Archive, quoted in Zimmermann (2000, 9) .
[192] See especially Kalyvas and Balcells (2010)

the guerrilla *foco*. Nicaraguan historian Adolfo Díaz Lacayo (2010, 673–84) records six separate guerrilla *focos* forming as early as April 1958 - nine months before Castro's victory in Cuba - to 1961, and two additional attempts by Fonseca's Frente de Liberación Nacional (FLN) in 1962 and 1963.[193] These *focos*, constructed by a swirl of opposition actors including military rebels, Conservative Party activists, and remnants of Augusto Sandino's EDSN, were rapidly suppressed. Only the FLN (renamed FSLN in 1963) survived organizationally.
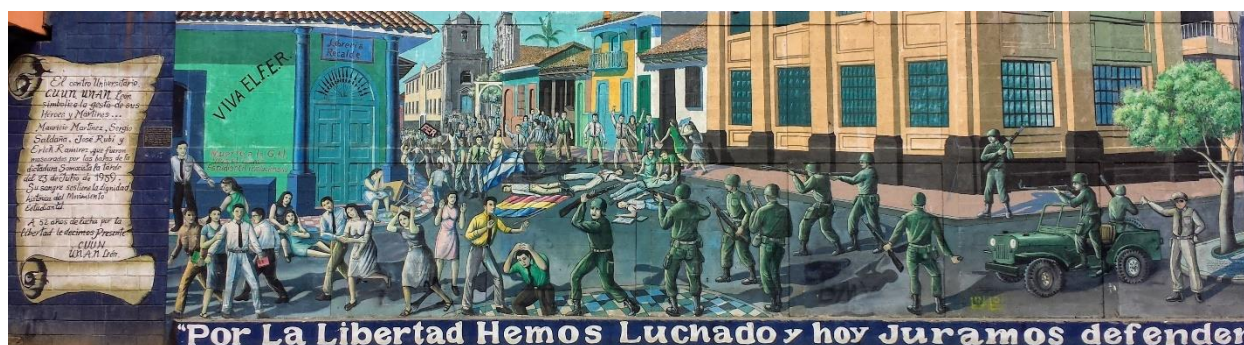
A mural depicting the July 23rd, 1959 student protest in León, which was attacked, with three fatalities, by the National Guard. The mural anachronistically portrays a banner and graffito reading "FER," the *Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario*, which was founded in 1962. Photo by author in León, Nicaragua.

Additionally, the Cuban revolution provoked many low threshold networks to participate in anti-regime political activity. Violently suppressed student protests in 1959 (see mural above) and the Cuban-backed JPN youth group, testify to the ripples of mobilization that the Cuban revolution sent through Nicaraguan society.[194] Onofre Guevara López, a long-time labor movement leader in the *Partido Socialista Nicaragüense*, describes

an explosion of enthusiasm among all the sectors of opposition to the Somoza dictatorship, including the right-wing itself. Like every year, on the first of January, the Catholic Church carried out its habitual "Procession of the Men," a rite which, at

---

[193] Nicaraguans point out that the first *foco* was formed well before the Cuban victory, but General Ramón Raudales, its founder, was inspired by Castro's M-26-7.
[194] Author interview, November 8th, 2015.

164

that time, only men of conservative and social Christian tendencies attended. Upon learning the news of the Cuban revolutionary triumph, the religious procession transformed into an anti-Somocista political demonstration. Meanwhile, among the worker and socialist movements the triumph constituted, aside from a moment of great enthusiasm, the departure point for a new period of activity. (Guevara López 2008, 114–15)[195]

The word "explosion" reappears in other accounts of the years after the Cuban revolution; Jacinto Suárez, one of the FSLN's first members, recalled a surge of socialist *campesino* organizations in the countryside, which he describes as resulting from "an explosion of social movements, a growth, and the winds of the Cuban Revolution were also blowing."[196]

By my rubric, civilian mobilization in immediate aftermath of the Cuban revolution was *moderate*, but by 1961 it had declined to *low*. Low threshold networks, such as radicalized students, Conservative Party-linked youths, and the PSN, had a central hand in forming the series of *focos* that petered out in 1960 – that is, they participated in militant activity. As these *focos* failed, these networks turned back to dissident political activity, leaving only the FSLN – quintessential zero threshold actors – conducting military operations. The PSN's abandonment of military activity occasioned Carlos Fonseca's final break with his old political party. He wrote that

---

[195] It is important to note that the Nicaraguan Conservative Party was the traditional enemy of Somoza's Liberal Party. It is my view that this simple matter of chance – that the Somoza dictatorship emerged from the left rather than the right – goes a long way to explaining why the FSLN succeeded in overthrowing the dictatorship when so many other Latin American guerrilla movements failed. In countries like El Salvador, for example, the fourteen families of the conservative coffee-growing oligarchy closed ranks around the government (Goodwin 2001). In Nicaragua, the conservative oligarch opposed the government to the bloody end, even to the extent of lending their support to the far-left FSLN guerrillas.
[196] Interview with Jacinto Suárez by Mónica Baltodano in Baltodano (2010a).

a situation developed in the country in which the little groupings of revolutionary-minded youth began to discuss the idea of building an armed revolutionary movement, while, on the other hand, the dominant elements in the socialist party proposed carrying out the same types of activities they always had, in which the party would go out and hook up with the traditional petit bourgeois sectors.[197]

In conclusion, from 1961 until January 1967, I score civilian mobilization as *low*. Low threshold actors continued to engage in anti-regime political activity, but only zero-threshold actors (the FSLN) continued militant activity. After high levels of recruitment in the early 1960s, the FSLN gained relatively few new recruits in the middle of the decade.

Roosevelt Avenue Massacre (1967)

Elections, scheduled for February 1967, led to a strategic rapprochement among Nicaragua's main opposition parties; the Conservative Party, Partido Liberal Independiente, Partido Social Cristiano, Partido Socialista, and Partido Comunista de Nicaragua created a joint ticket called the Unión Nacional Opositora (UNO) that bridged the center-right to far left. Conservatives Pedro Joaquín Chamorro and Fernando Agüero organized UNO, and in January 1967 convoked a massive political rally of 50,000 to 80,000 supporters on Roosevelt Avenue in central Managua (Casanova Fuertes 2013a, 159–68).[198] Somoza's National Guard (likely

---

[197] Carlos Fonseca Amador, ''Charla del Co. Carlos Fonseca en la Conmemoración del 4 de Octubre,'' Havana, 4 Oct. 1973, chm reg. 00248, caja 6 (1), quoted in Zimmermann (2000, 66).

[198] Humberto Ortega (2004) and the historian Rafael Casanova Fuertes (2013b, 159–68) wrote that the goal of the protest was to provoke a civil insurrection, which was only called off at the last minute when Edén Pastora (then conspiring with his Conservative Party friends) was captured by the National Guard with a carload of weaponry. By this telling, some of the attendees brought pistols and hunting rifles, and provoked the massacre by fatally shooting NG Lieutenant Sixto Pineda. Whether or not there was such a provocation (and Baltodano also collects interview evidence in favor of this interpretation), the massively disproportionate response of the NG, and the hundreds of

responding to shots from armed provocateurs) opened fire on the political rally, killing hundreds of non-combatants (Alegría and Flakoll 1982, 178).[199] The event reverberated throughout Nicaragua, at first demobilizing a cowed opposition but ultimately serving a serious blow to regime legitimacy much like the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre in Mexico.[200]

For many, the scale of the massacre led to revulsion with the regime. Manuel Salvatierra Rivera, an FSLN-TP commander, told Mónica Baltodano that the massacre initiated his political opposition, "Suddenly I realized that a government that is capable of killing anyone, without revulsion, then you start to have a condemnation of it, and you say, 'Those sons of bitches are murderers, they're criminals, they have no respect, you mean nothing to them.' All of those things marked me" (Baltodano 2010d). It also led others to abandon party politics for militant activity, either because they felt the regime would never allow an electoral defeat or because they felt betrayed by the Conservative Party. One student leader told me that the massacre precipitated his decision to collaborate with the FSLN, bringing many other students with him: "The student movement was also in that mobilization with the [political] parties, in Roosevelt," he told me, "and the massacre greatly impacted the student sector, because they became convinced that this game of parties wasn't the alternative... it ended the era in which this was the appropriate path to get rid of the Somoza dictatorship."[201] Another student who joined the FSLN shortly after told me how he became disenchanted with the political pathway to change after the massacre:

---

dead civilians, enraged many of those opposed to the regime, while Conservative Party leader Fernando Agüero's rapid rapprochement with Somoza enraged many of his own followers.

[199] The exact number is uncertain, and given the intense political stakes, all contemporary sources are likely biased in one direction or another.

[200] Author interview on 11/18/2016 with female student leader, FSLN collaborator, and poet, 70-80 years old. This informant was an eyewitness to the massacre, and cited it as being responsible for inspiring increasing anti-Somoza political activity.

[201] Author interview, December 13th, 2016. One of Baltodano's interviewees notes that the students were asked to march in front, though they hadn't been allowed in previous Conservative Party rallies, and thus bore the brunt of the massacre (Baltodano 2010c).

I knew that it was useless, it was useless because […] it amounted to nothing, and the

leadership of those parties was a false leadership, irresponsible and deceitful… About

a hundred thousand people gathered in the main street of Managua […] asking the

government to resign, and crying out, but to the air, like this, as if it were Superman's

name or some superhero (laughs). That they resign and could the Chiefs of Staff of the

[National] Guard please come to talk over how they were going to make Somoza leave.

So, absurd things. They killed a ton of people there.[202]

In interviews, I found that students who joined the FSLN in the late 1960s emphasized

what Elisabeth Wood calls their "moral outrage at the repression that followed [previous]

mobilization," confirming that her claim that "[r]epression forged insurgency because it reinforced

the framing of the government as profoundly unjust authority, an ongoing demonstration

constantly interpreted as such by insurgent organizers" (Wood 2003, 213, 130). These individuals

experienced regime violence as morally intolerable. "I've asked myself many times in order to try

and depict it viscerally, but what there was, was a situation of oppression," the student quoted

above told me, asking, "Do you know the difference between oppression and repression in

Spanish? Ok. Yes, a situation of oppression, a sensation of asphyxia. At least, I, being sensitive, I

think, I felt that they were kicking me or that they were standing on top of me, right? And it was a

permanent sensation. I couldn't resist it. I couldn't resist."[203] Another told me, in remarkably

---

[202] Author interview on 12/12/2016 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.
[203] Author interview on 12/12/2016 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.
The commander who described Somoza-era Nicaragua as asphyxia also told me a story of a tense street protest of
early 1970, after the National Guard killed Sandinista member Leonel Rugama, in which students squared off
against a row of Guardsmen with rifles pointed. There he saw "a girl student, a companion of ours, take off her shoe,
throw herself among the Guardsmen, and begin to hit the Guards in the head with the shoe… Then another guy went

similar terms, "Those psychological phenomena that occur when a person or society produces violence, that phenomenon of taking a decision and fighting against that, is something that is outside the control of fear. The fear exists and is blood-curdling; it's more than fear, but something develops: a degree of consciousness that this can't be, that this can't be tolerated."[204]

I score February 1967 to December 1972 as having *moderate* civilian mobilization, on account of two low threshold networks that tipped toward militant activity following the Roosevelt Avenue massacre: the student movement, where the FER saw rapid advances in 1968 and which elected an open member of the FSLN to head the national student government in 1969,[205] and the PSN, where a militant wing expelled its pacifist leadership in April 1967 and founded the FARN (Casanova Fuertes 2013a, 176–96).[206]

By contrast, the Conservative Party, which could arguably be classified as low threshold given its 1959 guerrilla *foco* and its (alleged) plot to spark an insurrection on January 22nd, 1967, was deeply wounded. Conservative Party leader Fernando Agüero stayed in the February 5th election, lending a fig leaf of democratic legitimacy to Somoza's victory, and shortly after came to terms with the dictator (Ferrero Blanco 2012, 330). However, many prominent and rank-and-file individuals within the Conservative Party moved anti-regime political activity towards militant activity, usually by crossing the ideological spectrum and joining the FSLN (often adopting

---

crazy just like the girl and began to slap the Guards with a novena, with a little book of the prayers of Saint Lucía [patron saint of the blind]… he threw himself on top of the guards shouting, 'Blind them, Saint Lucía, blind them!'"
[204] Author interview on 10/27/2016 in Managua with female FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a director of feminist / minority rights NGO.
[205] Author interview on 12/13/2016 in Managua with former student leader and FSLN collaborator, currently an economist and researcher.
[206] The popular Church also began to organize at this time, though this likely owes more to international trends than the Roosevelt Avenue massacre. Similarly, the student movement was also greatly bolstered by the international student movement of 1968. Author interview on 12/13/2016 in Managua with former student leader and FSLN collaborator, currently an economist and researcher.

socialism in the process). Most visibly, Agüero's own nephew Carlos, who was present with his uncle at the Roosevelt Avenue massacre, joined the FER shortly after and passed to the FSLN in 1968, where he became a top GPP commander.[207] Herty Lewites, a central conservative figure, and Edén Pastora, a famous conservative militant, both joined the FSLN in 1967 as a direct consequence of the massacre.[208] Of the Conservative Party rank-and-file among Mónica Baltodano's interviewees, Aristides Rojas, Alfredo Sánchez and his brother Yico, and Pedro Rivas Guatemala all began collaborating with the FSLN: "I was convinced that the only Frente Sandinista was the only alternative," said Rivas Guatemala, "I had participated with the UNO, Unión Nacional Opositora, with the Conservatives... In the massacre of January 22nd, they took us there like sheep" (Baltodano 2010d). The spike in FSLN recruitment visible in Figure 4-2, most directly from the now-militant student movement and to a lesser extent from disaffected conservatives, are consistent with moderate grievances.

Managua earthquake (1972)

In late 1972, Nicaragua's capital city, Managua, was leveled by an earthquake along a fault running directly beneath downtown. The earthquake served as a major exogenous shock, by providing new opportunities for mobilizing around old grievances, as well as by creating significant new grievances.

An article in Science, *Human Impact of the Managua Earthquake* (Kates et al. 1973, 984–85), summed up the extent of the damage in human lives, economic disruption, and social upheaval:

---

[207] http://www.ejercito.mil.ni/contenido/nacional/heroes/biografia-carlos-aguero.html, (United States, Department of State, and Office of Public Affairs 1988; Zimmermann 2000, 128).
[208] Ortega (2004), Baltodano (2010d).

When the sun rose over the city of Managua on Sunday, 23 December, out of an estimated population of 420,000 at least 1 percent were dead, 4 percent injured, 50 percent (of the employed) jobless, 60 percent fleeing the city, and 70 percent temporarily homeless. In this nation of 2 million people, at least 10 percent of the industrial capacity, 50 percent of the commercial property, and 70 percent of the governmental facilities were inoperative. To restore the city would require an expenditure equal to the entire annual value of Nicaraguan goods and services. In a country where the per capita gross national product is about $350 per year, the 75 percent of Managua's population affected by the earthquake had, on the average, a loss of property and income equivalent to three times that amount.

A series of recent studies have reported a relationship between rapid-onset natural disasters and civil unrest, particularly in countries with significant economic inequalities, weak political institutions, and pre-existing anti-regime civil actors (Arceneaux and Stein 2006; Bergholt and Lujala 2012; Berrebi and Ostwald 2011; Gleditsch 2012; Nardulli, Peyton, and Bajjalieh 2015; Nel and Righarts 2008; Omelicheva 2011). Nel and Righarts (2008, 179) conclude that natural disasters cause civil conflict, "by increasing grievances and increasing the incentive for [elite] resource grabs, while reducing state ability to respond."

All of these conditions, as well as mechanisms, can be observed in the Nicaraguan case. The vast panorama of suffering in post-earthquake Managua created new reservoirs of discontent by exacerbating inequality and by focusing residents' ire on the ineffective, and indeed counterproductive, government response. The earthquake's victims, mostly poor and middle-class, saw possessions accumulated over the course of a lifetime vanish overnight. The newly homeless and internally displaced refugees eventually coalesced into makeshift barrios, dispersed among the

ruins of old Managua, of exceptional social and economic precarity. The government accomplished almost nothing to aid earthquake victims, a key reason why the suffering caused by an act of God came to be blamed on the Somoza regime. For weeks after the earthquake, admitted Anastasio Somoza Debayle in his autobiography, "Managua was completely without any semblance of law and order, or any structure of government" (Somoza 1981, 8).

When the government did awaken, it did so only to establish a draconian martial law, with travel to affected zones restricted even for residents seeking to access their belongings. National Guardsmen engaged in widespread looting and organized a burgeoning black market in stolen goods (Foroohar 1989, 88). Somoza joined in the looting on a nationwide scale by siphoning international aid funds into his personal wealth, and expanding his business empire into land, cement, and construction; he capitalized on the latter by handing off lucrative rebuilding contracts to his own newly formed conglomerates (Everingham 1996, 111–12). Mauricio Solaún, US ambassador to Nicaragua at the time, wrote that he "found quite broad consensus […] that the […] earthquake of 1972 was a critical turning point ushering in a ludicrous period of exacerbated kleptocracy, wanton National Guard repression, debauchery of the ruler, corrupt expansion of his personal business empire and mismanagement scandals in it, and a syndrome of normlessness further delegitimizing the Somocista state" (Solaún 2005, 79).[209]

As before, I score civilian mobilization in response to the earthquake as *moderate*. The quake spurred anti-regime mobilization in several civilian and dissident networks, reaching high-threshold actors who had not previously acted individually or collectively. The most significant consequence was the growth and radicalization of the popular Church (Foroohar 1989, 119–30).

---

[209] Quoted in "Nicaragua, 1972: El Terremoto, El Revolución," author unknown. (2008, 13) – an unusually insightful senior thesis by an undergraduate at the University of North Carolina at Asheville whose name is, unfortunately, not given.

With the government paralyzed, Catholic clergy, in particular those influenced by Liberation Theology, rushed to fill the void in the provision of social services and relief in the aftermath of the earthquake. Christian Base Communities and Church networks expanded rapidly. According to Foroohar, priests, nuns, and Base Community members in the affected zones were simultaneously exposed both to the immense suffering of earthquake victims and the extraordinary callousness and corruption of Somoza and his agents, which radicalized many. The FSLN, which had already made inroads in the popular Church, suddenly saw an influx of recruits from a new low threshold network, the *Movimiento Revolucionario Cristiano* (MCR). Managua, which boasted a tiny student movement compared to León,[210] became a hotbed of revolutionary activity shortly after the earthquake, led by young Christian activists.

Anti-regime political activity began in high threshold networks as well. Private enterprise reacted defensively against Somoza's opportunistic expansion of his business empire, which had pushed into markets long considered the purview of powerful oligarchic families. In March 1974, several prominent anti-regime industrialists organized the First Convention of the Private Sector, for the first time lending a "political hierarchy" to a previously "amorphous" business community (Everingham 1996, 112). In the labor movement, a series of strikes roiled the country in 1973 and 1974 after Somoza used the earthquake as an excuse to roll back worker protections, particularly in imposing a sixty-hour workweek (Guevara López 2008, 129–30). As with the student movement that surged forward with the "Generation of '68," mobilizations of the popular Church, the business community, and the labor movement were "sticky," – these networks remained mobilized until the fall of the Somoza regime in July 1979.

---

[210] Author interview on 1/19/2017 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

Assassination of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro (1978)

On the morning of January 10, 1978, two men assassinated Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, the editor of the opposition newspaper *La Prensa*, and the Somoza regime's most well-known and intransigent opponent in Nicaragua's traditional civil society. *La Prensa*, rushing off a special edition ("They ordered his assassination!") strongly implied that Somoza had been responsible (La crónica del asesinato de Pedro Joaquín Chamorro 2017). Though there was little evidence of his involvement - and indeed, later evidence would be largely exculpatory - the regime was universally blamed in the weeks and months after the assassination.[211]

The murder provoked a massive public response; from that point participation in militant anti-regime action would rapidly cascade to higher and higher threshold actors, including the business community. This occurred for several reasons. First, the Somoza dynasty, while firmly in control of Nicaragua due to the obedience of the "praetorian" National Guard (Wickham-Crowley 1991, 265–74), had always permitted ample space for political and civil opposition to his regime. A pioneer in competitive authoritarian institutions,[212] the family maintained power through semi-constitutional slights of hand, including pacts with opposition parties, puppet presidents, and somewhat competitive elections. Within this context, there could be large-scale repression in the countryside, and on several occasions demonstrations ended in terrible bloodshed, but the upper-class families that dominated the traditional party system considered themselves sacrosanct from

---

[211] The ultimate authorship of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro's assassination remains disputed - and controversial - as of this dissertation in 2017. The FSLN was quick to second *La Prensa*'s accusation against Somoza, and in 1981 formally accused Anastasio Somoza Portocarrera (*El Chigüin*, or "Daddy's Boy") of masterminding the murder. Some members of Chamorro's family have blamed the FSLN without any evidence, as the murder helped sweep the FSLN into power. The more probable account is that a personal enemy of Chamorro's, Silvio Peña, conspired with several wealthy supporters of Somoza, "the majority of whom were functionaries fired by Anastasio Somoza Debayle, obligated by public pressure in December of 1977 after months and months of denunciations in *La Prensa*" (Pedro Joaquín Chamorro 2017).
[212] See Levitsky and Way (2002).

political assassination. The murder, when blamed on Somoza, thus represented a stunning breach of Nicaraguan politics' informal norms. Moreover, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, through his coalition, the Unión Democrática de Liberación (UDEL), had been a symbol and leader of the non-violent resistance to Somoza that had been gaining strength at the FSLN's expense through 1977. Chamorro's murder seemingly foreclosed that route, much as the Roosevelt Avenue massacre had done for a previous generation of relatively low threshold activists.

Nicaragua rapidly entered a state of popular insurrection which saw militant anti-regime activity from many high threshold networks. Historiographical sources are unanimous in attributing the mass popular mobilizations and anti-regime insurrections that followed to the assassination (Alegría and Flakoll 1982; Black 1985; Duque Estrada Sacasa 2014, 55; Ortega Saavedra 2004; Suñol 1992), and a wealth of causal process observations justify that assessment. The night of the murder, known businesses and properties of Somoza were burned throughout Managua, while eleven days later on January 21st, a mass in Chamorro's memory celebrated in Monimbó, the indigenous barrio of Masaya, spilled out into street fighting. The Monimbó uprising was independent from and only belatedly joined by FSLN cadres. With its makeshift barricades and homemade contact bombs, it helped create the cultural repertoire of contention for a string of subsequent urban uprisings in Matagalpa, Masaya, Estelí, and León (Duque Estrada Sacasa 2014, 100–156). The National Guard required a full month to suppress it.

Chamorro's assassination not only produced a qualitative expansion of the armed conflict, it also led to vast increases in non-violent anti-regime mobilization. The rebel movement in turn became increasingly embedded in these newly activated broad social networks; as described by TI leader Sergio Ramírez, "there sprang up new popular organizations, of neighbors in the barrios, of women, of youths, of revolutionary Christians, the majority under the influence of the FSLN's

tendencies, and that, together with labor unions and small leftist parties, formed the Movimiento Pueblo Unido (MPU), from which came many leaders of the armed struggle" (Ramírez 2015).[213] Nor was anti-regime mobilization confined to popular organizations and the traditional parties. UDEL and the Consejo Superior de la Inicitiva Privada (COSIP), representing the nation's leading businessman, a decidedly high-threshold set of individuals, called for the first of two nationwide general strikes in the aftermath of Chamorro's assassination (Everingham 1996). Mónica Baltodano describes the level of participation in this strike:

> The murder of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro impacted the entire national geography. In that month of January, while the Somoza regime deployed the municipal election campaign - there are municipal elections on February 5 - trying to appear normal, all social sectors joined the general strike, called after the murder of Pedro Joaquin. In Masaya this covered up to 95 percent of local commerce. Doctors, nurses, construction workers, craft centers, issued a statement of support for the strike. Meanwhile, popular demonstrations were held daily.[214]

It is clear that civilian mobilization after the assassination should be scored *high* – militant anti-regime mobilization spread even through civil society's most high threshold networks. Several young businessmen formed the Movimiento Democrático Nicaragüense (MDN), which collaborated extensively with the FSLN (Ramírez 2015, 172). Many others directly joined the FSLN: "I remember the Castillos, many compañeros of capitalist [*empresarial*] extraction that

---

[213] Please note that Sergio Ramírez's memoire has an English translation, to which I do not have access at the moment. Therefore, all translations are mine.
[214] Baltodano (2010b).

died fighting," recalled FSLN commander Bayardo Arce, "It's not that Guard grabbed them and murdered them, no, they died fighting as guerrilleros. How many compañeros of capitalist extraction rose up and participated in military operations?"[215] The mass insurrection of 1978 and 1979 was notable for the extent to which all sectors participated; what Everingham (1996) calls a "multiclass coalition"

Other variables for qualitative analysis

To make qualitative research manageable, I evaluate just two hypotheses from the statistical analysis in addition to the two that comprise civilian constituency theory (above): external support for…., and state repression. I choose these hypotheses for qualitative investigation because they found strong support in the statistical analysis, and because their independent variables vary across my three cases in Nicaragua and my pair of cases in Syria. The other variables of theoretic interest that were significant in cross-national analysis (state capacity, democracy, and regime change) do not vary across the cases at hand. In order to clarify the qualitative analysis, I renumber *hypothesis 10* (state repression) from the quantitative analysis as *hypothesis 3*. I renumber *hypothesis 11* (external support) as *hypothesis 4*. Finally, I add one additional hypothesis to the qualitative analysis, *hypothesis* 5 (ideological and strategic disagreement), that was not amenable to quantitative analysis.

While testing five hypotheses in only three cases makes it difficult to determine to what extent each causal variable is contributing to variation in the outcome, there are three reasons I feel that it is important to retain all five. First, of these three alternative hypotheses, state repression

---

[215] Interview of Bayardo Arce with Mónica Baltodano (2010a).

and external support are the most commonly cited in the scholarly literature on rebel fragmentation (Christia 2012; Staniland 2014; Tamm 2016; Weinstein 2007),[216] while ideological / strategic disagreements is the principal explanation in the historiography of the FSLN (Hellmund 2013; Monroy García 1997; Nolan 1984; Zimmermann 2000). Dropping any of these risks omitted variable bias that would be considerably greater than issues with degrees of freedom. Second, I am able to test five hypotheses because Chapter 7 adds two additional cases: Syria's Islamist rebellion (1976-1982) and its current civil war (2011-present). Third, the alternative hypotheses are easy to dismiss as they (and, as we have seen, *rebel type*) fail simple congruence tests in the Nicaraguan cases; that is, they do not vary with rebel movement fragmentation and thus cannot adequately explain it. For example, the Somoza regime's forces killed and imprisoned leading FSLN commanders in all three time periods, with the greatest level of state violence occurring *after*, not before, the rebel movement's fragmentation. Similarly, strong ideological disputes are documented in all time periods. Conversely, external support cannot explain the FSLN's fragmentation because the group had received no external support up until the end of the fragmented period, though Cuban support did help play a role in unifying the FSLN during the third period.

I now introduce each alternative hypothesis in turn. I briefly discuss the relevant literature and my operationalization of the variable, along with the causal pathway by which other authors expect it to impact rebel fragmentation. I score competing hypotheses where appropriate in Chapters 5 and 6.

---

[216] I do not consider Staniland's main hypotheses on rebel group's social base a competing hypothesis. Rather, I modify and expand on this theoretic approach in several ways with the civilian constituency theory.

State repression

> *Hypothesis 3: State repression may provoke rebel leadership disputes and splits,*
>
> *making a fragmented rebel movement more likely.*

There is something approaching consensus in the literature that under some conditions state repression causes rebel movement fragmentation. State repression has been held to cause rebel group splintering through several mechanisms, all of which involve stirring conflict between rebel subgroups or rebel elites (Christia 2012; McLauchlin and Pearlman 2012a; Seymour, Bakke, and Cunningham 2015; Staniland 2014).[217] In broad strokes, the above authors promote variations of two mechanisms, an *asymmetric battlefield losses mechanism* and a *leadership decapitation mechanism*, both of which I operationalize and test.[218]

First, I test Christia's (2012) asymmetric battlefield losses mechanism. To test this mechanism, I seek evidence that a) a rebel subgoup suffered the majority of the FSLN's battlefield losses in the two (or more, if justified by rebel elite rhetoric) years prior to an organizational split. In order to score battlefield losses, I employ descriptive statistics from my network dataset (which records the deaths of FSLN commanders), which I supplement with data taken from Díaz Lacayo (2010), who records a list of killed-in-action rank-and-file FSLN militants in his Appendix 7. Second, I seek evidence (using elite rhetoric as data) that b) the afflicted subgroup's elites promoted a new strategy (especially one aimed at alleviating battlefield losses), and finally that c) the subgroup's elites attempted an internal coup or split in order to implement this new strategy.

---

[217] Woldemariam (2016) finds that not only battlefield setbacks, but also battlefield successes can trigger group splintering; as the threat posed by the state recedes, rebel elites have less incentive to act collectively. Though intriguing, I don't test Woldemariam's hypothesis in this dissertation.

[218] See Chapter 2.3.3, in the literature review, for a substantive discussion of these authors' theories.

In order to test this mechanism the leadership decapitation mechanism (McLauchlin and Pearlman 2012a; Seymour, Bakke, and Cunningham 2015; Staniland 2014), I look for evidence that a) the killing, imprisonment, or exile of a high-level rebel elite (scored using data on commander battle-deaths recorded in my network dataset), b) led to uncertainty over the internal distribution of power and / or a lack of trust between surviving leaders (according to statements from principals or witnesses), which finally c) within two years of the decapitation, led (an)other elite(s) to attempt an internal coup or split in order to revise the balance of power. As can be seen from the above, the leadership decapitation mechanism is vaguely defined in comparison to Christia's asymmetric battlefield losses mechanism, which is a significant obstacle to process-tracing it. Specifically, none of the authors operationalize power in the context of a rebel movement or group, while the causal link between loss of trust within rebel group leadership and the breakdown of "central processes" is not clear (Staniland 2014, 47). With this in mind, I not only cast the net widely for evidence, seeking to confirm a causal link, but I also seek to inductively "flesh in" the steps above.

This hypothesis would be weakened if it cannot explain the timing of rebel fragmentation (or coups) in simple congruence tests, for example, because rebel organizational splits occurred but cannot be traced to either battlefield losses or leadership decapitations, or because significant battlefield losses or leadership decapitations occurred, but did not result in rebel organizational splits. The asymmetric battlefield losses mechanism also makes a prediction about the specific subgroup that should splinter (that which suffers battlefield losses) – if a different subgroup splinters, this would be disconfirming evidence.

180

External support

> *Hypothesis 4: Fungible external support to a rebel movement may lead to opportunistic independent mobilizations and splits, while unbalanced external support may lead to leadership disputes and splits, making rebel movement fragmentation more likely.*

External support, such as the provision of funding, arms, logistical support, cross-border sanctuaries, or other resources, may engender independent mobilizations and rebel splits or unity and umbrella groups by changing the structure of incentives within rebel groups, or within society as a whole (Lounsbery 2016; Mosinger 2017; Tamm 2016; Weinstein 2007).[219] As with state repression, I operationalize and test two potential mechanisms: the *fungible resources mechanism* and the *balance of support mechanism*. These mechanisms are closely related, as both hinge on whether only one or many rebel groups (or leaders) can benefit from external resources.

In order to test the fungible resources mechanism (Mosinger 2017; Sawyer, Cunningham, and Reed 2015; Weinstein 2007), I first a) score whether external support (if any) is *fungible* (that is, funding in cash or arms) or *non-fungible* (military training, external sanctuaries, troops). If *fungible*, I b) look to see whether independently mobilizing or splintering rebel groups sought a patronage relationship with an external supporter (or vice versa) *prior* to mobilizing or splintering. This is a doubly-decisive process tracing test, as the *fungible resources mechanism* holds that external support is used to meet start-up costs and there must be present at start-up.

In order to test the balance of support mechanism (Lounsbery 2016; Tamm 2016), I first a) score whether external support (whether fungible or non-fungible) was *balanced* (more or less

---

[219] Again, for a substantive discussion of these authors' theories, see Chapter 2.3.3.

evenly distributed multiple rebel groups or leaders within a single group) or *unbalanced* (overwhelmingly distributed to a single group or leader). If *balanced*, I employ the same doubly-decisive test as with the *fungible resources mechanism*: I b) look to see whether splintering rebel groups sought a patronage relationship with an external supporter (or vice versa) *prior* to splintering. If *unbalanced*, I examine c) whether the benefitting rebel group or leader subsequently *distributed* these external resources to rivals in order to secure their loyalty (securing an umbrella group), or alternatively, used the resources to *outcompete* or *militarily overwhelm* rivals (securing hegemony).

This hypothesis predicts the timing of rebel splits and unifications (shortly after receiving external support), the identities of the principal actors (the beneficiaries of external support), and the outcome (rebel movement fragmentation or unification). As above, this hypothesis would be greatly weakened if it cannot explain the timing, identity of actors, or outcome through congruence testing. If rebels receive fungible or unbalanced external support which does not result in fragmentation, this would constitute disconfirming evidence. If they receive non-fungible or unbalanced external support which does not result in unification, this would constitute disconfirming evidence. If the rebel movement fragments or unifies when no external support is observed, this would constitute disconfirming evidence.

Ideological disagreements

Hypothesis 5: When rebel group elites commit to incompatible ideological / strategic

positions, a fragmented rebel movement is more likely.

While conflict scholars are increasingly studying the role of rebel ideology on civil war microprocesses (Sanín and Wood 2014; Thaler 2012), relatively few emphasize the role of disagreements over ideology (or strategy, which following Sanín and Wood, I take as a dimension

of ideology) in rebel splits. This is a significant scholarly lacuna even if disagreements over ideology / strategy turn out to be marginal causes of rebel splintering, because splinter groups themselves commonly frame their decision to split in ideological / strategic terms. Inasmuch as political scientists study it, ideology is held to matter primarily in the context of spoiler groups, which splinter out of disagreement with rebel group concessions during mediation and peace processes (Atlas and Licklider 1999; Lounsbery and Cook 2011; Stedman 1997). The assumption in the literature on spoilers is that rebel groups are typically divided into moderate and radical subgroups, which have divergent preferences over war aims and discount the costs of fighting differently. While these latent ideological conflicts are held to emerge during negotiations, it is not clear why severe ideological disagreements could not provoke splintering at other points during a civil war's timeline.[220]

That ideological / strategic disagreements cause rebel fragmentation is an especially critical hypothesis in the case of the FSLN, as strategic disagreements are held to fundamentally explain the FSLN's three-way division in both official and scholarly historiography.[221] In this telling, one tendency, called the *Guerra Popular Prolongada* (FSLN-GPP), or Prolonged People's War, favored a Cuban *foco* strategy of building guerrilla columns in the mountainous northern terrain of Nicaragua. The second, *Proletaria* or Proletarian tendency (FSLN-TP) employed a strict Marxist-Leninist analysis, seeking to mobilize urban workers and rural *campesinos* through combined military and political organizing. The third, *Tercerista* or *Insurreccional* tendency

---

[220] Note that strategic disagreements are sometimes held to be an intervening variable linking state repression and battlefield setbacks with rebel splinters. This hypothesis encompasses strategic disagreements arising independently of such negative external shocks.

[221] See especially Zimmermann (2000), Hellmund (2013), Monroy García (1997), and Hodges (1986), which all take at face value self-claims by FSLN factions that ideology and strategic differences motivated the division. To her credit, Zimmermann also observes that personal loyalty, rather than ideological convictions, was responsible for individual militants' sorting into the different factions, which she blames on a "tradition of cliquism and personalism in Nicaraguan political culture."

(FSLN-TI), relaxed its ideological rigor and sought to spark a mass popular uprising through broad alliances with popular and even conservative sectors. These incompatibilities, historiography holds, divided the FSLN.

Because this hypothesis emerges from historiography, there has been little attempt to formulate a causal mechanism. However, causal analysis is necessary, because actors' claims to act out of ideological conviction cannot be taken at face value: what appears to be a dispute's ideological dimension may emerge *post hoc*, when disputants search within the rebel groups' ideological "repertoire"[222] for "self-justifying narratives" with which to rally their loyalists (Christia 2012). Therefore, in order to test ideological disagreements, I seek three kinds of data, each of which I subject to a hoop test. First, a) sequencing: does rhetoric (in letters, communiques, reported in interviews) indicate that significant ideological differences *preceded* the onset of the dispute? Second, b) causal process observations: does an explicit disagreement over strategy between rebel commanders *directly trigger* the onset of a rebel leadership dispute? Finally, c) I search for diverse evidence that ideological differences were either "cheap talk," or more than "cheap talk." Ideological differences may be "cheap talk" if they map onto baser disputes, such as over power, personnel, or personality; if commanders routinely change ideological commitments, especially if their new ideologies are conspicuously convenient for those promoting them; or if ostensibly committed ideologues do not practice what they preach. This sort of evidence is of course not dispositive, and certainly base motives, convenient deployment of ideology, and hypocrisy do not preclude that adherents are genuinely committed to their ideological visions. However, they could cast considerable doubt on the hypothesis that ideology motivates rebel commanders' actions in the first instance.

---

[222] Compare to Christia's (2012) "identity repertoire."

Ideological disagreements are also subject to congruence tests, of course. If ideological disputes are common but rebel organizational splits rare, this weakens the hypothesis (or at least suggests the need for stricter scope conditions). Similarly, if rebel organizational splits occur without underlying strategic differences, this weakens the hypothesis.

Conclusion

The research design presented in this chapter is not able to test all aspects of the civilian constituency theory. Specifically, H1 (rebel type) does not vary over the three Nicaraguan cases: I scored the FSLN and its three splinter groups as stationary for all three time periods (Appendix E). We can still gain some leverage on the role of rebel type by paying close attention to causal process observations, and in Chapter 6, I will show how the FSLN's great capacity for seeking out and incorporating diverse dissident networks helped create and maintain a unified rebel movement from 1961 to 1974, and for weaving and activating broad civilian networks in 1978. However, without variation on the independent variable, our insight remains limited, and a stationary rebel type is shown to be an insufficient condition for rebel movement unity.

That said, there is a major benefit to the lack of variation on the independent variable at the heart of H1: we thus control for rebel type, making the three Nicaraguan cases ideal for tracing the effect of H2 (civilian grievances) on rebel movement fragmentation. This is especially beneficial as H2 is a more provocative hypothesis. We may well have a strong prior that rebel movements composed of stationary organizations would be more unified. Though not trivially true, the notion that more socially embedded and ideologically committed rebel groups would also better resolve collective action problems both within and between groups should appear likely enough. Not so with civilian grievances - the complex, non-linear relationship between rising grievances and rebel movement fragmentation I posit in the civilian constituency theory is by no

means self-evident. Yet the cross-national statistical evidence presented in Chapter 3 does not only suggest that grievances are as important as rebel type; in fact, they demonstrate that grievances, whether proxied by the N* discrimination index, positive horizontal inequality, or negative horizontal inequality, exhibit a substantially larger and statistically more significant association with rebel movement fragmentation than rebel type does.

Both due to its theoretical importance and the statistical evidence in its favor, H2 (civilian grievances) merits our attention. Chapter 5, in which I process trace a mechanism, the commander constituency change mechanism, that connects rising grievances to rebel fragmentation, demonstrates the causal nature of this critical relationship, and is therefore the empirical core of this dissertation. Substantially, Chapter 5 addresses the FSLN's fragmented "second period" from 1975 to 1978, when the organization succumbed to factional infighting. As I will show, the fragmentation followed, and resulted from, the rising civilian grievances identified in this chapter with the 1967 Roosevelt Avenue massacre and the 1972 Managua earthquake.

APPENDIX C: DETAILED INTERVIEW INFORMATION

#	Date	Location	Time	Type	Current occupation	Recording	FSLN Faction	Sex	Age
1	7/29/2015	Managua	45m	FSLN militant	Taxi driver	Supplementary notes, interview in person and over phone	Didn't know	M	50-59
2	8/12/2015	Managua	1h	Academic	Director of study abroad program	Concurrent notes	-	F	50-59
3	8/12/2015	Managua	35m	FSLN commander	Unknown, husband of above	Audio recording	TI	M	50-59
4	9/29/2015	Jinotega	3h	FSLN militant	FSLN regional organizer, leader in organization of former combatants	Audio recording	GPP, but didn't know at time	M	50-59
5	9/29/2015	Jinotega	45m	FSLN militant	Agricultural work	Audio recording	GPP, but didn't know at time	M	50-59
6	9/30/2015	Jinotega	1h	FSLN militant	Automobile repair	Concurrent notes	GPP, but didn't know at time	M	50-59
7	10/2/2015	Estelí	1h30m	FSLN collaborator	Taxi driver, hostel operator	Audio recording	-	M	50-59
8	10/2/2015	Estelí	1h	FSLN collaborator	Director of local anti-violence NGO, hostel operator	Supplementary notes	-	F	50-59
9	10/13/2015	Managua	45m	Academic	Professor of Philosophy at UNAN-Managua	Audio recording	-	M	40-49
10	11/7/2015	Las Palmitas (León)	1h15m	FSLN militant	Owner of bar	Audio recording	GPP	M	50-59
11	11/7/2015	León	2h	FSLN collaborator	Owner of different bar	Concurrent notes	-	M	50-59
12	11/8/2015	León	1h30m	FSLN militant	Unknown, friend of above	Concurrent notes	Didn't know	M	50-59
13	2/4/2016	Managua	1h	FSLN commander (1980s)	Retired high-ranking military officer, drives Uber in Boston for fun	Audio recording	Personal assistant to GPP leader	M	50-59
14	2/17/2016	Managua	1h	Academic	Graduate student, thesis on female commanders in FSLN	Concurrent notes	-	F	20-39
15	6/18/2016	Managua	1h30m	FSLN commander (1980s)	Retired high-ranking military officer, drives Uber in Boston for fun	Audio recording	Personal assistant to GPP leader	M	50-59
16	6/18/2016	Laguna de Apoyo	1h30m	FSLN commander	Historian, owner of resort hotel	Audio recording	GPP	F	60-69
17	6/24/2016	Managua	1h	FSLN commander	Politician, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS)	Audio recording	TP	M	60-69
18	8/3/2016	Managua	1h	FSLN commander	Opposition politician in Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS)	Concurrent notes	GPP	M	60-69
19	8/5/2016	Managua	1h30m	Dissident network leader	Sociologist	Audio recording	-	M	70-79
20	8/16/2016	Managua	1h	FSLN commander	Retired general, opposition politician Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS)	Concurrent notes	TI	M	60-69
21	10/27/2016	Managua	2h	FSLN commander	Director of feminist / minority rights NGO	Audio recording	GPP	F	60-69
22	10/27/2016	Managua	1h30m	Dissident network leader	Journalist, director of FSLN-linked journalism school	Audio recording	-	M	60-69
23	11/2/2016	Managua	1h30m	Academic	Historian	Audio recording	-	M	70-79
24	11/4/2016	Estelí	2h	FSLN commander	Retired military officer	Audio recording	TI	M	60-69
25	11/18/2016	Managua	1h	Dissident network leader	Poet	Audio recording	-	F	70-79
26	12/12/2016	Managua	1h30m	FSLN commander	Lawyer	Audio recording	TP	M	60-69
27	12/13/2016	Managua	1h30m	Dissident network leader	Economist and researcher	Audio recording	-	M	70-79
28	1/5/2017	Tola	2h	FSLN collaborator	Agricultural work, leader of regional FSLN agricultural laborer organization	Concurrent notes	-	M	70-79
29	1/18/2017	Managua	1h	FSLN commander	Historian and politician	Audio recording	TI	F	60-69
30	1/19/2017	Managua	1h30m	FSLN commander	Politician, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS)	Audio recording	TP	M	60-69
31	1/19/2017	Managua	1h30m	FSLN commander	Lawyer	Audio recording	TP	M	60-69

APPENDIX D: DATASET CONSTRUCTION

The list of total FSLN membership on which my network dataset is based comes from Adolfo Díaz Lacayo's (2010) encyclopedic almanac, in which he attempted to compile a comprehensive record of FSLN militants. The list includes 643 names, to which I contributed a handful of additions. The names on Díaz's list include formal FSLN militants over a twenty-year period, as well as individuals who were better categorized as FSLN collaborators or allies. I met in person with Adolfo Díaz Lacayo on three occasions in order to discuss his sources and methodology for compiling his list. His methods (and zeal) were much like those of a genealogist, his other hobby: he combined documentary evidence from publicly available records with memoires and, due to his high social status,[223] the ability to call a wide range of actors for clarifying details. As an example, his almanac publishes a complete roster of the ephemeral dissident network *Juventud Patriótica Nicaragüense* (JPN), in existence for less than one year in 1960; his source was the personal archives the group's treasurer, a family friend.

Armed with this list, I began pouring over FSLN internal documents, testimonials, memoires, newspapers, and post-conflict biographical material published by the FSLN government in the *Instituto Histórica de Nicaragua y Centroamerica* (IHNCA) archive. I sought four biographical data for each FSLN militant: their commander status, their pathway to mobilization, their year of recruitment, and, if applicable, the year in which they left the FSLN (usually through being killed). Only militants for whom I could score the first two data were added to my network dataset. First, I sought evidence that the militant was a commander, whether of the

---

[223] The Díaz Lacayo are a prominent and wealthy Conservative family that subsequently supported the FSLN.

organization as a whole, a batttalion, or just a cell or squad. By focusing only on individuals explicitly referred to as "commander" [*comandante*], "responsible" [*responsible*], or "leader" [*dirigente*],[224] I pared a list of 643 names down to a manageable number, while focusing on nodes who were most influential within the FSLN's network. In practice, because squads and cells were so small, and because the FSLN had a set trajectory for competent new militants, almost all militants managed to become commanders after two or three years in the organization. For this reason, as discussed in Data Collection, up until 1977 the number of "commanders" in my dataset is not far below the FSLN's total estimated membership at any given time. The missing data primarily include short-time militants who were either killed or left the group before being given a position of responsibility. I identified 192 individuals on Díaz Lacayo's list to be commanders of one stripe or another.

Second, and critically for a network dataset, I sought to determine whether each commander belonged to a dissident network prior to joining the FSLN. I thus recorded every named dissident organization, network, or community found in each commander's biographical information prior to joining the FSLN. Absent this (and even with it), I sought to learn who *recruited* each commander. In sum, my goal was to specify each commander's pathway to mobilization. I was able to record these data for 144 individuals – an exceptionally high percentage (75%) of all commanders I identified. This coverage is thanks to the proliferation of the testimonial in Latin America during this period (for example, Cuba's famed *Casa de las Américas* literary society added a testimonial category to its annual prizes in 1970, and until the late 1980s most

---

[224] This includes ranks of responsibility within squads but under squad commanders (e.g. "*segundo responsable*, *tercero responsable*); the network dataset may therefore more accurately be said to cover the FSLN's officer corp than its commanders, though I refrain from using that term so as not to give the mistaken impression that the FSLN was a conventional army.

laureates were guerrilla memoires), dozens (if not hundreds) of interviews by surviving militants to the Nicaraguan and domestic press from the 1980s to the present day, and the 1980s FSLN government's efforts at martyrology for fallen commanders.

Third, I sought to specify the year of recruitment to the FSLN for each commander in the dataset. These data was usually given in the biographical information above, but, where absent or ambiguous, I used the year in which the commander is first attested as being an FSLN member. I was able to specify the year of recruitment for 103 commanders, and thus estimated based on year first attested for 41 others. Finally, I sought the year in which commanders left the FSLN. I recorded these data for 50 commanders, over a third of the sample. The vast majority of these individuals were killed in action. Again, because of the revolutionary FSLN government's penchant for martyrology, my prior is that those killed in action are accurately recored, though it is likely that desertion is systematically underreported (I can only think of a handful of recorded examples).

APPENDIX E: SCORING REBEL TYPE

As rebel type did not vary among the Nicaraguan cases, it cannot explain variation on the dependent variable (rebel fragmentation). Therefore, I report my detailed scoring of rebel type here, rather than in the chapter proper. I do make use of several of the concepts and data presented here to help understand rebel unity in Chapter 6. I score rebel type along four constituent dimensions: *investment in social ties*, *ideology*, *institutional strength*, and *territorial control*. Here I discuss my operationalization and scoring of each of these in turn.

Dimension One: Investment in social ties

Stationary rebel groups should seek to cultivate strong ties with civilian and dissident social networks. Almost all rebel groups are built on, or attempt to build on, distinct "social bases" (Staniland 2012), preexisting civilian social networks that provide crucial stores of interpersonal trust and reciprocity, and allow for the rapid diffusion of information. Civilian networks produce social capital that rebels can repurpose in order to construct cohesive institutions (Putnam 2000; Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1993). Most importantly, social networks are repositories of horizontal ties connecting rebel first-movers with other dissident actors, and of vertical ties connecting national rebel organizations to diverse localities, such as urban universities and rural villages (Staniland 2012).[225] As described in Chapter 2, strong ties bring other low-threshold actors inside the rebel group, making them less likely to mobilize an independent or splinter group.

Drawing on Granovetter's (1973) classic distinction between strong and weak ties, I score this component of rebel type by observing the degree of a rebel group's *investment* in building strong ties with dissident and civilian networks. Stationary rebel groups seek to build strong,

---

[225] See page 16 of this prospectus for more on Staniland's definition of horizontal and vertical ties.

iterative ties characterized by high levels of mutual trust and information. A significant investment

of time and effort is required to create interpersonal bonds. I thus seek to observe a rebel group's

efforts to build strong ties, as well as the resultant flows of high-quality information between

individuals. Roving rebel groups, when they form ties at all, form ties that are contingent,

transactional, and contextual. Weak ties between rebel groups and dissident networks are likely to

remain cooperative only as long as there is an exchange of material resources, such as weapons or

funds (Seymour 2014). Weak ties can therefore be identified by the presence of such exchanges.

In short, stationary rebel groups can be identified by significant *effort* to build trust-laden strong

ties, and roving rebel groups by their *lack of effort* to build more than short-term, transactional,

weak ties – if they seek civilian support at all.[226]

The units of observation for this variable are civilian dissident groups and broad civilian

social networks, as well as the social ties between rebels and these civilian networks. Data to score

this dimension for the Nicaraguan rebel movement's three time periods (my cases) come

principally from an original network dataset constructed during fieldwork, as well as interviews

with civilians (particularly those in leadership roles) that served as ties linking rebel groups with

other political actors.[227] I make use of interviews and secondary source material to identify

dissident networks. I investigate whether and how each was induced to participate in the rebellion.

This allows me to identify sites of linkage (i.e., ties between rebels and civilian political groups,

and between distinct parts of the rebel organization) that were subjected to detailed process tracing

through interviews and through evidence gathered in combatants' testimonies about their pathways

---

[226] A large investment of time and effort in civilian mobilization does not guarantee that rebels will *succeed* in mobilizing and incorporating civilian networks, though it certainly makes that more likely. I seek evidence of investment, even when not successful. Successful incorporation of civilian networks naturally provides evidence of investment as well.

[227] Aside from interviews, archives, and secondary sources.

to mobilization. Interviews focused on the *manner* of civilian participation in rebellion, in particular on processes of diffusion (of information, participation, recruitment, and conflict arbitration) via civilian network ties. Interviews of leaders and members of civilian dissident groups covered a) the origin and nature of relationships between the civilian group and rebels, b) how participation (or non-participation) in rebellion was negotiated between group leadership and rebels, and c) whether and how participation diffused through the rank and file of civilian network membership. Testimonies of former combatants frequently provided these data as well.

Scoring investment in social ties

I score *investment in social ties* as *present* for the FSLN and its splinter groups during all time periods. The FSLN did not always succeed in creating strong ties, but it always *sought* to create strong ties. From the very outset of his tenure as secretary-general in 1963, Carlos Fonseca defined the FSLN as a *"political-military"* organization, a designation which pointedly distinguished the FSLN from an earlier series of ephemeral *foco*-based revolutionary organizations which consisted of a mere military column. Tomás Borge, his closest early companion, wrote of Fonseca's intentions in the FSLN's foundational years:

> [T]he Frente Sandinista didn't appear as nothing more than a guerrilla organization, but rather as a political organization that uses the tool of guerrilla warfare as one of its forms of struggle. For that reason the guerrilla is defeated and the Frente continues existing. We were born, moreover, with a vocation for the masses, linked to the most assaulted and exploited sectors of our country, unlike other organizations in Latin America that formed as guerrilla organizations without taking into account any factors beyond guerrilla warfare. (Borge Martínez 1980, 40)

In both the urban underground and the mountainous guerrilla columns, the lives of FSLN commanders depended on the trustworthiness of their strong ties with dissidents and civilians. Commanders relied on "structures" of civilian and dissident collaborators for safehouses, provisions, and high-quality information for communications and operational success (Booth 1985, 140–45; Cabezas 1982; Kruijt 2013, 94–95; Thaler 2017, 22; Torres Jiménez 2005). One commander, describing the structures he built in Nuevo Segovía, emphasized the FSLN's penetration into "family and communal networks. We took advantage of the local knowledge we were acquiring in order to use the people's natural organizational forms, and the natural organizational forms of the people was communal... In practical terms it was to have a base of support that permitted us protection, gave us lodging and food, and us more people."[228] Dedicated to political organizing as well as military training, FSLN cadres were often assigned to be "*responsables*" for specific regions (such as the indigenous community of Subtiava or Nuevo Segovía) and dissident organizations (such as pre-existing anti-Somoza high school or university student organizations). Their role as *responsable* was to approach dissident leaders, build trust, and at first, cooperate in local organizing. In time, some dissidents would be invited to join the FSLN. This process was explicitly understood as cultivating trustworthy relationships in order to construct networks by FSLN cadres (Cabezas 1988, 12–25).

In fact, the FSLN's approach to building social ties with dissident networks often went beyond "building strong ties." On several occasions, upon learning of organizing efforts by pre-existing dissident networks, the FSLN would send cadres not only build ties, but to take control of the network itself. The FSLN would either promote its own candidate for leadership (as occurred with the *Juventud Patriótica de Nicaragua* (Borge 1992, 117), the *Frente Estudiantil*

---

[228] Author interview on 12/12/2016 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.

Revolucionario (Ortega Saavedra 2004, 147), or recruit the dissident leaders themselves (the *Movimiento Cristiano Revolucionario*).[229] These organizations in most cases continued to exist, but subordinate to the FSLN, they became "intermediary organizations" - active conduits between dissidents and the FSLN.

At no point do available sources indicate that the FSLN offer significant material resources, arms, or funds to a dissident network or its leaders; indeed, resources always flowed in the other direction.[230] Links to the FSLN could result in imprisonment or death for dissidents, while state violence was rarely directed at non-dissidents prior 1978. Thus, dissidents cooperated with and joined the FSLN neither for material gain nor increased safety. Rather the FSLN built strong ties with dissident groups. It was able to do so both because of their exceptional investment in tie-building, and, as Kai Thaler points out, Carlos Fonseca's and others' "transformational" as opposed "transactional" leadership style (Downton 1973; Thaler 2017, 13). That is, FSLN leaders offered dissidents "a purpose that transcends short-term goals and focuses on higher order intrinsic needs," rather than a "focus on the proper exchange of resources" (Judge and Piccolo 2004, 755).

In conclusion, the FSLN made significant investments in civilian mobilization, to the extent that it was arguably the organization's defining attribute. The three FSLN splinter groups, the FSLN-GPP, FSLN-TP, and FSLN-TI, also continued to put civilian mobilization at the forefront of their strategic vision between 1975 to 1978. Accounts of events following the FSLN's fragmentation make clear that each splinter group's first order of business was to rebuild civilian

---

[229] Author interview on 6/24/2016 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).
[230] The FSLN from 1961 to 1976 had an insignificant arsenal and funding, precluding the creation of transactional ties in the first place. One informant told me that in the mid-1970s, the organization as a whole was able to pool twelve weapons, most of which were hunting rifles, and not all of which worked, for training purposes. Author interview on 12/12/2016 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.

"structures" where they had lost them to the other factions (Ortega Saavedra 2004; Rivera Quintero and Ramírez 1989). Finally, the insurrectionary period was similarly marked by the FSLN's efforts at organizing mass urban uprisings into *Comités de Defensa Comunitarias* (Community Defense Committees, or CDCs) (Selser et al. 1979, 19). Thus, I score *investment in social ties* as *present* for all three time periods.

Dimension Two: Ideology

A defining feature separating rebel organizations from armed criminal bands is that rebels articulate an ideology, which, following Sanín and Wood (2014), I conceptualize as

> a more or less systematic set of ideas that includes the identification of a referent group
> (a class, ethnic, or other social group), an enunciation of the grievances or challenges
> that the group confronts, the identification of objectives on behalf of that group
> (political change – or defense against its threat), and a (perhaps vaguely defined)
> program of action. (Sanín and Wood 2014, 215)

In adopting Sanín and Wood's framework, I emphasize their first two dimensions, "identification of a referent group" and "enunciation of grievances," which have implications for the model of civilian mobilization I employ in this dissertation.[231]

How do I draw on the Sanín and Wood framework to score rebel group ideology? It may be useful to remind the reader here that, in Chapter 2, I presented a model in which rebel groups attempt to mobilize civilian networks whose willingness to participate in anti-regime action is in

---

[231] This is not to suggest that the final two dimensions, the *identification of objectives* and the *program of action*, are irrelevant for civilian mobilization, but given my simplified model of mobilization, I lack clear priors about their impact.

part determined by the intensity of their anti-regime grievances. Following this model, a rebel group's *identification of a referent group* determines which civilian networks a rebel group attempts to mobilize, while its *enunciation of grievances* helps determine whether those attempts to mobilize civilians are likely to be successful. I now expand on these two dimensions in turn.

First, the *identification of a referent group* determines which civilian networks a rebel group seeks to mobilize, and which are more likely to respond to its ideology.[232] Rebels' referent groups may be *broad* (the nation, a majority ethnic group, a supranational religion), or *narrow* (a minority ethnic group, a single social class, a specific community).[233] I score a rebel group as stationary if it identifies a broad referent group in order to appeal to a larger proportion of civilians and dissidents. By contrast, I score a rebel group as roving if it identifies a narrow referent group, assuming it identifies any referent group at all, thereby leaving most potential civilian supporters outside civilian mobilization efforts.

Second, recollecting that I have defined grievances as "politicized claims about objective inequalities and injustices," I hold that a rebel group's *enunciation of grievances* should be more effective at mobilizing civilians when civilians are actually aggrieved by the inequalities and injustices enunciated by the rebel group. If rebel groups are to convince civilians to support them, they should seek to enunciate grievances that resonate with civilians' lived experiences of inequality and injustice. Where a rebel group's enunciation of grievances are *consistent* with

---

[232] This is not to claim there is a perfect relation between referent group and mobilized civilian networks. The Bolsheviks' famous cry, "All power to the [workers'] Soviets!" did reflect their popular strength among the urban working class. But the Bolsheviks' appeal to the rural peasantry was just as important for their victory, even though Bolshevik ideology would later lead them to mercilessly squeeze the peasantry to pay for urban industrialization (Fitzpatrick 1984).

[233] The referent group must be compared to the identity around which the rebel movement is mobilized. If the rebel movement's identity is Moro, for example, and a rebel organization's referent group is Moros, then this referent group is broad *with respect to the rebel movement*, even though Moros are a minority ethnic group in the Philippines. However, if the rebel movement's identity were southern secessionism, then Moro would be a narrow referent group with respect to the rebel movement.

salient inequalities and injustices experienced by civilians, rebels are more likely to succeed at mobilizing civilian networks. Where they are *inconsistent*, as with Liberian or Sierra Leonean rebel groups enunciating urban grievances while attempting to mobilize rural areas (Mkandawire 2002), rebels are less likely to succeed at mobilizing civilian networks. Following this, I identify a rebel group as stationary if its enunciation of grievances is consistent with grievances actually held by civilians. Meanwhile, roving rebel groups, if they enunciate any grievances at all, enunciate grievances that are inconsistent with those held by many or most civilians.

This formulation raises the question of reverse causality: perhaps civilian grievances come to reflect those enunciated by rebel groups, rather than the other way around. Stationary rebel groups, unlike roving rebel groups, may attempt to indoctrinate civilians, thereby transforming civilian preferences, inculcating the group's claims about regime injustices, and hence lowering thresholds to participate in risk-prone collective action with little expectation of personal rewards (Green 2011; Sanín and Wood 2014, 211). To this end, rebel groups may engage in popular education campaigns, comprising village-level clandestine political instruction, struggle sessions carried out by rebel cadres, or the use of pro-rebel material in local school curriculums (Eck 2010). Political education can be understood as a stronger way to create and maintain durable civilian loyalties. While reverse causation of this type may occur, it does not complicate the scoring of *enunciation of grievances*: undertaking major political education campaigns is a clear indicator of a stationary rebel group.

In practical terms, then, scoring the *enunciation of grievances* component of ideology requires that I first identify grievances held by civilians, and then identify grievances enunciated by the FSLN and its splinter groups. Below, I identify four grievance-causing focusing events in 1960s and 1970s which provoked cascading levels of anti-regime mobilization throughout

Nicaraguan society. I compare these focusing events with the grievances enunciated by the FSLN and its splinter groups in order to determine whether they were *consistent* or *inconsistent* with civilian grievances.

Data to score the both dimensions of rebel ideology in the Nicaraguan cases were taken from the internal and public documents of the FSLN and its three splinter factions, and book-length treatments of the FSLN's ideological writings including Hodges (1986), Nolan (1984), and Monroy García (1997). I also gathered and analyze primary materials, such as propaganda posters, media statements, and popular songs. Individual-level observations were gathered via interviews with rebels, civilian participants, and non-participants during the rebellion. My questions revolved around reasons for participation in anti-regime political activity and rebellion: When and why did you begin to oppose the Somoza government? What were all your reasons for supporting the FSLN? What was the most important reason? What event precipitated your participation?

Scoring ideology

With one exception, the FSLN and its splinter groups identified a *broad* referent group and enunciated grievances which were *consistent* with civilian grievances. The only exception was the FSLN-TP, which, following an orthodox Marxist-Leninist ideology, focused on mobilizing workers, a *narrow* referent group. However, the FSLN-TP invested in political education to an even greater extent than the other factions, and enunciated *consistent* grievances. Thus, I score *ideology* as present for the FSLN and its splinter groups for all time periods. Below I present documentary and interview evidence justifying this scoring for both dimensions of *ideology*, the *identification of a referent group* and the *enunciation of grievances*.

Identification of referent group

Like Cuba's M-26-7, the FSLN distinguished itself from other Latin America Marxist-Leninist rebels by identifying a *broad* referent group.[234] The FSLN's referent group was "the Nicaraguan people" set against a corrupt and oppressive regime. While in many manifestos the FSLN espoused a Marxist ideology and many commanders wrote theoretically sophisticated Marxist works, Fonseca insisted on casting the FSLN's struggle in broad, nationalist terms. One interviewee described to me how Fonseca gently reprimanded those who took an overly doctrinaire approach: "Those of us who came from Chile were there for a year, and we returned with an insufferable Marxist-Leninist jargon... So as a joke [Fonseca] said, 'Son of a...' (he didn't say bad words) 'Now you guys are making me talk weird.'"[235] In an early statement titled "I uphold a broad revolutionary ideology," Fonseca rebutted media representations of him as a communist, insisting that "I am not a Marxist-Leninist, and this is nothing new... I think the revolutionary Nicaraguan must embrace that leads the Nicaraguan people victoriously to its liberation. In my thought, I gather the popular marrow of distinct ideologies: of Marxism, of liberalism, of social Christianity" (Fonseca Amador 1982, 234–35).

In fact, like the FSLN, Fonseca *was* Marxist-Leninist, if a non-doctrinaire one, but his statements reflected how he believed the FSLN must present itself—as an ally of all Somoza's opponents. The FSLN's Historic Program never mentions Marxism, instead calling for a "worker-peasant alliance and the convergence of all the patriotic anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchic forces in the country" (Borge 2006, 13). Doris Tijerino, one of the first women to join the FSLN, summed up her own understanding of the organization's inclusiveness in an interview a decade after the

---

[234] See Wickham-Crowley (1993) for the M-26-7's formulation of a broad nationalist front.
[235] Author interview on 12/12/2016 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.

revolution, "Sandinismo was broader [than Marxism-Leninism], and we arrived at it in Nicaragua through many different paths, Christianity; anti-Somocismo, through conservatism for some; for others, through shame, as Carlos Fonseca called it; and through the socialist party, which was in reality the Marxist-Leninist party […] this very breadth has characterized both the Frente and the revolution. Nevertheless, the Frente is a single entity, and we don't worry about whether we are Christians, Marxists, and so on, because now what we all are is Sandinistas" (Heyck 1990, 63–64).

Most historiographers as well as FSLN commanders see the adoption of a broad, nationalist ideological platform in 1963 as the key moment of transition between the FSLN and its ephemeral precursor groups. Specifically, convinced of the need to base his ideological approach in the Nicaraguan context (as opposed to an internationalist Marxist one), Carlos Fonseca studied, appropriated, and publicized a previously obscure guerrilla leader, General Augusto César Sandino, as an idealized representation of Nicaraguan resistance (Zimmermann 2000). Not a Marxist, Sandino espoused an egalitarian, anti-imperialist, and strongly nationalist agenda during his struggle with occupying U.S. Marines and the forces of Anastasio Somoza, founder of the Somoza dynasty. In his biographical and ideological analysis, Fonseca emphasized Augusto Sandino's embrace of "armed struggle in the pursuit of definitive national independence, as well as his advanced conception of social demands" (Fonseca Amador 1985). The point was to cast Sandino as an authentic representative of the Nicaraguan people (and a point of pride for Nicaraguan self-determination), while casting Somoza as a puppet of the United States. That Sandino was assassinated in 1934 by Somoza added to his allure as an anti-Somocista rallying cry. "When [Fonseca] took on Sandino as his reference, he took on a much broader perspective," one commander told me, leading the FSLN to attempt "a gathering of forces to convert our movement

into a national movement, understood not only geographically, but of all the social sectors. So it's not, yes [there are] bourgeoisie or no bourgeoisie or Christians… it's Nicaraguans, right?"[236] Fonseca appended "Sandinista" to the name of his tiny revolutionary group, the Frente de Liberación Nacional, casting the FSLN's activity as a continuation of Sandino's, and sought out surviving combatants from Sandino's Ejército Defensor de la Soberanía Nacional de Nicaragua (EDSN) to serve as a living link between the two rebel organizations.

Enunciation of grievances

The grievances enunciated by the FSLN and its splinter groups were *consistent* with the grievances that mobilized Nicaraguan civilian networks. In order to reach this scoring, I first identify four focusing events that produced substantial anti-regime political activity throughout Nicaraguan society. I then compare the objective injustices or inequalities that were politicized by these focusing events with claims made by the FSLN leadership.

In this chapter (Section 4.3.3), I examine and score civilian grievances in great detail. Below, in Table 4-5, I produce a summary of my findings for the sake of comparison with the FSLN's claims. There were four focusing events that stoked significant civilian mobilization between 1958 and 1979: the 1959 Cuban revolution, the 1967 Roosevelt Avenue massacre, the 1972 Managua earthquake, and the 1978 assassination of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro.

---

[236] Author interview, January 20th, 2017.

Table 4-5 Four grievance-causing focusing events

Year	Focusing event	Politicized inequality / injustice
1959	Cuban revolution	Authoritarianism / dictatorship
1967	Roosevelt Avenue massacre	Regime violence
1972	Managua earthquake	Regime avarice
1978	Assassination of PJ Chamorro	Regime violence

The FSLN's enunciated grievances are *consistent* with the inequalities and injustices that would, in fact, mobilize Nicaraguans from across the political spectrum against the Somoza regime. The FSLN's clearest enunciation of grievances, "From prison I accuse the dictatorship," written by Carlos Fonseca in 1964 while awaiting trial for bank robbery, emphasizes two types of anti-regime grievances that consistently reappear in historiography and field interviews: violent repression and avarice. In a key section, Fonseca writes,

> I accuse them, I say, not of simply planning attempts against the lives of innocent citizens, but rather systematically carrying out assassinations of patriots and worthy persons... I accuse the ringleaders of the Somocista government of assaulting, over the course of thirty years, the long-suffering Nicaraguan people to accumulate, not the paltry sum of fifty thousand Córdobas [the sum Fonseca had been accused of robbing from a bank], but rather fabulous quantities of more than some thousands of millions of Córdobas.(Fonseca Amador 1982, 231)

These same themes figured prominently in interviews. Regime violence, particularly fatal violence, against individuals and "martyred" militants were frequently cited as motivating individual mobilization, despite also serving as evidence of the high risks of mobilization. Of the four major events that politicized grievances, reported in Table 4-3 above, two of them (the 1967 Roosevelt Avenue Massacre and the 1978 assassination of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro) involved regime violence, and their mobilizing power may have been due to the regime's violation of strong

Nicaraguan norms against indiscriminate political violence. A third focusing event (Somoza Debayle's embezzlement of international aid sent in the wake of Managua's devastating 1972 earthquake) emphasized regime avarice.

Carlos Fonseca's denunciation of the Somoza regime remained the cornerstone of FSLN ideology even after it splintered into three factions. While the factions came to disagree over strategy, they all had the same enemy: the Somoza regime.[237] Thus, there is no variation over time on this scoring. The FSLN and its splinter groups enunciated grievances that were *consistent* with civilian grievances over the course of the rebel movement.

Summing up ideology

In sum, the FSLN and its splinter groups put forward a *broad* referent group (with the partial exception of the FSLN-TP in 1975-1978) and enunciated *consistent* grievances in all three time periods in this study. Thus, I score *ideology* as *present* across the board. This scoring strongly accords with the secondary literature, where the sheer volume of writings by scholars such as Hodges (1986), Nolan (1984), and Monroy García (1997) indicate the FSLN's ideological sophistication.

Dimension Three: Institutional strength

Deep reservoirs of civilian support can little avail rebels if they lack the organizational infrastructure to incorporate civilian networks, or if newly incorporated civilian networks have no stake in rebel decision-making. Rebel organizational structures are costly and time-consuming to construct, and therefore roving rebel groups, who in the Olsonian formulation are more concerned with short-term pay-offs than long-term investment, do not build them. Roving rebel groups can

---

[237] Author interview on 10/13/2015 in Managua with historian of the student movement at UNAN-Managua.

be identified by *indiscriminate recruitment* that may consist of little more than putting a gun in any would-be fighter's hands and sending them to fight (Weinstein 2007). By contrast, according to Weinstein, stationary rebel groups *discriminate between potential recruits*, only accepting dedicated or vouched-for fighters, and provide *political training* and other forms of acculturation. Meanwhile, following Sarbahi (2014), stationary rebel groups must rely on consensus to keep their civilian constituency loyal, and thus can be identified by *collective* decision-making structures in the rebel leadership. Meanwhile, roving rebel groups can be identified by *personalistic* leadership: decision-making power concentrates in one individual (or a small coterie's) hands. Measurement for the *institutions* sub-dimension consists of a qualitative assessment of rebel organizational structures, as gleaned from internal documents, secondary sources, and interviews.

Scoring institutions

The FSLN chose at least two institutional designs that indicates their stationary rebel type: first, they created a cellular structure with regular, predictable, and homogeneous trajectories for new militants, and second, they created a collective leadership, called the National Directorate. A cellular structure with set trajectories should be contrasted with *ad hoc* militancy, where participation may be temporary and at will (for example, linked to crop cycles or specific operations).[238] Collective leadership should be contrasted with personalistic leadership, in which a single leader dominates decision-making, often treating subordinates as potential threats to her authority.

The FSLN was highly selective in recruitment and provided extensive opportunities for political education and acculturation. For the bottom ranks, joining the FSLN meant being assigned

---

[238] It should be noted that many otherwise predatory, roving rebel groups can have set trajectories. The Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda is an example.

to a cell. Most potential recruits would first be asked to work "*en la legalidad*" (legally) side-by-side with clandestine FSLN cadres who assessed them for their competence and commitment. As their commitment deepened they would be asked to "*entrar la clandestinidad*" (perhaps best translated as "to go underground"), and would be assigned to a cell operating out of a safe house. Once in a safe house, recruits would find every aspect of their lives oriented around the FSLN's activities: they would seldom leave, except for operations, they would live with other members of their cell, engage in directed political study, and be unable to maintain their old, non-FSLN relationships. New recruits would spend months or years in these conditions, which tended to be a profoundly socializing experience.

The FSLN also adopted mechanisms of collective leadership from its earliest days. The FSLN National Directorate consisted of a variable number members, selected based on proven competence by the assent of other members. Carlos Fonseca encouraged open debate even within the Directorate, and was known for respecting the views of other commanders, while maintaining a central role by dint of his charismatic authority. This mode of rebel governance encouraged consensus-building and mediation among the FSLN's highest commanders. Collective leadership helped protect the FSLN from decapitation (though as Chapter 5 will discuss, it was not always successful): while on many occasions the FSLN suffered devastating losses of leaders and experienced cadres, in most cases another pre-picked commander slid into the vacant leadership role, leading to minimal disruptions of activity. In particular, because the National Directorate included "distinguished younger militants in addition to veterans," writes John Booth (1985, 148–49), "the arrests of Tomás Borge, Carlos Fonseca, and Daniel Ortega and the deaths of Silvio

Mayorga, Camilo Ortega, and even Fonseca himself posed only momentary difficulties for the Front."[239]

Nonetheless, the distributed, institutionalized nature of leadership was not a strong enough bulwark against fragmentation – the FSLN divided into three factions due to leadership disputes. Even so, each of the three FSLN splinter groups, the TP, the TI, and the GPP, adopted collective leadership after the split.[240] Each were led by a three-member National Directorate with decision-making power shared equally. When members of their National Directorates were killed, as occurred with the TP's Roberto Huembes, the TI's Eduardo Contreras, and the GPP's Pedro Aráuz, the fallen leader was swiftly replaced (with Carlos Nuñez, Victor Tirado, and Bayardo Arce, respectively).[241]

In conclusion, the FSLN and its three splinter groups built institutions to recruit selectively, to acculturate new recruits, and to make decisions collectively. These are all identifiers of stationary rebel groups. Therefore, I score *institutions* for the FSLN and its splinter groups as *present* for all three time periods.

Dimension Four: Territorial control

Territorial control is the key trait separating "stationary" from "roving" bandits in Olson's (1993) model of state-building, which I have borrowed as the conceptual core of rebel type. In Olson's formulation, even the most predatory of bandits, having gained control of territory, are

---

[239] Note that despite his perspicacious analysis, Booth's sources in 1985 didn't permit him to see who the FSLN's key leaders were for most of the conflict. Tomás Borge and Daniel Ortega, for example, were far more important leaders in the post-triumph era than during the fighting itself. A revised list would have focused on the deaths of Oscar Turcios, Ricardo Morales, Eduardo Contreras, Carlos Huembes, and Pedro Aráuz, as Chapters V and VI will discuss.
[240] See Bayardo Arce's interview with Mónica Baltodano (2010a).
[241] Barricada 11/7/1987, page 3; Hernández (1982, 79).

incentivized to build institutions regulating their relationships and interactions with subjects and to construct legitimating ideologies.[242] Territorial control is not the master variable explaining rebel institutions and ideologies - non-territorial rebels still frequently construct both - but it is an important factor in explaining why some rebel groups are more apt to do so. Several authors have pointed to territorial control as both a resource for rebel groups to deepen their institutional structures as well as an impetus to do so (Mampilly 2011; Stewart 2015). Maintaining territorial control, or long-term rebel occupation of a territory that is relatively secure from government forces, requires rebels to develop governing structures, provide public goods, even run hospitals and schools. Meanwhile, possessing a sanctuary from government violence gives rebels uninhibited communication and space to deepen their internal command structures as well. Sanctuary refers not only of territories inside the borders of the internal conflict, but also to cross-border and external sanctuaries provided by external sponsor.

Territorial control is visible to varying degrees in different conflicts. In some, such as the Colombian civil war, NGOs have collated dozens of media sources to construct data sets that reveal the geographic contours of rebel territorial control (Restrepo, Spagat, and Vargas 2006). Similar efforts exist for the Syrian civil war.[243] For the Nicaraguan case, I rely on secondary literature to score territorial control, scored as *present* or *not present*, which is sufficient because the FSLN wrested substantial control inside Nicaragua away from the National Guard only during the final

---

[242] Olson's (1993) and Tilly's (1985) equation of criminality, state-making, and legitimacy was preceded by some 1,500 years by St. Augustine of Hippo (1962), who wrote in his City of God Against the Pagans: "In the absence of justice, what is sovereignty but organized brigandage? For what are bands of brigands but petty kingdoms? They also are groups of people, under the rule of a leader, bound together by a common agreement, dividing their booty according to a settled principle. If this band of criminals, by recruiting more criminals, acquires enough power to occupy regions, to capture cities, and to subdue whole populations, then it can with fuller right assume the title of kingdom, which in the public estimation is conferred upon it, not by the renunciation of greed, but by the increase of impunity."

[243] See the Syria Needs Analysis Project (SNAP) of the ACAPS organization: https://www.acaps.org/country/syria/special-reports.

months of the rebellion (Thaler 2017, 22–23). External sanctuaries in Cuba, Honduras, and Costa Rica are well-attested in the secondary literature, but I investigate their role in maintaining (and indeed, fomenting) fragmentation in this chapter as part of *hypothesis 4* (external support).

Scoring territorial control

Due to their massively disproportionate military weakness as compared to the state, the FSLN were unable to wrest control of significant amounts of territory except during final few months of the insurrectionary period, and thus I only score *territorial control* as *present* during the final period (1979). As a result, the FSLN was not forced by the exigencies of governance to develop a bureaucracy or to develop the capacity to provide public goods. Though the FSLN would never build much of a bureaucracy, it would, as Thaler (2017, 22) points out, make very limited efforts to provide public goods to the civilian communities in which it was embedded. These included Carlos Fonseca's injunction that militants training *campesino* collaborators to fight should "also teach them to read" (MINED 1980), a practice confirmed by FSLN commander in interviews;[244] they also organized poor and indigenous *barrios* around public goods demands, such as access to improved health, water, and electrification. The *campaña de alfabetización* or literacy campaign, a massive effort undertaken shortly after taking power, also reflected the FSLN's concern with public goods provision. While this concern is characteristic of a stationary group, I found little evidence that rebel public goods provision in particular played a significant role in maintaining rebel unity in the FSLN's case.

---

[244] Author interview on 12/12/2016 with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.

5. FRAGMENTATION OF THE FSLN

Introduction

This chapter examines why and how middling levels of civilian grievances cause rebel movement fragmentation – that is, it tests the civilian constituency theory's *hypothesis 2b*. On the face of it, this proposition is puzzling: as civilian grievances rise, rebel movements should pick up steam because they can more easily recruit militants. Yet it is exactly this increase in civilian mobilization that causes rebel movements to fragment. Networks of civilian dissidents, newly mobilized by rising grievances and socially disconnected from existing rebel groups, may choose to independently mobilize their own rebel groups. Even where dissident networks are successfully incorporated into existing rebel groups, they may bring with them or raise up their own leaders, who may struggle with the existing rebel leadership for control of the group. As an influx of recruits from a new dissident network alters the internal balance of power between incumbent rebel leaders and their challengers, the rebel group itself may split, fragmenting the rebel movement as a whole. This process, which I dub the *commander constituency change mechanism*, tore apart the FSLN as successive waves of new recruits, mobilized by grievance-triggering focusing events, flooded into the FSLN and lent their support to challengers over incumbent leaders.

As discussed in Chapter 4, this dissertation compares three cases (or rebel movement-time periods) from the Nicaraguan anti-Somoza rebel movement: a unified period from 1961 to 1974, a fragmented period from 1975 to 1978, and a re-unified period in 1979. In order to test *hypothesis 2b*, that middling grievances cause rebel movement fragmentation, this chapter examines the middle of the three Nicaraguan cases, chronologically speaking: the fragmentated

period from 1975 to 1978, when the FSLN was divided into three bickering splinter groups.[245] I show that the commander constituency change mechanism, and a closely related mechanism, are responsible for the movement's fragmentation during this period. I trace the mechanism over the course of four leadership disputes, which I define as a credible attempt to revise the formal distribution of power within a rebel group. Two of these leadership disputes ended in organizational splits and hence, rebel fragmentation.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, I describe the commander constituency change mechanism – which I propose is operates between medium-level grievances and rebel movement fragmentation (both operationalized in previous chapters) to produce the latter – step by step. In order to process trace the causal relationship between rising grievances and organizational splits, at every step I describe the types of data I sought and the sort of qualitative and quantitative tests I employed to establish evidence of a causal link (Beach and Pedersen 2016; Bennett 2010; Bennett and Checkel 2015; George and Bennett 2005). I then introduce the case, providing important context for empirical analysis, and two interrelated concepts, *power* and *canteras* (or rebel-linked dissident networks), that define the conduct of rebel leadership disputes. Following this, I summarize the results of my investigation into the FSLN's four leadership disputes, indicating that most of these, though not all, stem from influxes of new recruits mobilized by rising grievances. I then process trace each of the four leadership disputes from the beginning of the causal chain to the end: 1) a dispute between the incumbent Carlos Fonseca and a challenger Oscar Turcios, ending in a power-sharing accord (1971-1973), 2) between the incumbent Carlos Fonsec and Turcios' successor Pedro Aráuz, ending in an internal coup (1973-1974), 3) between the incumbent Pedro Aráuz and his challengers, Jaime Wheelock, Roberto Huembes, and Luis Carrión, ending in an

---

[245] Or, in 1975, 1.6 effective rebel groups, and from 1976 to 1978, 2.6 effective rebel groups.

organizational split (1975), and 4) between the incumbent Pedro Aráuz and his challenger Eduardo Contreras, ending in a second organizational split (1975-1976). I show that for the first three disputes, loyal dissident networks, mobilized by rising grievances and cultivated by new rebel leaders, were the key power resource allowing them to challenge incumbents for leadership of the FSLN. In the fourth dispute, I show how *operational networks* may serve an analogous function as dissident networks. Finally, in the conclusion, I discuss the generalizability and potential limits of the commander constituency change mechanism, as well as the inherent unpredictability of individual decision-making under low-information conditions, which curtails the predictive power of my theory.

Describing the mechanism: commander constituency change

The civilian constituency theory proposes that rebel movements are more likely to be fragmented during periods of middling anti-regime grievances among the civilian population than periods of low or high grievances. Dissident networks mobilize in response to rising grievances. They may either *mobilize as/into an independent rebel group* (resulting in a fragmented rebel movement), or an already existing rebel group may incorporate them. When an existing rebel group incorporates new dissident networks, that group is more likely to succumb to a *rebel splintering* event – that is, the group is more likely to split in two (which also results in a fragmented rebel movement). This section introduces the latter mechanism, which I call *commander constituency change*, by which the incorporation of new dissident networks alters the internal balance of power between leaders of a rebel group, sowing leadership disputes and as a result, splinter groups and rebel movement fragmentation.

Specifically, rising grievances cause new dissident networks to mobilize.[246] When an existing rebel group incorporates these new dissident networks, it recruits new cadres with leadership potential. These potential leaders enter with (or cultivate) an independent power base: other rebel recruits from the same dissident network. When a new leader's power base is as strong as, or stronger than, that of older leaders, he is likely to initiate a leadership dispute.[247] The result of a leadership dispute should follow the logic laid out by Tamm (2016): if a new leader has a significantly larger power base than older leaders, she is likely to win the leadership dispute, taking over the rebel group in an *internal coup*. On the other hand, if her power base is relatively equal to the older leaders, neither side has the strength to win, and the rebel group is likely to *split* into two splinter groups, each following a different set of leaders.
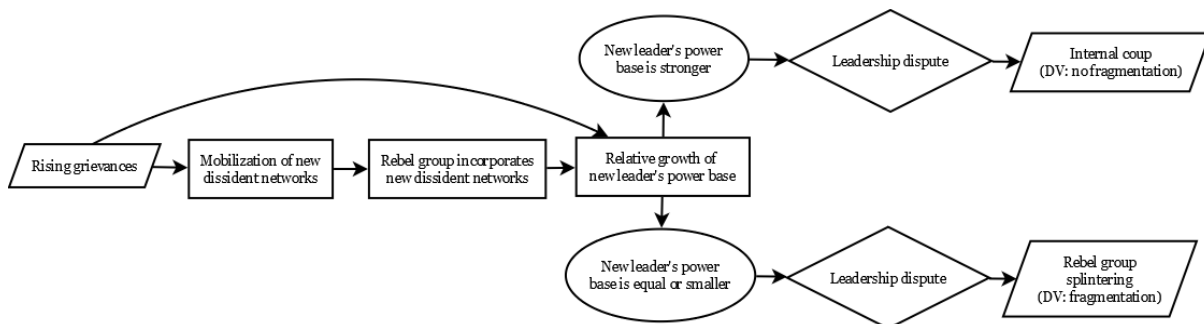
Figure 5-1, above, breaks this mechanism into four discrete steps that connect the main independent variable, *rising grievances*, with the dependent variable, *rebel movement fragmentation* due to a new rebel splinter group: 1) the mobilization of new dissident networks, 2) rebel group incorporation of new dissident networks, 3) the relative growth of a new leader's power

---

246 Rising grievances has this effect as low grievances rise to moderate grievances. As moderate grievances rise to high grievances, they are likely to activate broad social networks, making rebel unity more likely.
247 Alternately, older leaders may preemptively strike at a rising leader in a foresighted effort to preserve their dominance.

base, and 4) a leadership dispute, which may result either in an *internal coup* or a *split*. In the following section, I describe each of these steps in more detail. For each of the causal mechanism's steps, I identify its observable implications, the specific data I collected, and the analytical tests I employed to demonstrate evidence of causality (Beach and Pedersen 2016).

Rising grievances mobilize new dissident networks

The civilian constituency theory posits that as anti-regime grievances within a society intensify, more individuals and groups are motivated to participate in anti-regime political activity. As Roger Petersen (2001) points out, this is especially true for individuals in groups with "low thresholds" for action: members of youth groups and social-patriotic organizations, for example, are likely to act on their grievances even when few others will, while economic organizations are unlikely to do so.[248] When a collection of interconnected individuals – a group or network – participates in anti-regime activity, I refer to it as a "dissident network."[249] Rising grievances cause more low-threshold groups to mobilize as dissident networks, and they cause more individuals to join dissident networks. Thus, when grievances intensify, I expect to observe more dissident networks, and I expect dissident networks to be larger.

Assessing causality: observable implications, data, and tests

In the previous chapter, I identified four focusing events and scored the extent of subsequent civilian mobilization throughout Nicaraguan civil society. In this chapter I focus only

---

[248] Mark Granovetter, observing that some types of collective action are risky but there is "safety in numbers," defines an individual's threshold as "the proportion of the group he would have to see join before he would do so" (Granovetter 1978, 1422). Someone with a low threshold would join a protest march even if only a few dozen others are marching, and the risk of being attacked by security forces is high. Grievances are held to *lower* individual thresholds: because grievances make individuals angry, they are willing to accept higher risks for their political activity.

[249] Dissident networks are often formally organized into named groups, such as the *Federación de Trabajadores de Estelí* (FTE), but they need not be.

on zero- and low-threshold actors that participate in anti-regime activity – that is, dissident networks – and that were subsequently incorporated by the FSLN. My main analytical goal for this step is to demonstrate that the dissident networks which were later incorporated into the FSLN were mobilized by the same four focusing events that, as I showed in Chapter 4, caused widespread increases in anti-regime mobilization in Nicaraguan society as a whole. In order to do that, I focus on the same two types of data: 1) sequencing (a causal connection is more likely if the dissident network's mobilization increases shortly after the focusing event), and 2) whether the networks and individual members of these networks claim to have been motivated by the focusing event. On its own, sequencing and such claims doesn't tell us much about the causal connection between a focusing event and an individual network's mobilization – there are after all, many potential focusing events, and an individual network may claim a causal link to justify their mobilization. However, if dissident network mobilization occurred during a broader societal mobilization, actors' claims about their reasons for mobilization gain additional credibility.

I identify low-threshold networks using my network dataset: if four or more FSLN recruits were members of the same network prior to joining, I consider it a relevant low-threshold network.[250] While this selection criteria of course excludes low-threshold networks that did not eventually became *canteras*, only networks which were incorporated by the FSLN are relevant for the commander constituency change mechanism.[251] I collected data on network-level and individual-level claims about reasons for mobilization during field interviews with FSLN

---

[250] The number four is somewhat arbitrary; I chose it because some minimal threshold for inclusion as a dissident network must be set, and the largest family unit to join the FSLN (the Ortegas) had three members.
[251] The civilian constituency theory holds that low threshold networks that were not, or were only partially, incorporated into the FSLN may produce independently mobilized rebel groups. I return to these low threshold networks in Chapter 6.

combatants ("what motivated you to begin your political activism against Somoza?"), combatant memoires, and in dissident literature perused in IHNCA.

New dissident network mobilization encourages rebel group incorporation

Once a dissident network is mobilized – that is, participating in anti-regime activity – it may be incorporated into a rebel group. For the purposes of this theory, incorporation consists of the establishment of a persistent formal or informal relationship between the rebel group and dissident network followed by the systematic recruitment into the rebel group of cadres from the dissident network. Intuitively, recruitment is an existential issue for rebel groups: they must replenish their ranks after fighters die in combat, and ultimately they look to recruit sufficient manpower to defeat or exact concessions from the government, or, at a minimum, survive. Ideally rebel groups would like to recruit high-quality fighters who demonstrate both discipline and commitment to their cause (Weinstein 2005). However, both finding and gathering information about the quality of potential recruits can be costly. Dissident networks provide rebel groups with a concentration of potential recruits and a heuristic to assess their quality, because members of dissident networks have already demonstrated discipline and their commitment to the cause in their anti-regime political activities. Therefore, I expect *stationary* rebel groups to monitor anti-regime political activity and seek to incorporate dissident networks, systematically recruiting new fighters from their ranks. Once incorporated, I refer to the dissident network as a *cantera* ("quarry"), a term used by FSLN commanders to describe the incorporated dissident networks that furnished them with new recruits.

An alternative pathway, which I do not explore further in this chapter, may occur at this step. *Roving* rebel groups are less likely to identify and incorporate dissident groups than *stationary* rebel groups. As grievances continue to rise (for example, through a deepening of indiscriminate

216

state repression), unincorporated dissident groups may choose to mobilize independent rebel groups. This pathway did occur in Nicaragua; however, due to the FSLN's extensive investment in civilian mobilization, these independent rebel groups were unable to expand and remained marginal or evanescent (see Chapter 6). This pathway occurred far more extensively in Syria, where the Free Syrian Army's lack of civilian mobilization caused many civilian dissident networks to take up arms independently (see Chapter 7).

Assessing causality: observable implications, data, and tests

If stationary rebel groups actively seek to incorporate dissident networks, we should observe them take the actions described above: they should notice anti-regime political activity and attempt to forge a durable relationship with dissident networks. Furthermore, they should seek to recruit members of these dissident networks. I collected data on whether these actions occurred through field interviews with dissident network leaders and combatant memoires.

Growing *cantera* increases relative power of new leader

Newly incorporated *canteras* cause leadership struggles owing to two interrelated dynamics. First, they elevate new rebel leaders. For the purposes of this mechanism, I regard as probabilistic the appearance of new rebel cadres with leadership potential; new leaders may win a *cantera*'s loyalty as a result of their previous leadership roles, military preparedness, high rank, operational exploits, role in recruitment, access to arms or wealth, or personal charisma.[252] Whatever the reason for their prominence, leaders organizing or emerging from newly incorporated *canteras* are likely to possess strong, personal ties to and social traits in common with

---

[252] *Cantera* leaders need not be recruited through their *canteras*. Rather, they may be older cadres who have been promoted to a key recruitment or command position over recruits from a *cantera*.

other recruits from their *cantera*. In the event of a dispute with a rival for leadership, *cantera* leaders may expect personal loyalty from those other recruits. In effect, fighters recruited through their *cantera* constitute the key military resources in each *cantera* leader's power base, which I follow Tamm in defining as "a relational concept, measuring the leader's and the rival's relative shares of the military resources under their control" (Tamm 2016, 3). I frequently refer to a *cantera* leader's power base as his *de facto* power, as distinct from his formal power indicated by rank within the rebel hierarchy.

Second, because rising grievances continue to drive low-threshold individuals to join *canteras* and through them, the rebel group, a new rebel leader's power base may grow over time. And as with two states locked in an arms race, any upsurge in recruits from newly incorporated *canteras* weakens the relative power of older rebel leaders. As new recruits join the rebel group from dissident networks with markedly different characteristics and identities to older cadres, their loyalty to the existing leadership of the group may be weak. Meanwhile, the number of loyal partisans of older leaders may diminish due to attrition (from state violence) and desertion, or from the promotion of loyalists to leadership positions, where they may become rivals.
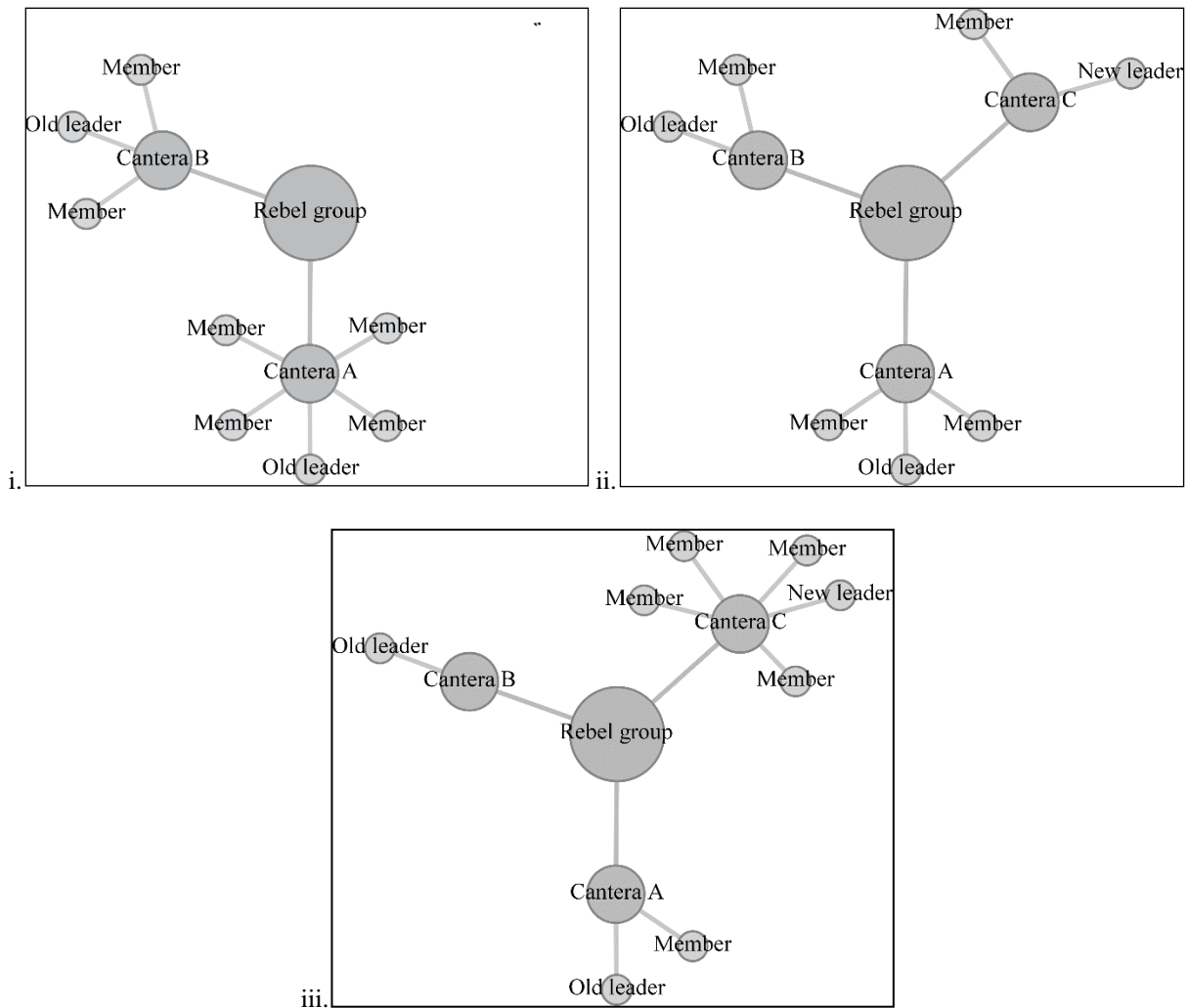
Figure 5-2 Recipe for a leadership struggle

Figure 5-2, above, illustrates these dynamics in networks terms. A rebel group (in the center) eventually draws on three *canteras* that change in size over time, Cantera A (bottom), Cantera B (left), and later, Cantera C (right). The older rebel leaders emerged from *canteras* that are shrinking – we see that Cantera A and Cantera B are losing members as we move from sub-figure i to ii to iii. This is a common dynamic, as dissidents who join in early stages of a rebellion typically face high levels of state repression, and suffer concomitantly high mortality rates. Meanwhile, a newly incorporated *cantera*, Cantera C, grows in size over time, sending ever more recruits to the rebel group and elevating new leaders to heightened influence.

Assessing causality: observable implications, data, and tests

In order to demonstrate how a newly incorporated *cantera* increases a new leader power base, I must observe the process depicted above in Figure 5-2. In short, I must observe the emergence of a new leader with a *cantera*'s loyalty, and second, I must show the flow of new recruits from that *cantera* into the rebel group. In this section, I first describe my strategy for identifying all *cantera* leaders throughout the FSLN's history. Second, I operationalize these leaders' *power bases* and describe the data with which I measure them.

In order to identify *cantera* leaders, I seek commanders who had a central role in a) the *cantera*'s recruitment and training, and / or b) operational command of the recruits from a *cantera*. But not every commander who meets one or both of these criteria was a *cantera* leader. Second, I seek data (usually interview evidence) evincing recruits' respect and loyalty for a specific commander. In practice, there was little ambiguity in the historical record regarding the identities of *cantera* leaders at any given time.

Having identified *cantera* leaders, what is the best way to operationalize and measure their *power base*? The operationalization must be sensitive to the way in which leaders actually draw on *canteras* in leadership disputes. A simple count of recruits from each *cantera*, for example, is not an adequate operationalization because leadership disputes are not solely determined by which leader has a larger *cantera*. While "strong ties" with loyal fighters are an erstwhile rebel leader's core military resource, leadership disputes do not simply pit the disputants' *canteras* against each other: a leadership dispute necessarily involves the entire rebel organization. Disputants therefore seek to construct the largest *coalition* possible.

For this reason, I operationalize each leader's power base as the Eigenvector centrality of their *cantera* within the rebel network.[253] Eigenvector centrality is a commonly used metric ("an important part of the basic network toolbox" (Newman 2015, 168)) in mathematical social network analysis which measures the relative influence of a specific node in a network, returning higher scores (on a scale of 0 to 1) for nodes that are themselves connected to influential nodes.[254] This captures two important dynamics that a simple count of *cantera* members would not. First, it will return a higher score for a rebel leader whose *cantera* includes many influential lieutenants. Second, it captures "weak ties" between *cantera* members and other fighters across distinct portions of a rebel organization's network, which may be drawn on to help build larger coalitions (Granovetter 1973).[255]

Growth of new leader's power base provokes leadership dispute

Why does the relative change in an older and newer leaders' power bases cause a leadership dispute? In such a case, an older leader occupies a position of formal power at the top of the rebel hierarchy, while the newer leader possesses a larger power base – that is, they possess

---

[253] See Newman (2015, 170) for a specification of Eigenvector centrality in mathematical terms: "the centrality x_i of vertex i is proportional to the sum of the centralities of i's neighbors:

$$x_i = \kappa_1^{-1} \sum_j A_{ij} x_j, \quad (7.6)$$

which gives the eigenvector centrality the nice property that it can be large either because a vertex has many neighbors or because it has important neighbors (or both). An individual in a social network, for instance, can be important, by this measure, because he or she knows lots of people (even though those people may not be important themselves) or knows a few people in high places."

[254] While different measures of centrality lend "centrality," or "influence," a mathematical formula, "[t]he question 'what centrality is' seems to be difficult to answer in general, so we have to rely on intuition" (Ruhnau 2000, 359). Similarly, these measures are designed to be interpreted intuitively.

[255] I do not report Eigenvector centrality of individual leaders, as their ability to command the allegiance of individual *canteras* derives from factors other than network centrality alone. As I write above, it may stem from "pre-rebellion leadership roles, military preparedness, high rank, operational exploits, role in recruitment, access to arms or wealth, or personal charisma." What matters for calculating the relative power of individual leaders in this analysis, then, is the network centrality of the *canteras* that are loyal to them.

more strong ties and affinity with rank-and-file rebel members whose loyalty they can count on. In these circumstances, where a rebel leader's formal power within the rebel hierarchy does not reflect their *de facto* power, the newer leader may be frustrated by "blocked promotions" (Staniland 2014), and seek to revise the distribution of formal power through a leadership dispute.

While a new leader strongly embedded in a growing *cantera* may seek to capture a higher share of formal power by initiating a leadership struggle, the old leader also possesses an incentive to preemptively cut down overly powerful subordinates.[256] Rebel leadership disputes are structured like the now-classic bargaining model of conflict, in which a rising power cannot credibly commit to continued obedience in the future (Fearon 1995). The bargaining problem is especially acute in a rebel leadership dispute as loyalty, the currency of power in the leadership dispute, is private information known only to individual rebel fighters. Network ties and affinity may serve as a useful heuristic, but both old and new leaders are ultimately uncertain of their own – and their rival's – power base in case of conflict. Uncertainty may complicate arriving at mutually satisfactory bargaining outcome (for example, granting responsibility over a rebel battalion), or cause grave miscalculations (for example, waiting too long to swat down a rising rival leader).

Assessing causality: observable implications, data, and tests

What evidence would demonstrate that leadership disputes occur due to changes in the relative extent of rebel leaders' power bases? I employ two types of evidence. First, sequencing:

---

[256] C. f. to Thrasybulus' advice to Periander after the latter "inquired in what way he would best and most safely govern his city. Thrasybulus led the man who had come from Periander outside the town, and entered into a sown field. As he walked through the wheat, continually asking why the messenger had come to him from Cypsalus, he kept cutting off all the tallest ears of wheat which he could see, and throwing them away, until he had destroyed the best and richest part of the crop… Periander, however, understood what had been done, and perceived that Thrasybulus had counselled him to slay those of his townsmen who were outstanding in influence or ability" (Herodotus and Strassler 2009, Book 5, 92-f).

because a rising leader is unlikely to be content with a lower rank for long, a leadership dispute should occur shortly after (within a year or two) a significant change in the balance of power.[257] Second, and crucially, the *identity* of the disputant must match the prediction of the mechanism outlined above: at least one disputant challenging the established rebel leadership should be the leader of a "rising" *cantera*.[258] At any given time, there were no more than two commanders fitting the above description (that is, the leader of a rising *cantera*) in the FSLN. Thus, we would be unlikely to observe such leaders consistently involved in leadership disputes were there not a relationship between leading a "rising" *cantera* and participating in a leadership dispute. In assessing each leadership dispute, I calculate the individual and compound probabilities of observing the above pattern.

However, the relationship may not necessarily be causal. A potentially confounding variable could account both for *cantera* leadership and for participation in leadership disputes: for example, exceptional leadership skills. I subject this competing explanation to a hoop test, comparing the leadership qualities of disputing leaders with other leaders who did not participate in the leadership dispute. If the disputing leaders were not exceptional commanders, this confounding hypothesis can be rejected.

---

[257] I expect the direct trigger of or pretense for a leadership dispute to be unsystematic: a difference over strategy, a personal insult, a dirty look at a meeting. As Tamm (2016, 3) puts it, "one can reasonably assume that (latent) rivalries exist in almost all rebel groups, even in those that are highly effective on the battlefield. The main question, therefore, is under which conditions rivalries escalate."

[258] Leadership challenges typically involve coalitions of commanders on both sides. At least one of the challenging leaders must be a *cantera* leader; otherwise the challenging coalition lacks the necessary power base with which to mount a challenge. The third dispute discussed in this chapter involves a coalition of three challengers. Only one of these challengers was a *cantera* leader, but though he was (by rank) the junior partner in the coalition, the challenge failed completely until he joined to it.

Leadership dispute produces coup or fragmentation

Once a leadership dispute has been initiated, what determines how it will be resolved? In an insightful article, Henning Tamm (2016, 3) sketches the logic of leadership disputes within rebel groups:

> A leader's command authority is generally based on an *imbalanced* distribution of power in his favor. If this imbalance gets radically inverted in favor of a rival, the latter is likely to be able to stage a successful coup, thus replacing the existing leader without necessarily undermining the group's structural integrity. By contrast, the shift from an imbalance to a *more balanced* distribution of power increases the likelihood of a split. The rival becomes strong enough to actively challenge the leader but remains too weak to replace him.[259]

I expect this logic to hold for leadership disputes within the FSLN. Once the gloves come off, the outcome of the dispute is likely to be determined by *de facto* power, measured in the Eigenvector centrality of a loyal *cantera*, rather than formal power within the rebel hierarchy. Loyalty and influence, not funds or arms (as per Tamm), are the key determinants: by drawing on a more influential stock of loyal cadres, a new leader with a dominant power base will likely cobble together an overwhelming coup coalition. Where the power bases of an old leader and a new leader

---

[259] Tamm (2016, 3).Tamm explains the changing balance of power by pointing to external support, but this independent variable can only *change* a rebel leader's power base – it cannot constitute that power base. In short, a rebel leader may receive more funding or weapons from an external power, but the leader presumably uses these resources to *alter the distribution of loyalty in her favor*. Therefore, Tamm's theory must be complimented with a fuller depiction of the basis on which individual rebel leaders derive their power in the first place: the loyalty of rebel fighters themselves. With this in place, we can predict which leaders will contest for leadership in the first place, and when rebel groups will splinter even in the absence of significant external support.

are evenly matched, the new leader can count on the cadres loyal to him to follow her into a splinter group.

Assessing causality: observable implications, data, and tests

This step has a key observable implication: each disputant should employ his power, formal or *de facto*, against the other. First, leaders with greater formal power – that is, older leaders who face a challenge – should attempt to draw on their formal power to ward off challenges. Specifically, they should attempt to apply mechanisms of *internal discipline*. Small-scale disputes and issues of internal discipline are common in rebel groups, and the leadership draws on a repertoire of punishments for dealing with cadre indiscipline. These punishments range from internal sanctions, to reassignment, reduction in rank, expulsion, and execution. I expect that challenged leaders attempt to deploy these punishments over the course of a leadership dispute.

Second, challengers with greater *de facto* power should attempt to mobilize their power base in response to the incumbent's use of internal discipline. Thus, I sought evidence that *cantera* leaders cultivated the loyalty of cadres over the course of the dispute. The extent of a challenger's power base should determine whether they are successful at overcoming internal discipline. I expect that a challenger without a significant power base will *suffer punishment*, that a challenger with a comparable power base will be able to *fight back* against punishment (by negotiating or by splintering with loyal fighters), and that a challenger with a significantly greater power base can *ignore* attempts at punishment.

A leadership dispute thus leads to rebel movement fragmentation when evenly-matched challengers fight back against internal sanctions: specifically, challengers decide to leave (or are expelled from) the rebel group and a high proportion of their loyal *canteras* follow them into a new splinter organization. The larger a challenger's power base, the larger the splinter group is

likely to be, and the more fragmented the resulting rebel movement. However, if the challenger's power base is substantially larger than the incumbent's, he does not need to fight back, but may simply ignore internal sanctions. This is because the rebel organization is already, for practical purposes, in his hands. In this case, the challenger may expel the incumbent or simply remove his formal powers as a *fait accompli*. In the case of such an internal coup, the rebel organization's structural integrity remains intact, and no rebel fragmentation ensues.

The above account raises the question of the *precise* timing of disputes. Why do some disputes begin early, when the incumbent retains an advantage or at least parity, and others late, when the challenger has gained the advantage? This precise timing determines whether the dispute terminates in a coup or a split, and thus partly determines the outcome. Unfortunately, it is difficult to predict *ex ante* the precise timing of a leadership dispute, as it is contingent upon the decision-making of individual incumbents and challengers. This, in turn, is subject to uncertainty (over one's rival's intentions and power, over the extent of one's own power, and of potential future changes in the distribution of power), of miscalculation, of mismatches between a leader's personal incentives and those of the rebel group as a whole, and of learning, which accumulates over successive leadership disputes. I return to this problem in the conclusion to this chapter, where I discuss how these different factors affected the precise timing of the FSLN's four leadership disputes.

Case overview

The FSLN fragmented shortly after its greatest operational success to date. On December 27th, 1974, after thirteen years of armed struggle, the FSLN struck a spectacular blow against the Somoza dynasty that had governed Nicaragua for nearly four decades. A command of thirteen urban guerrillas stormed a Christmas party hosted at the home of José María "Chema" Castillo,

the minister of agriculture in Anastasio Somoza Debayle's government. Jaime Wheelock described the operation in a panegyric pamphlet:

> On the night of December 27th, the exultant confidence of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie transformed into a grimace of terror… Thirteen combatants, decisive and well-armed, like a strong arm of the people, eternal party-poopers of tyrants and imperialists, were in the midst of the sumptuous residence, crammed with people of ancient and aristocratic surnames, quick to raise a glass in tribute to the Yankee master.[260]

The FSLN captured a large number of high-ranking members of the regime, including relatives of the president. In exchange for freeing the hostages, the guerrillas demanded a million dollars, the publication of a revolutionary manifesto, freedom for several political prisoners, including eight captured FSLN members, and an escort to the "Las Mercedes" airport, where they would fly to Cuba (Wheelock 1979, 53). All these demands were met. On the way to the airport, masses of ordinary Nicaraguans followed the caravan, demonstrating their support for the revolutionaries:

> "A little after leaving the house we saw a multitude jumping with happiness behind a barrier. Then we took out the flag of the Frente. Up to the airport itself the people [*el pueblo*] followed us, in taxis and motorcycles, honking and raising their hand in signals of victory." [...] Arriving at "Las Mercedes" thousands of people of all social classes

---

[260] Wheelock (1979, 10, 14).

thronged the interior of the building, the highway, and even the terminal... A clamor

and shouts were heard of "Viva el Frente! Viva Sandino!"[261]

An FSLN commander in Managua at the time told me that this was when the organization

realized the depth of anti-regime sentiment throughout the Nicaraguan populace: "[w]e saw… a

popular reaction, when the bus with the command went en route to the airport, the people left their

houses to cheer it on. That was something we hadn't seen before."[262] The commander envisioned

new possibilities for toppling the Somoza dictatorship by bringing the masses into the fight.

Yet even given the spectacular success of the Chema Castillo operation, the rapid growth

of the FSLN, and the increasing unsteadiness of the regime, the FSLN itself came apart. By mid-

1976, less than two years after the operation, the FSLN had fragmented into three bickering

factions, called *tendencias* or tendencies. One faction, the *Guerra Popular Prolongada* (FSLN-

GPP), or Prolonged People's War, favored a *foco* strategy of building guerrilla columns in the

mountainous northern terrain of Nicaragua. The second, *Proletaria* or Proletarian tendency

(FSLN-TP) favored the mobilization of urban workers and rural campesinos. The third, *Tercerista*

or *Insurreccional* tendency (FSLN-TI), sought to spark a mass popular uprising. For three years

until their formal reunification in 1979, the three tendencies closed their structures to one other

and competed with propaganda and in attempts to outbid one another. The FSLN's fragmentation,

coming at a moment of political opportunity, instead proved costly for each faction, at least in the

short run. Security conditions deteriorated as each faction was forced to build new internal

structures to replace those lost to rival factions. In November 1976, Carlos Fonseca, the FSLN's

---

[261] Wheelock (1979, 53).
[262] Author interview on 1/19/2017 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

long-time leader and now a top commander of the FSLN-GPP, was killed by the National Guard (Instituto de Estudio del Sandinismo 1985). At almost the same time, FSLN-TI leader Eduardo Contreras and FSLN-TP leader Roberto Huembes were also captured and killed in separate incidents (Zimmermann 2000, 203). In October 1977, the FSLN-GPP leader Pedro Aráuz was caught unaware and killed by a National Guard patrol that was responding to an action by FSLN-TI.[263]

This sequence of events raises a puzzle: why would a rebel movement fragment in such a costly manner despite enjoying military success and observing rising anti-regime grievances? The commander constituency change mechanism analyzed in this chapter allows us to solve this puzzle. It was precisely those rising anti-regime grievances, and the resulting anti-regime mobilization throughout Nicaraguan society, that made rebellious collective action more challenging. Rising levels of civilian grievances in Nicaragua, caused by the 1967 Roosevelt Avenue massacre and the 1972 Managua earthquake, mobilized new dissident networks: radical student groups and revolutionary Christians. These networks (now properly *canteras* channeling new recruits to the FSLN) dramatically transformed the FSLN's internal composition, displacing the networks upon which the organization was originally built and bringing to the fore new leaders with independent power bases. These new leaders struggled with established, yet declining incumbents so that they could move up the rebel hierarchy. Where new leaders built a dominant power base, they overthrew older leaders: an internal coup. Where the FSLN's constituent *canteras* divided their loyalties between old and new leaders, the conflict sundered the rebel group, giving

---

[263] Author interview on 10/13/2015 in Managua with historian of the student movement at UNAN-Managua. See also Glauco Robelo's interview with Mónica Baltodano (2010b).

birth to organizational splits. When this occurred, the rebel movement as a whole became more fragmented.

Above: FSLN leaders enjoying happier times in Cuba, 1973. Depicted clockwise from top left: Camilo Ortega, Humberto Ortega, Carlos Fonseca, Jaime Wheelock, and kneeling on ground, Edgard Munguía and Manuel Morales. Three years later, Camilo and Humberto Ortega would be in the FSLN-TI, Carlos Fonseca and Edgard Munguía in the FSLN-GPP, and Jaime Wheelock and Manuel Morales in the FSLN-TP. Photo given to author by an interlocutor.

The rest of this section further develops these two interrelated concepts, power and *canteras*, before turning to an analysis of four interrelated leadership disputes in the FSLN between 1971 and 1976. I first present interview and documentary evidence that the leadership disputes fundamentally revolved around struggles for power on the part of individual leaders. Second, I discuss how *canteras* structure fighter loyalty, the most important source of *de facto* power within rebel groups.

Leadership disputes: a struggle for power

While almost all extant historiography on the FSLN reports that the factional dispute was caused by disagreements over ideology and strategy (Hellmund 2013; Hodges 1986; Monroy García 1997; Zimmermann 2000), my interviewees were equally unanimous that the factional dispute was actually, at its heart, a struggle for power. The factional dispute was the result of "disputes between leaders that had the fundamental nature of power, of desire for power;"[264] it was caused by "human pettiness… and I don't know, I don't discard either the ambition of power, right?... So then, I think those two things are the seed of the conflict. That afterwards came to acquire a clear ideological differentiation, or rather strategic."[265] It had "a very strong doctrinal foundation, there's no doubt, but it didn't present itself like that, right? One. Two, it seems to me that it presented itself at the same time as a struggle for power… They wanted to take the leadership from Carlos Fonseca."[266] Another commander, close to the main protagonists, told me that "everybody wanted to be in command. Even in the most thuggish bands there's always a fight for command, even though being in command implies they'll shoot you with four machine guns. But that's what it is to be human, that's the human condition: ambition, the theory of ambition."[267] Nor was Carlos Fonseca, the FSLN's long-time leader whose popular image is of a visionary idealist, blind to the worldlier aspects of revolutionary organizations. "It happens," he wrote in a 1976 polemic dripping with biting understatement, "that certain compañeros give the appearance of being ambitious" (Fonseca Amador 1976, 13).[268]

---

[264] Author interview on 6/18/2016 in Laguna de Apoyo with female former FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a historian and owner of a resort hotel.

[265] Author interview on 6/24/2016 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

[266] Author interview on 12/12/2016 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.

[267] Author interview on 10/27/2016 in Managua with female FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a director of feminist / minority rights NGO.

[268] Fonseca was referring to Eduardo Contreras and Humberto Ortega with this statement.

There had long been ample space for strategic disagreements and discussion within the FSLN, but there could only be one overall commander. Meanwhile, this struggle for power was necessarily between individuals who became leaders by virtue of the loyalty of one or more of the FSLN's *canteras*. Possession of an independent power base was the necessary – and indeed, in the Nicaraguan case, sufficient – condition for each leader's attempt to wrangle power. Thus it becomes necessary to explain how *canteras* structured loyalty, and therefore the contesting leaders' power, even though most ordinary dissident network cum cantera members had little desire to take part in the power struggles that were tearing apart their revolutionary organization.

Canteras and loyalty: the currency of power

FSLN members referred to their most prolific sources of recruits as "*canteras*," or quarries, and frequently refer to canteras as constitutive building blocks of the rebel organization.[269] This concept is closely analogous to that of a dissident network (defined earlier in this chapter as a community subgroup whose members, on average, possess low thresholds for participation in rebellious action).[270] I employ this term to signify a dissident network once multiple members have been mobilized by the FSLN. I also retain this term to emphasize that the leaders of the FSLN conceived of their recruitment strategy in a manner analogous to the network mobilization model depicted earlier: they sought to identify groups of zero- and low-threshold activists, sought to establish personal and enduring links with them, and to regularly recruit militants from them.

---

[269] FSLN members also referred to dissident networks as "semilleros," or seedbeds.
[270] That guerrilla practitioners invented a specialized terminology equivalent to our theoretical constructs should reassure us as to their validity.

Individual rank-and-file rebels who join a rebel organization from a specific *cantera*, or incorporated dissident network, tend to remain loyal to other rebel fighters and rebel leaders from the same *cantera*. In theory, individual rebels may find their loyalties divided in several directions. They may be loyal to a leader who can provide selective incentives (Berman 2009), the quotidian ties of friends, family, and romantic interests (Parkinson 2013), the individual(s) that recruited them, operational ties, generational ties such as shared training or experiences, ideological commitments, and individuals from the same *cantera*. In practice, these different possible sources of loyalty tend to overlap and reinforce each other. Friends and family follow each other into the same dissident networks and recruit each other into armed groups (Humphreys and Weinstein 2008), while dissidents who join together are likely to train together, fight together, and share a pre-existing ideological formation. One commander, who gave up his high ranking in the FSLN to defect to the FSLN-TP, Jaime Wheelock's splinter faction, explained why he was willing to do so: "We're comrades [*compañeros*] and friends for many years. Jaime and I entered the *Frente* together, together in the same year, doing the same thing... and in the same place in León. With the same people. We came from the same high school, we came from the same university, we lived in the same house, we lived in the same neighborhood in Managua, so we knew each other from forever, right?"[271]

Even in integrated combat units, FSLN recruits often continued to identify, or be identified by others, with their original *cantera*. One FSLN guerrilla who joined from the Christian movement told me that when she was initially placed in a mixed cell of Christians and Marxists, some Marxists remained distrustful – even disparaging – of the Christians.[272] Clandestine tasks

---

[271] Author interview on 12/12/2016 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.
[272] Author interview on 6/18/2016 in Laguna de Apoyo with female former FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a historian and owner of a resort hotel.

were divided between militants from different *canteras* – "community organizing" for the Christians and "clandestine propaganda" for the Marxists. Later she was transferred to a fully Christian cell. Reflecting on how rank-and-file militants were later *sorted* into different splinter factions, she told me that "the links or the construction of the tendencies [factions] came about by who your friend was, who had recruited you, who you knew, who you were with at the moment. It wasn't by your ideology, it was by personal alignments." Each of these elements, in turn, were largely a function of the *cantera* from which individuals had joined the FSLN. In this manner, *canteras* structured rebel subgroup loyalties over the course of a conflict: they determined which rank-and-file militants "followed" which leaders, even for militants who lacked personal loyalty to a leader or that leader's ideology.

In moments of uncertainty, such as occur during leadership struggles, another mechanism helps bind members of the same *cantera* together. Leadership struggles cause formal lines of communications to break down as links between the loyalists of different leaders come apart. Given that rebel groups are illicit organizations, the resulting environment is likely to be information-poor: rank-and-file cadres may receive only a partial account of the causes of division, only the vaguest of ideas about the composition of different factions, and may even be uncertain of how to contact their immediate superiors. When formal lines of communication break down, they may be replaced by informal lines of communication built on top of pre-existing social ties (Parkinson 2013). These ties are densest among members of the same *cantera*. Therefore, *canteras* are especially likely to structure individual choice during leadership disputes.

Tracing the mechanism through four leadership disputes

In this section I present an overview of the findings from my analysis of four successive leadership disputes in the FSLN from 1971 to 1976, which culminated in a power-sharing accord,

an internal coup and two splintering events that fragmented the anti-Somocista rebel movement. I present in broad strokes two types of evidence connecting rising grievances to rebel movement fragmentation (the civilian constituency theory's core hypothesis). Those two types of evidence are the results of *process-tracing tests* and a comparison of *predictions made by my theory* with observed outcomes. The results offer strong support for my explanation of the FSLN's organizational splits (as well as its internal coups). I observe the posited observable implications throughout every leadership dispute except the fourth dispute, suggesting the mechanism is only partially operating in the dispute. Second, my theory's predictions about the *timing* of disputes, the *identity* of disputants, and the *outcome* of disputes are accurate across all four disputes. As each of these twelve predictions is independent, my theory's accuracy is powerful supporting evidence that rebel splinter groups are triggered by changes in rebel leaders' relative power, measured in fighters loyal to them. At the conclusion of this section, I compare my theory's performance to that of three competing explanations from the literature on rebel fragmentation. As I demonstrate, most competing hypotheses fare poorly on congruence tests, that is, the observed outcomes did not match the hypothesized outcome.

Results of process-tracing tests

When introducing the commander constituency change mechanism earlier in this chapter, I described the observable implications of each step and the process tracing tests which I used during my analysis. Table 5-1, below, presents summary results of my analysis.[273] In sum, I observed the expected observable implications in three out of four disputes.

---

[273] The full process tracing analysis, which takes up the majority of this chapter, begins with section 5.4.4.

Table 5-1 Evaluating the causal mechanism across four leadership disputes

	Dispute 1: CF vs. OT (1971-1973)	Dispute 2: CF vs. PA (1973-1974)	Dispute 3: PA vs. JW, LC, & RH (1975)	Dispute 4: PA vs. EC (1976)
	Outcome: power-sharing accord	Outcome: internal coup	Outcome: split	Outcome: split
	Step observed?	Step observed?	Step observed?	Step observed?
Rising grievances mobilize dissident network	Yes	-	Yes	No
Rebel group incorporates dissident network	Yes	-	Yes	No
Growing cantera increases relative power of new leader	Yes	-	Yes	No
Growth of new leader's power base provokes leadership dispute	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Degree of power (imbalance) leads to degree of fragmentation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Dispute 2 offers less evidence in support of the mechanism than Disputes 1 and 3, because the challenger's power base was the same *cantera*, the *Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario*, involved in Dispute 1. The observed causal chain in Dispute 2 therefore begins with step four, without offering additional evidence for or against steps one, two, or three. Dispute 4 offers some disconfirming evidence of steps one and two: the challenger's power base was not a dissident network, mobilized by grievances, but an *operational network*, assembled for a military action. This suggests that grievances and civilian mobilization, while significant, are not the only source of rebel fragmentation. The final two steps of the causal mechanism in Dispute 4 were observed as expected, demonstrating that rather than being a rival theory, *operational networks* can best be conceptualized as an extension of the commander constituency change mechanism – what Zaks (2017, 5) labels an inclusive hypothesis.

In conclusion, I observed the complete causal mechanism twice, and the last three steps in all four disputes. This indicates that rising grievances can cause rebel fragmentation by mobilizing dissident networks, the logic underlying the civilian constituency theory. However, it

also indicates that the civilian constituency theory cannot explain all instances in which rebel movements fragment. These results should leave us more confident in the final three steps of the causal mechanism, which pertain to the structure of rebel leadership disputes. That is, every dispute examined occurred when a challenger's power base of loyal fighters grew large enough to threaten an incumbent.

Predictions about rebel leadership disputes

My theory makes three predictions of outcomes that occur in the final two steps of the causal mechanism based on relative changes in rebel leaders' power bases. These predictions pertain to a) the *timing* of leadership disputes (step 4), b) the *identities* of the disputants (step 4), and c) the *outcomes* of leadership disputes (that is, whether or not groups fragment in step 5). All three predictions proved accurate in every dispute – twelve correct predictions in all – proferring strong evidence that relative changes in rebel leader's power bases cause rebel leadership disputes and through them, rebel fragmentation.

First, the theory predicts that rebel leadership disputes will occur shortly after a new rebel leader's power base grows strong enough to challenge or threaten the incumbent. Figure 5.3, below, compares the Eigenvector centralities of each *cantera* within the FSLN over time, along with one operational network (JJQ) that functioned as a power base in the fourth dispute.
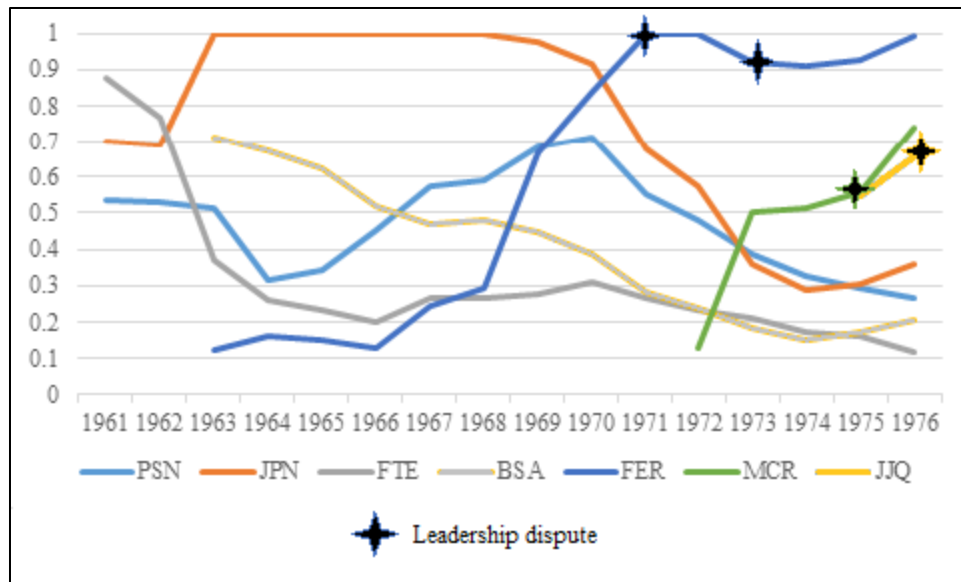
Figure 5-3 Change in cantera centrality over time

Carlos Fonseca's initial power base consisted of the PSN, JPN, FTE, and BSA, all *canteras* that he had personally recruited into the FSLN in the earliest years of the organization.[274] As can be seen, leadership disputes in the FSLN invariably initiated within two years after a challenging leader's power base (a *cantera* or operational network) reached an Eigenvector centrality of at least .5.[275] The FER reached .67 in 1969, and a leadership dispute ensued two years later in 1971, and another in 1973 when a new leader assumed control of the FER after the previous leader's death. The MCR reached .503 in 1973, and a dispute ensued two years later in 1975. Finally, the JJQ reached .549 in 1975, and a leadership dispute ensued the following year in 1976.

While this sequencing matches the expectations of the theory, it would mean little if the challengers were not the leaders of the networks shown above. Thus, the theory predicts the identity of the disputants: challengers should be the leaders of rising *canteras* or operational

---

[274] Fonseca began to lose control of the BSA to the Ortega brothers only after he had lost control of the FSLN as a whole. His other *canteras*, the PSN, JPN, and especially the FTE, remained relatively loyal to Fonseca.
[275] Whether or not an Eigencentrality of .5 represents a generalizable threshold or not could only be confirmed by comparing this case with social network analyses of many more leadership disputes.

networks. There were, at any given moment, a dozen or more elite commanders within the FSLN who might contend in a leadership dispute, but only one or two leaders of rising *canteras* or operational networks. Thus, we would not expect to observe this pattern unless there were a strong statistical relationship between a leader's growing power base and their participation in a leadership dispute.[276]

The theory accurately predicts the identity of the challenger in all four leadership disputes. In every case, at least one challenger in every dispute was the unambiguous leader of a rising *cantera* or operational network: Oscar Turcios and Pedro Aráuz of the FER in 1971 and 1973, Luis Carrión of the MCR in 1975, and Eduardo Contreras of the JJQ in 1976. By contrast, there is far less correlation between participation in a leadership dispute and the challenger's *formal* rank within the rebel hierarchy. Oscar Turcios was Fonseca's second-in-command and Eduardo Contreras a member of the FSLN's National Directorate, but Pedro Aráuz and Luis Carrión were not even members of the National Directorate when their leadership disputes began.

Finally, my theory predicts the outcome of leadership disputes based on the relative sizes of the incumbent's and the challenger's power base. Where challengers have substantially larger power bases, I expect an internal coup; where the incumbent and challenger have comparable power bases, I expect an organizational split (Tamm 2016). As demonstrated by Table 5-2, below, my theory performs well in predicting the outcomes of leadership disputes. The first dispute, where an internal coup was predicted, ended in a power-sharing accord favoring the challenger, an

---

[276] Outside of the mechanism presented here, we would have no prior belief that a rebel leadership dispute is more likely to involve a rising *cantera* leader. We may expect a leadership dispute to only involve elite rebel commanders, but, like Thersites' rebellion against the Achaean leadership in the Iliad (Homer 2001, Book 2), we can also suppose that a rank-and-file fighter may challenge the leadership. There are many more elite rebel commanders within a rebel group than there are *cantera* leaders, and far more rank-and-file fighters.

outcome that closely resembles an internal coup. Other disputes ended in unambiguous coups and splits, as predicted by the theory.

Table 5-2 Predicted and observed leadership dispute outcomes

Dispute	Incumbent's power base (Eigencentrality)	Challenger's power base (Eigencentrality)	Predicted outcome	Observed outcome
Dispute 1: CF vs. OT (1971-1973)	0.386	0.923	Internal coup	Power-sharing accord favoring challenger
Dispute 2: CF vs. PA (1973-1974)	0.328	0.911	Internal coup	Internal coup
Dispute 3: PA vs. JW, LC, & RH (1975)	0.925	0.555	Organizational split	Organizational split
Dispute 4: PA vs. EC & HO (1976)	0.995	0.657	Organizational split	Organizational split

In conclusion, my theory performs well across four FSLN leadership disputes in predicting not only *when* a leadership dispute will occur, but also *who* will challenge for leadership, and *how* the leadership dispute will conclude – i.e., whether we will observe rebel group fragmentation. The theory's predictive success provides compelling evidence that commander constituency change explains the FSLN's leadership disputes and its subsequent fragmentation.[277] In the process tracing that follows in sections 5.5 through 5.9, I also show that *rising civilian grievances* were the underlying cause of three out of four leadership disputes, supporting my civilian constituency theory's H2b, that rebel movements are more likely to fragment as civilian grievances rise.

---

[277] We gain even more confidence when we consider that the causal role of leaders' power bases differs slightly over the course of the dispute. Leadership disputes are caused by leaders' *beliefs* about relative power: they occur when an incumbent feels threatened by a rising commander, or when a commander believes herself strong enough to challenge an incumbent. The final prediction demonstrates that their beliefs are well-founded: the leaders' power bases, measured in terms of loyal fighters structured by *canteras* or operational networks, really do correspond to the outcome of leadership disputes.

Comparison with competing hypotheses

This sub-section provides a summary overview comparing my main hypothesis, H2 (rising grievances), with competing hypotheses taken from the literature (state repression, external support, and ideological differences). I also present more detailed assessments of competing hypotheses in the process tracing sections, beginning with Section 5.5. In broad strokes, H2 (rising grievances) significantly outperforms competing hypotheses in explaining the onset of rebel leadership disputes and fragmentation in this case. Table 5-3, below, compares all hypotheses, highlighting those making correct predictions and with evidence for their causal mechanisms for any given dispute.

H3 (state repression) is a constant presence throughout the time period that identifies this case, either through the Somoza regime's leadership decapitations (of Julio Buitrago in 1969 and Oscar Turcios in 1973) or the severe battlefield losses inflicted on the FSLN in 1970 and 1975. Yet process tracing reveals limited evidence connecting these events to the disputes and splinters that followed. Prior to the first dispute, Oscar Turcios assumed charge of a battered organization after the death of a previous leader, but his strong ties to Carlos Fonseca and the content of their strategic differences go against the expectations the leadership decapitation and asymmetric battlefield losses mechanisms (see descriptions and operationalizations in Chapters 2 and 4). There is far greater evidence that Oscar Turcios' death played a key role in stoking conflict between Fonseca and Pedro Aráuz, who had never met. While major battlefield losses occurred during the third and fourth disputes, my analysis uncovered little evidence for the asymmetric battlefield losses mechanism in these disputes. Comparing across cases, severe battlefield losses in 1963 and 1967, leadership decapitations in 1968 and 1976 (the latter for all three factions), and additional battlefield losses in 1977 all failed to produce further internal coups or splits. For example, the

organization's worst battlefield defeats occurred in 1963 in Raiti-Bocay and in 1967 in Pancasán (Instituto de Estudio del Sandinismo 1985). In both cases an entire column was massacred and in the second Carlos Fonseca was captured. Neither led to a leadership struggle. Moreover, one interviewee told me that the depredations of 1976 and 1977, when major leaders from all three tendencies were killed, helped promote unity: the deaths convinced the factions of the need to work together to avoid defeat.[278]

H4 (external support) finds no support in this case for a simple reason: external support was negligible during this period. According to top FSLN-GPP commander Henry Ruiz "from our school in 1968, Cuba had suspended the policy of training us militarily. They didn't run us out of the country, because Cuba didn't run anybody out, but they preferred not doing anything than giving military training to those whose plans they didn't know."[279] Another top FSLN commander reports that Fidel Castro, fearing American counterintervention, is reported to have said as late as 1977 that, "The best help I can give you is not to help you at all."[280] Beyond moral support and perhaps low level military training,[281] none of my sources indicate that the FSLN received external support from 1970 to 1978 (other than Castro not forcing the FSLN leadership out of their houses in Cuba). Thus, H3 (external support) cannot explain the Nicaraguan rebel movement's fragmentation in the second case.

---

[278] Author interview on 12/12/2016 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.
[279] Interview with Henry Ruiz by Mónica Baltodano (2010a)
[280] Edén Pastora, quoted in Booth (1985, 134).
[281] The sources are not clear on whether this resumed in 1974 or later.

Table 5-3 FSLN leadership dispute case study findings

Explanation	Dispute 1: CF vs. OT (1971-3) Result: Power-sharing accord		Dispute 2: CF vs. PA (1973-4) Result: Internal coup	
	Correct prediction?	Evidence for mechanism?	Correct prediction?	Evidence for mechanism?
H1 (Rebel type)	No	-	No	-
H2b (Moderate grievances)	Yes	Strong	Yes	Strong
H3 (State repression)	Yes	Mixed	Yes	Strong
H4 (External support)	No	-	No	-
H5 (Ideological/strategic disagreements)	Yes	Mixed	No	-

Explanation	Dispute 3: PA vs. JW, RH, & LC (1975) Result: Split		Dispute 4: PA vs. EC & HO (1976) Result: Split	
	Correct prediction?	Evidence for mechanism?	Correct prediction?	Evidence for mechanism?
H1 (Rebel type)	No	-	No	-
H2b (Moderate grievances)	Yes	Strong	No	Mixed
H3 (State repression)	Yes	No	Yes	No
H4 (External support)	No	-	No	-
H5 (Ideological/strategic disagreements)	Yes	Mixed	Yes	Mixed

Finally, there is evidence in favor of H5 (ideological disagreements) for the first, third, and fourth disputes. Yet in each of these disputes, evidence of genuine ideological commitment must be balanced against equally abundant evidence that ideological positions frequently amounted to "cheap talk": elites instrumentally developed ideologies that justified their own claims to leadership, invented ideologies *post hoc* as "justifying narratives" (Christia 2012, 6) to explain their participation in power struggles, and frequently abandoned their own ostensible strategies for tactics indistinguishable from those of their ideological opponents. Meanwhile, H5 faces a severe problem of cross-case congruence: the whole history of the FSLN, and all of its hierarchy from the leadership to the rank-and-file, are rife with ideological and strategic disagreements. Indeed, up until the final leadership dispute, internal ideological and strategic

discussions were not only tolerated but encouraged.[282] Given the ubiquity of latent disputes across time and throughout the ranks, even deeply felt ideological differences cannot predict when a leadership dispute would occur, nor can ideological differences predict the identities of the disputants, or most of all, whether ideologically-motivated disputes would end in an internal coup or a fragmented rebel movement.

Only my hypothesis, that rising grievances spur rebel recruitment, changing the composition of rebel groups and empowering new leaders, can explain not only when leadership disputes will occur, but also the identities of the disputants and the outcomes of the disputes. However, while rising grievances successfully predict the first, second, and third disputes, they were unable to explain the fourth dispute. I inductively develop an explanation for the fourth dispute which is based on the commander constituency change mechanism and ultimately complements it. I now turn to process tracing each of the four disputes in succession.

---

[282] See especially Zimmermann (2000) for the frequent colloquia held by Fonseca for ideological and strategic discussions among elite and even rank-and-file FSLN militants. These discussions were also attested in author interview on 12/12/2016 with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.

First leadership dispute

Oscar Turcios "El Ronco", años 60.
Foto: Archivo OSN. CHM-EN.

Figure 5-4 Carlos Fonseca Amador (left)[283] and Oscar Turcios Chavarria (right)

This section process traces the first of four leadership disputes within the FSLN, comparing each step with the observable implications of the commander constituency change mechanism. In 1967, the FSLN was a quintessential vanguard rebel organization: composed of a small set of tightly interconnected zero-threshold activists (Staniland 2014). However, following two grievance-triggering focusing events (the Cuban revolution and a massacre of civilian protestors on Roosevelt Avenue), Nicaraguan university students mobilized and radicalized en masse. The *Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario* (FER), in turn, became a conduit for new recruits

---

[283] Taken from http://www.laprensa.com.ni/2016/10/16/suplemento/la-prensa-domingo/2117567-retratistas-de-la-historia. For the photograph of Oscar Turcios, CHM stands for Centro de Historia Militar, the Nicaraguan military archive.

into the FSLN, ultimately transforming its composition and the formerly stable balance of power between leaders. In 1971, Oscar Turcios, after taking operational control of the new FER recruits, would challenge long-time FSLN leader Carlos Fonseca for overall control of the organization. Ultimately, the two leaders would avoid fragmenting the group by settling on a power-sharing accord favoring Turcios, reflecting the challenger's superior power base.

Rising grievances mobilize new dissident network: the Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario

Anti-regime student dissident networks in Nicaragua mobilized extensively during two separate revolutionary generations, each following a major focusing event (Booth 1985, 110–12). The first wave of student activism, which I discuss in this section, sprang out of the euphoric wave of revolutionary politics that swept through Latin America in the immediate aftermath of the Cuban revolution in 1959. While large-scale student mobilization had subsided in Nicaragua by 1962, the first wave left behind a small but crucial organizational infrastructure that would grow exponentially larger during the second wave. In short order, the FSLN incorporated a small student organization, the *Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario* (FER), which had been founded at UNAN-León and the Universidad Centroamericana (UCA) during the first wave. The second mobilization of student dissident networks occurred from 1967 to 1970, impelled by a 1967 regime massacre of civilian protestors on Roosevelt Avenue in Managua. During this second wave, which I discuss I a later section, the FER would become a major *cantera* for the FSLN – a source of dozens of commanders and rank-and-file fighters.[284]

---

[284] I identify the FER as a major *cantera* by means of my network dataset.

Fidel Castro's rebel group, the M-26-7, marched into Havana on January 1st, 1959, and this "iconic event" would dramatically impact the repertoire of contention for the political left across Latin America (Capoccia and Ziblatt 2010; Wickham-Crowley 1991, 139). As described in Chapter 4, Nicaraguan dissidents attempted to emulate the Cuban experience with a series of guerrilla *focos* that coalesced and were rapidly suppressed in the northern Segovian mountains (Blandón 2011). As Chuno Blandón, a journalist involved in this era's leftist student politics, points out, these *focos* largely failed in their efforts to recruit campesinos, instead drawing many activist students. The defeat of student guerrillas at El Chaparral in June 1959, in turn, sparked street demonstrations in León, home of the vast majority of Nicaragua's university students.[285] These were also bloodily suppressed, with four students killed by the National Guard (Booth 1985, 110).

Prior to these events, Nicaraguan student politics directly mirrored the political system writ large, and student political groups were mere wings of established parties.[286] In 1960, UNAN-León students initiated efforts to create autonomous, revolutionary student organizations. The first of these, *Juventud Patriótica de Nicaragua* (JPN) would last less than a year, but would prove a key *cantera* for the FSLN's earliest recruits.[287] The second, which would consolidate into the FER by 1962, began as an attempt by students affiliated with the *Juventud Socialista* to gather all of the disparate revolutionary students under a single banner. A professor and student movement leader who later collaborated with the FER described its founding to me:

---

[285] Author interview on 11/7/2015 in León with a male former FSLN collaborator, now owner of a bar. This informant told me that, according to friends of his who witnessed the events, the "official narrative" behind this massacre may also be largely invented, though he was unable to specify how. Again the question probably revolves around whether the violence began with the National Guard or with the students.
[286] Author interview on 7/16/2016 in Managua with historian and brother of prominent Conservative Party activist.
[287] See Chapter 6.

It was formed by people who came from the most advanced portions of the *Partido Socialista* and other student groupings. They were students, indeed here the entire revolutionary movement was fed with students, and that was part of the *Partido Socialista*'s discussions, because they said that the students were petty-bourgeoisie who couldn't be revolutionaries… Some *compañeros* convoked a meeting in León – León was a center of activity early in our history – so they convoke a meeting, an assembly, a get-together, however you want to say it, and they decide to form this organization, the *Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario*. And some people maintain that it formed before the *Frente Sandinista* consolidated [in 1963].[288]

According to Mónica Baltodano (2010a), these initial meetings took place in 1961, with the official foundation of the FER in 1962. By this time, however, revolutionary activity had "lost its pull" among the students in León (Blandon 660), and "the student revolutionist movement of 1959-1961 became quiescent after 1962" (Booth 1985, 112). The FER survived, but as a small group competing with many others in campus politics.[289]

In analytical terms, we start with a strong prior that the series of student mobilizations discussed above were a response to the Cuban revolution. We owe this prior to the judgment of other scholars (Booth 1985; Wickham-Crowley 1991), and to the fact that similar student mobilizations occurred across Latin America in the immediate aftermath of the Cuban revolution. Specific causal process observations also connect the Cuban-style *focos* that formed in 1959 with

---

[288] Author interview on 12/13/2016 in Managua with male former student leader and FSLN collaborator, currently an economist and researcher. The revolutionary organization that would later be called the FSLN was first founded in 1961 as the *Frente de Liberación Nacional*. I use this date as its founding date, but most Nicaraguans consider 1963, when Carlos Fonseca took control and added *Sandinista* to its name as the founding date.
[289] Author interview on 12/13/2016 in Managua with male former student leader and FSLN collaborator, currently an economist and researcher.

the radicalization of student protesters in León a month later. Jesus Blandón (2011), an eyewitness to the 1959 student march, listed several of the FER's founders as participants in the march. In sum, there is strong evidence that the Cuban revolution pushed several low threshold student networks into open dissident activity, and mobilized the FER.

The FSLN incorporates the FER

The FSLN moved quickly not only to establish a relationship with the FER, but also to bring the group "under our control," as early FSLN member Jacinto Suárez put it (Baltodano 2010a). FSLN leader Humberto Ortega describes how the FSLN took advantage of the FER's internal democracy to seize control of its leadership positions: "In 1963, the *Partido Socialista Nicaragüense* **restores** the FER in the II Student Congress [of the FER], through Guillermo Baltodano and Roberto Arévalo. Afterwards, the FSLN **displaces** the socialists with Sandinista militants" (Ortega Saavedra 2004, 146). From this point on, "the organized student movement progressively assumed the line of armed revolutionary struggle pushed by the FSLN" (Baltodano 2010a). The FER, now deeply intertwined with the FSLN, achieved some early victories, such as the election of FSLN members Casimiro Sotelo, Julio Buitrago, and David Tejada to the UCA student government in 1963 (Zimmermann 2000, 76), but by and large the national student government was dominated by Social Christian groups from 1962 to 1968 and the FER remained small.[290] The FER had become an FSLN *cantera*, but few recruits entered the rebel group from FER during this period.

---

[290] Author interview on 10/13/2015 in Managua with historian of the student movement at UNAN-Managua and author interview on 12/13/2016 in Managua with male former student leader and FSLN collaborator, currently an economist and researcher.

Growth of the FER *cantera* increases Oscar Turcios' relative power

This section spans several analytic goals. First, I discuss how a second focusing event, the 1967 Roosevelt Avenue massacre, mobilized additional growth of the FER dissident network. As a result of the massacre, in 1968, student activists embraced the FER, which grew rapidly in size and captured control of the national student government in 1969. A wave of student recruits then joined the FSLN through the FER, far outpacing the FSLN's previously central *canteras*, the JPN and PSN. I describe these two processes of *cantera* growth and recruitment to the rebel group, then I show how the FER's rapid growth elevated a new leader, Oscar Turcios. The strength of Turcios' *power base*, which was balanced in 1970 and 1971 relative to that of the FSLN's secretary general, Carlos Fonseca, allowed him to challenge Fonseca for the overall leadership of the FSLN.

As described in the previous chapter, on January 22nd, 1967, a Conservative Party opposition rally featuring as many as 50,000 to 80,000 protestors, came under fire from Somoza's National Guard on Managua's central Roosevelt Avenue, leaving several hundred civilians dead (Casanova Fuertes 2013, 159–68). In the wake of this massacre, the student movement radicalized again, giving birth to a second revolutionary student generation, whose agitation led to the most significant campus unrest since 1959 (Booth 1985, 110). "The student movement was also in that mobilization with the [political] parties, in Roosevelt," one student leader of the time told me, "and the massacre greatly impacted the student sector, because they became convinced that this game of parties wasn't the alternative… it ended the era in which this was the appropriate path to get rid of the Somoza dictatorship."[291] The student movement in particular turned away from student groups subordinate to traditional political parties, as exemplified by the response of student leader

---

[291] Author interview, December 13th, 2016.

and 1968-1969 CUUN president Hugo Mejía, an independent candidate that was previously associated with the *Juventud Universitaria Católica* (JUC):

> The event that unbottled all this movement is the massacre on the January 22nd… I figure that the electoral option is shot after January 22nd. And I said that we had to take up other options. It's obvious that my position is very close to the FER, so Pablito Cuadra [a member of the FER] contacts me. But afterwards I have other contacts and links, they give me orientation and tell me that the whole of the FER's militancy would be working with me (Baltodano 2010a).

The FER, in turn, responded to its rising popularity among students that formerly supported traditional political parties by recruiting more broadly. Staunch Marxists lost control of FER's governing board to a newer generation espousing a broad anti-regime front, and the organization began growing rapidly in 1969: "We opened the doors of the FER and many students entered, without imposing the condition that they had to be Marxists."[292]

After Hugo Mejía's presidency, the student body elected the FER's candidate, Edgar Munguía, to control the student government for the first time in 1969 (Cabezas 1982, 38). Omar Cabezas, a student leader and later, an important militant in the GPP tendency, describes the importance of this victory for FSLN recruitment (Cabezas 1982, 30):

> Through our protests with the CUUN [the student government], we were able to continue attracting the most outstanding student activists for the FER. And it allowed

---

[292] Author interview on 10/27/2016 in Managua with female FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a director of feminist / minority rights NGO.

us to make use of the economic resources and structures of the CUUN to invest in propaganda for the work, not only for the CUUN and the FER but also for the FSLN.

As an "intermediary organization,"[293] the FER provided the FSLN with its largest *cantera*, comprising radical university students, and gave potential recruits the space to participate in anti-regime activities at lower levels of risk, while simultaneously evaluating them for their potential suitability as combatants and socializing them into accepting a higher level of participation.[294] For many students, their passage from student activism to clandestine militancy was not a choice: after a period of open anti-Somoza activism in the FER, they would be "burned" (*quemado*), their faces "known to the regime," and would enter the ranks of the FSLN for protection from retributive violence or imprisonment.[295] As a result, many relatively higher threshold students would enter the FSLN through the FER, expanding the pool of potential recruits.

Oscar Turcios, who assumed control of the FER after its previous leader, Julio Buitrago, was killed by the National Guard in 1969, reaped the benefit of the *cantera*'s growth.[296] He was

---

[293] In Spanish, "organización intermedia," a term repeated by other FSLN commanders in several author interviews.
[294] Intermediary organizations also served as sources of material and logistical support, as members would be tasked with transporting FSLN fighters in their vehicles, providing safe houses, and serving as couriers.
[295] Author interview in Managua, 10/31/2016; other FER activists who were unwilling to head to the guerrilla *foco* in the mountains or to the urban underground were forced into exile from Nicaragua. Author interview in Managua, 11/2/2016.
[296] Had Julio Buitrago not been killed, the commander constituency change mechanism would have predicted a leadership dispute between him and Carlos Fonseca, rather than between Oscar Turcios and Carlos Fonseca. Buitrago's death on July 5th, 1969 came in the middle of the FER's expansion, and according to one informant, the heroic way in which he fought to the death for over an hour, alone, against an entire NG battalion replete with tanks and planes, was a major boost to FER recruitment – especially as Somoza had the entire episode broadcast live on radio and television. Immediately following Buitrago's death, Efráin Sánchez Sancho, son of a PSN labor leader, was assigned to take Buitrago's role, but evidently failed to gain the respect of both his superiors and subordinates. The same informant, his immediate subordinate, described him as "always breaking the security norms, completely irresponsible… [The National Guard] hit him with a bullet and then his father grabbed him and sent him to Russia." After Buitrago, long-time militant and Fonseca loyalist José Benito Escobar took over, but was swiftly captured by the NG and imprisoned. At this point, in late 1970 or early 1971, Turcios took over. Author interview on 10/27/2016 in Managua with female FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a director of feminist / minority rights NGO.

selected for the role of the FSLN's National Coordinator because he was one of the earliest "student leaders:"[297] in 1965 he directed the FER along with Daniel Ortega, founded its FSLN-sympathetic newspaper, El Estudiante (The Student), and "gave a great organizational **impulse** to the activity of young people who were joining the various structures of the FSLN" (Ortega Saavedra 2004, 168). After spending 1968 to 1970 in Cuba, he returned to Nicaragua, where as National Coordinator, he "took up all of the organization's work" (Díaz Lacayo 2010, 703). Above all, he took this to mean the tasks of recruitment and training, a "process Oscar baptized as the accumulation of strength in silence [*acumulación de fuerzas en silencio*]."[298] Bayardo Arce, at that time Turcios' chief lieutenant, recalls Turcios recruiting even the help in his very first safe house (of an UNAN-León professor) in León:

> 'El Ronco' [Turcios] ended up recruiting the people, he didn't hold back, he didn't stop talking, he was talkative; he recruited the employees, which was the [professor's] family's fear… From there we started to reorganize the work, starting in León. We worked in León through the student movement, a mix of CUUN-FER,[299] and of work in the barrios.[300]

Similarly, Marlen Chow, a student activist and FSLN commander, told Mónica Baltodano that during this period, "Oscar Turcios had the mission to forge [*forjar*] that heap of kids in the most critical conditions the country had ever seen" (Baltodano 2010a). Humberto Ortega credited Turcios' work in recruitment ("**generating** the reproduction of **cadres**") and organizing the FER

---

[297] Author interview on 10/27/2016 in Managua with female FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a director of feminist / minority rights NGO.
[298] Bayardo Arce interviewed by Mónica Baltodano (2010a).
[299] CUUN was the acronym of the student government.
[300] Bayardo Arce interviewed by Mónica Baltodano (2010a).

and CUUN for reviving the FSLN from a nearly moribund position in Nicaragua (Ortega Saavedra 2004, 222). Nora Astorga, a student leader recruited for the FSLN in 1969, said simply, "That's why I hold so much affection for Oscar Turcios; he put me in the Frente" (Astorga 1988).

The statistical evidence gained through analysis of the network dataset shows that the FER rapidly rose from a marginal *cantera* to the FSLN's most central *cantera* between 1968 to 1971. Table 5-4, below, shows the Eigenvector centrality of the FER from 1967, the year of the Roosevelt Avenue massacre, to 1971, the year in which the first leadership struggle initiated. The table compares the FER to the *Partido Socialista Nicaragüense* and the *Juventud Patriótica Nicaragüense*, the *canteras* that constitute Carlos Fonseca's power base.

Table 5-4 Cantera centrality of the FER

Year	*Cantera* centrality (Eigenvector)		
	PSN	JPN	FER
1967	0.575	1	0.241
1968	0.591	1	0.291
1969	0.683	0.975	0.67
1970	0.714	0.916	0.839
1971	0.551	0.681	1

In 1967, Fonseca commanded an overwhelmingly central position within the FSLN's network. By 1971, Fonseca's power base was still formidable, but the FER had become the most central node in the FSLN's network. Its leader would have a strong position from which to challenge Fonseca's formal authority over the FSLN. This dynamic is readily visible on the network graph in Figure 5-5, below: in 1967, recruits of the FER *cantera*, which would form Turcios' power base, are marginal compared to the recruits from the PSN and JPN (in red), Carlos

Fonseca's power base. In Figure 5-6, in 1971, the year in which Fonseca and Turcios began to struggle for control of the FSLN, the two power bases are much more evenly matched.
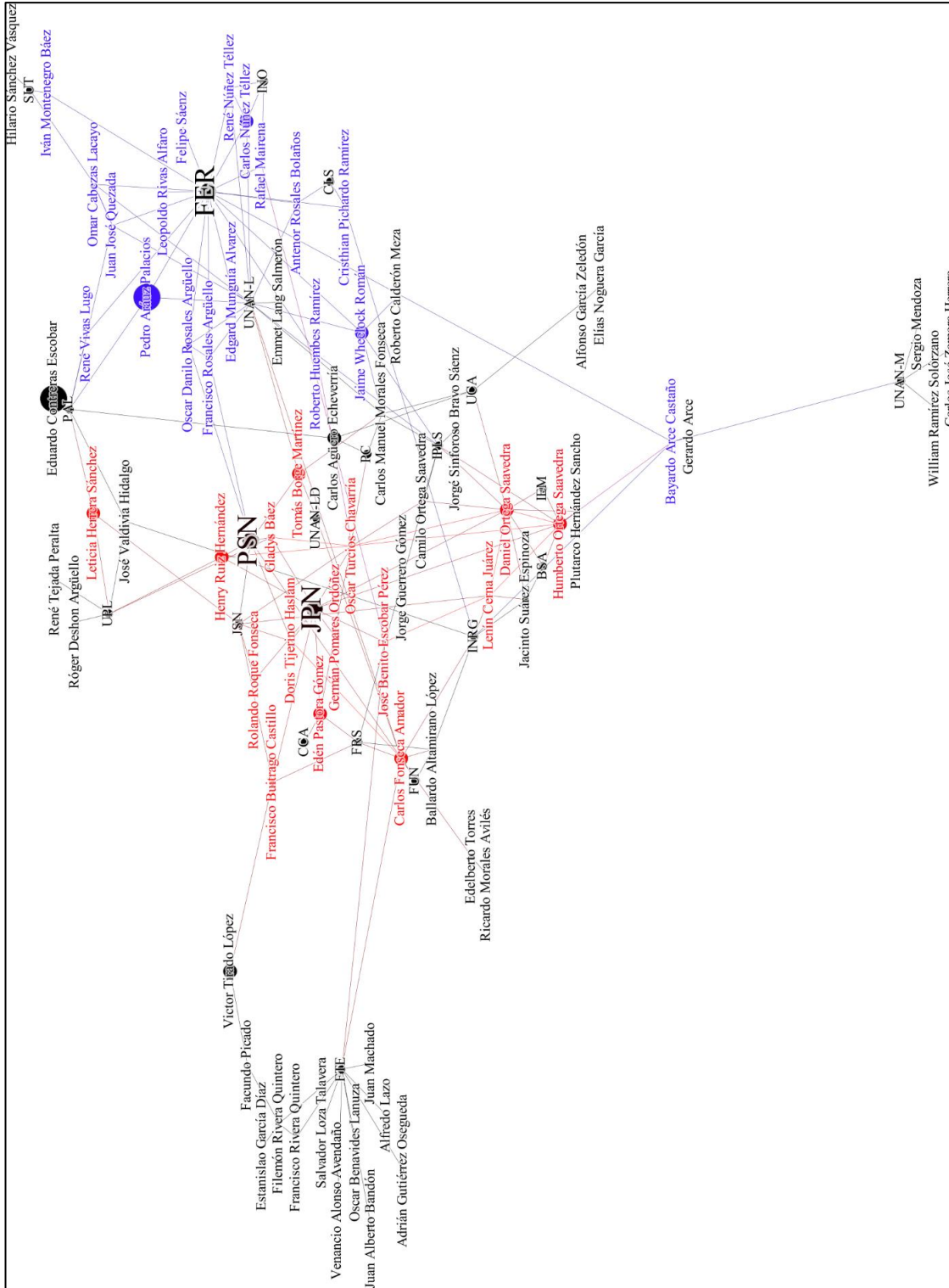
Figure 5-5 The FSLN in 1967 (red: Carlos Fonseca's power base, blue: Oscar Turcio's power base)

256

Figure 5-6 The FSLN in 1971 (red: Carlos Fonseca's power base, blue: Oscar Turcio's power base)

Turcios' growing power base provokes a leadership dispute

This section simply tests two predictions: whether the *timing* of the first leadership dispute aligns with the predictions made by the commander constituency change mechanism (1969-1971), and whether the *identity* of the challenger matches the mechanism's prediction (Oscar Turcios). Both predictions are accurate: beginning almost immediately after assuming control of the FER in 1971, Oscar Turcios struggled with Carlos Fonseca for control over the FSLN's direction (Zimmermann 2000, 165).[301] The timing of onset, 1971, supports the hypothesis that Turcios' growing power base gave him the leverage necessary to challenge Fonseca. The dispute began within two years after recruits from the FER began streaming into the FSLN, and the same year that the FER's network centrality overtook that of Fonseca's JPN. The theory predicted that Oscar Turcios would be a disputant, because he was the FER's *cantera* leader when it overtook the JPN. In sum, the theory correctly predicts both the timing of the dispute and the identity of the disputants, which supports the importance of relative changes in the leaders' power bases as a key cause of leadership disputes.

Leadership dispute: Oscar Turcios vs. Carlos Fonseca

The dispute between Oscar Turcios and Carlos Fonseca began in 1971, when the two leaders enjoyed a rough parity of power bases, and concluded in 1973, when Turcios enjoyed a considerable advantage due to the continued growth of the FER *cantera*. The theory predicts either

---

[301] Author interview on 6/18/2016 in Laguna de Apoyo with female former FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a historian and owner of a resort hotel.

that the FSLN would splinter early in the dispute, or that Turcios would take power in an internal coup later in the dispute. The observed outcome is closest to the latter: a negotiated settlement that favored Oscar Turcios.

There are relatively few data available about the leadership dispute between Oscar Turcios and Carlos Fonseca. Turcios "began to consider himself more gifted militarily"[302] than Carlos Fonseca, and Zimmermann identifies a "personality conflict" between the two leaders (Zimmermann 2000, 163). The ensuing struggle for "supremacy in the leadership of the FSLN" played out in a series of missives arguing for different strategic emphases (Ortega Saavedra 2004, 250). According to Mathilde Zimmermann, who reviewed the leaders' dueling communiques, [303] Turcios proposed that the FSLN focus on building its strength in the Segovia mountains ("It will be from the countryside that we will advance on the cities and take them," wrote Turcios), a position called the *guerra prolongada popular* (GPP, or prolonged people's war). Meanwhile, Fonseca wrote that this reduced to "just copying an approach from books about experiences in other countries," and advocated building strength in cities, towns and agricultural sectors for a potential insurrection (Zimmermann 2000, 167, 169).

While the content of the dispute may have been strategic differences, the conduct of the dispute reflected each leader's relative power: the leaders bargained with each other to define the strategic direction of the FSLN. According to Humberto Ortega, at that time Carlos Fonseca's chief lieutenant, he entered Nicaragua in May of 1973, and "by means of my close relations with the **maximum** *dirigentes* [directors, leaders] of the FSLN Carlos Fonseca and Oscar Turcios, I try to reduce the tensions arising between them owing to different problems" (Ortega Saavedra 2004,

---

[302] Author interview on 6/18/2016 in Laguna de Apoyo with female former FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a historian and owner of a resort hotel.
[303] These are now locked away in the Centro de Historia Militar and unavailable to most researchers.

250). These discussions lasted until August, at which point both sides attended a meeting in Nandaime (Ortega Saavedra 2004, 250–51). The cadres present at this meeting accurately reflected each leader's power base, providing some evidence that the respective power bases played a role in determining the outcome of the dispute between leaders: Turcios attended the meeting with two of his top lieutenants, Ricardo Morales and Carlos Agüero, both student movement leaders whose chief responsibilities were organizing the FER and its new recruits (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional 1980; United States, Department of State, and Office of Public Affairs 1988), while Ortega and Tomás Borges, recruited from first-generation *canteras* BSA and PSN, respectively, represented Fonseca. However, available sources give no indication that Carlos Fonseca attempted to employ internal sanctions against Turcios.

As Turcios had a significantly larger power base than Fonseca in 1973, my theory predicts that the dispute between the two leaders would end in an internal coup. This prediction is not borne out; however, the outcome of the negotiations did reflect the respective power base of each leader. According to Ortega, in the accords struck at this meeting, "the thesis that predominates is the *guerra popular*, without rejecting judgments of the insurrectional type" (Ortega Saavedra 2004, 251). In sum, Oscar Turcios' position was adopted, though Carlos Fonseca's position was not rejected; an incomplete victory for Turcios.[304] This outcome did not amount to an internal coup because Carlos Fonseca remained formally in control of the FSLN. Instead, we might label this a

---

[304] Comparing this dispute to the bargaining model of war raises the question of the dispute's timing (Fearon 1995). As a rising power, Oscar Turcios had an incentive to wait until his power base was stronger than Fonseca's before pushing a confrontation. But why did Carlos Fonseca wait so long before trying to assert his authority? Available sources give no indication that Fonseca attempted to employ internal discipline against Turcios, though he did so in other disputes. The simplest answer would be miscalculation: having counted on an unbalanced distribution of power in his favor for nearly a decade since taking control of the embryonic FLN in 1963, Fonseca may have taken for granted his control of the FSLN.

power-sharing accord.[305] Though I did not previously identify power-sharing accords as a potential outcome of rebel leadership struggles, it is logically consistent with my theory. It is uncertain whether this dispute would have eventually culminated in a leadership coup, because Oscar Turcios was captured and killed by Somoza's National Guard a month after the meeting in Nandaime (Alegría and Flakoll 1982, 202).

Assessment of first leadership dispute

While H2 (rising grievances) is well-supported by the causal process evidence presented above, there is also some support for H3 (state repression) and H5 (ideological differences). This suggests that leadership disputes may be multi-causal in a specific way: while ultimately determined by a changing balance of power between rebel leaders, other factors might act as the *specific trigger* of a dispute.

There is some evidence that H3 (state repression) played a role in stoking the first dispute, through Christia's (2012) asymmetric battlefield losses mechanism. Christia holds that when severe battlefield setbacks disproportionately affect one or more rebel subgroups, elites worry about subgroup survival, leading to disputes about strategy that map on to subgroup cleavages. These disputes then culminate in internal coups or organizational splits. These dynamics are visible prior to the first dispute. Despite the FSLN's heavy recruiting in 1969 and 1970, there is substantial evidence that the FSLN suffered crippling battlefield losses during these years, with the locus of state repression in the FER *cantera*'s strongholds of León and the north. In a passage too long to

---

[305] Turcios' victory was not only rhetorical; the FSLN leadership immediately began to take appropriate steps to adopt his strategy. One informant told me that "in consequence [of the meeting] they even reinforce the mountain with Francisco Rivera 'El Zorro' with Juan de Dios Muñoz who had entered with Humberto Ortega." Author interview on 6/18/2016 in Laguna de Apoyo with female former FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a historian and owner of a resort hotel.

quote in full here, Baltodano (2010a) reports that 33 FSLN militants were killed, imprisoned or exiled during those two years when "the Somoza regime unleashed a terrible repression": in 1969, the death of a key leader (Julio Buitrago), two other leaders imprisoned, three militants killed, and five captured; in 1970, 11 militants killed, seven imprisoned, and five exiled. My network dataset (though not a complete roster of the FSLN) records 64 militants in 1970; without doubt state repression incapacitated a substantial proportion of total membership. Meanwhile, networks of collaborators cultivated over the course of years were violently dismantled by the state: "Campesino groups active in the north are brutally repressed the entire year [1970]. There are raids in which entire families are reported murdered… all the structures of the north are practically on the ground" (Baltodano 2010a).

Quotes from Oscar Turcios' subordinates provide data that, upon assuming operational command inside Nicaragua, Turcios' redesigned the group's strategy in response to the battlefield losses. Marlen Chow, a militant who worked closely with Turcios, described this period as "perhaps the most serious crisis in [the FSLN's] history" and characterized Turcios' strategy of "the accumulation of strength in silence" as designed to staunch these losses.[306] Bayardo Arce, Turcios' top lieutenant in this era "with all the structures dismanteled," explained what the strategy of "silence" entailed: "It was for the best that the dictatorship and the Office of National Security believed that the Frente Sandinista had been annihilated. We saw that it was best for the future of the revolution to make the government believe we'd been annihilated, and virtually, we made the existence of the Frente Sandinista disappear."[307]

---

[306] Interview with Marlen Chow by Mónica Baltodano (2010a).
[307] Interview with Bayardo Arce by Mónica Baltodano (2010a).

However, there is no evidence that the strategic disagreements that began surfacing between Oscar Turcios and Carlos Fonseca in 1971 revolved around the "the accumulation of strength in silence" strategy – a crucial missing causal link for the asymmetric battlefield losses mechanism. Rather, Zimmerman (2000) and Ortega (2004), the two authors with the most access to internal documents from this period, write that the leaders' strategic differences revolved around Turcios' adherence to the "prolonged people's war" (GPP) strategy, a Maoist conception in which FSLN control would expand around mountain-based guerrilla *focos*, eventually encircling the cities. For example, Zimmermann (2000, 167) quotes Fonseca as admonishing Turcios and his followers: "both in written documents and in meetings with cadres here [in Havana], the National Directorate has been stating very clearly that it is wrong to mechanically adopt this business of a 'prolonged war,' just copying an approach from books about experiences in other countries."[308] As we saw in the previous section, the power-sharing deal that resolved the dispute (at least temporarily) concerned the mix of GPP as opposed to insurrectional content for the FSLN's future; as far as the available sources report, the "accumulation of strength in silence" strategy was not at issue. Thus, the full causal chain between asymmetric battlefield losses and ideological differences between the leaders is not observed. However, because the publicly available data for the ideological content of this dispute are sparse, it cannot be dismissed that the disagreements over the "prolonged people's war" strategy evolved out of earlier disagreements over the "accumulation of strength in silence" strategy. Thus, there is mixed evidence for H3 (state repression).

On the other hand, there is little evidence for the *leadership decapitation* mechanism. While FER leader Julio Buitrago's 1969 death was responsible for Turcios taking command of

---

[308] Carlos Fonseca Amador, ''Carta a compañeros de la parroquia,'' 31 July 1974, point 7, chm reg. 00367, caja 2B (44). This document is from 1974 but Zimmerman (2000, 167) characterizes it as Fonseca summarizing the past "two years" of strategic differences.

this *cantera*, there are several data that tell against a depletion of interpersonal ties of trust between leaders. Oscar Turcios and Carlos Fonseca had just as long of a shared history (both Buitrago and Turcios joined the FSLN in 1964) and Fonseca had promoted Turcios to a formally higher rank, Second-in-Command as opposed to Head of the Urban Resistence, even prior to Buitrago's death (Díaz Lacayo 2010). Two informants close Turcios described him as an "honorable" commander "who always taught us to respect Carlos Fonseca even though Carlos wasn't in Nicaragua at that time."[309] While the two had strategic and personnel conflicts in the past (Ortega Saavedra 2004, 193, 203), these grew out of close, rather than distant, interpersonal ties.

Meanwhile, there is no evidence for H4 (external support) in the available sources, and some evidence that no external support at all was forthcoming during this period. Zimmermann (2000, 164) writes that "[a]ccording to Jacinto Suárez, the only time during the entire two decades after 1959 that the Cubans refused to provide military training to the Nicaraguans was the years 1970 through 1973."

There were, as already discussed, strong strategic differences (H5) in elite rhetoric, whether or not they ultimately descended from disputes over the best way to respond to battlefield losses. There are strong data in favor of Fonseca's and Turcios' earnest commitments to their ideological positions. First, both were committed socialists who travelled to Moscow before joining the FSLN, and Turcios was expelled from the Patrice Lumumba University for "Maoist tendencies" (United States, Department of State, and Office of Public Affairs 1988). Second, both were prolific writers of ideological and strategic tracts: Fonseca's approach was more pragmatic and nationalistic (Fonseca Amador 1982), while, theoretically complex and Maoist-inspired,

---

[309] Author interview on 10/27/2016 in Managua with female FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a director of feminist / minority rights NGO.

"Oscar Turcios's writings 'Conditions for a Truly Revolutionary Organization' and 'Concerning the Cells' float outside time and place" (Zimmermann 2000, 167). Finally, the fact that the resolution of their dispute concerned a treaty over strategy testifies strongly that strategic differences truly did form the content of the dispute.

However, there are also indications that to some extent the ideological commitments were "cheap talk." For example, Henry Ruiz told Mónica Baltodano that the dispute between Turcios and Fonseca first arose through a combination of personality conflict and pride, beginning in the late 1960s – that is, before the later strategic differences were defined:

> I learned of clashes that took place between Tomás [Borgés, Fonseca's top lieutenant] and Turcios, between Turcios and Carlos Fonseca. Turcios tended to think that he was the military leader, while the other was the political [leader], as if political conceptions weren't linked to military ones and viceversa. All that opened our eyes, took away our innocence. We realized that we weren't as pure as we believed.[310]

Meanwhile, Oscar Turcios proved far more ideologically flexible in his direction of the FSLN than he did in his dispute with Carlos Fonseca. In a 1994 interview with Mathilde Zimmermann, Doris Tijerino, one of Turcios' most trusted lieutenants from their time together at Patrice Lumumba University in 1964, revealed that Turcios actively pursued a strategy completely at odds with his prolonged people's war' strategy "that envisioned up to 30 years of rural guerrilla warfare as a precondition for an FSLN victory" (United States, Department of State, and Office of Public Affairs 1988):

[310] Interview of Henry Ruiz by Mónica Baltodano (2010a).

According to Doris Tijerino, she traveled to Havana in 1973 to make a proposal on behalf of the entire Prolonged People's War (GPP) leadership that the FSLN strike a deal with the Conservative opposition. The GPP thought Sandinista guerrillas could distract and neutralize the National Guard while the opposition carried out a coup to install Pedro Joaquín Chamorro as president… When she met with Fonseca and Humberto Ortega in Havana, they summarily rejected the idea. Although Ortega joined Fonseca in refusing to sanction the deal with Chamorro (perhaps because the proposal came from the GPP, which would have considerable influence over any alliance it initiated), he soon became the leading advocate of alliances with the bourgeois opposition.[311]

These data do not obviate what appear to have been genuine idiological differences between Fonseca and Turcios. Yet the above data also indicates that ideological differences were superimposed onto earlier personal and personnel disputes (undermining its independent causal power), and that ideology was instrumentally manipulated and disregarded when inconvenient. Moreover, ideological differences cannot explain why Oscar Turcios was in a position to challenge Carlos Fonseca (that is, it cannot explain the identity of disputants, given that many FSLN militants embraced a wide range of ideological and strategic positions), nor why Turcios acted from 1971 to 1973, despite holding Maoist tendencies since at least 1964 (ideology cannot explain the timing of the dispute). Finally, unlike H2 (rising grievances), H5 (ideological differences) can make no predictions regarding the outcome of a leadership dispute, which in turn determines whether a

---

[311] Reported in Zimmermann (2000, 174). Zimmermann's observation about Ortega's role in rejecting the Conservative alliance and coup strategy is apt; the idea sounds like something directly taken from the playbook of Ortega's FSLN-TI and offers strong evidence for both the opportunistic embrace of strategy by both Turcios and Ortega.

rebel group fragments or not. Ideological and strategic disagreements are common in rebel groups, as are many other sources of discontent. Unless disaffected rebel elites are able to cultivate an independent power base, such as a *cantera* mobilized by rising grievances, they lack the resources with which to challenge the incumbent leadership.

Second leadership dispute
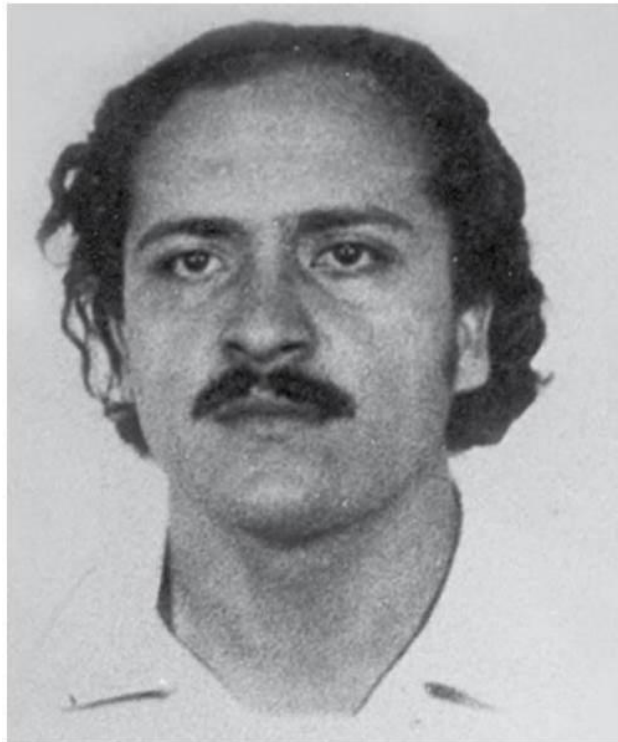
Pedro Aráuz Palacios, caído el 17 de octubre de 1977. Foto: CHM-EN.

Figure 5-7 Pedro Aráuz Palacios

Following Oscar Turcios' death in Augyst 1973, Pedro Aráuz replaced Turcios as the leader of the FER in September 1973, inheriting Turcios' *cantera* and thus his relative power superiority over the formal leader of the FSLN, Carlos Fonseca. My theory again predicts a leadership dispute, this time with Pedro Aráuz challenging Carlos Fonseca's overall leadership,

and predicts that this dispute should end in an internal coup. All of these predictions were borne out.

The first and second disputes are not independent, which affects which causal steps we can analyze. Because Aráuz, like Oscar Turcios, was the leader of the FER *cantera*, the mobilization of the FER, and its incorporation, described above, play the same causal role in the second dispute as they did in the first dispute. It is not necessary to reexamine the FER's mobilization here, because we cannot learn anything new by doing so. My assessment of the leadership dispute between Aráuz and Fonseca thus starts at the third step, the relative growth of a challenger's power base. I analyze how Pedro Aráuz secured control of the FER *cantera*, and Carlos Fonseca's incentives for initiating a leadership dispute. I then examine the conduct of the leadership dispute itself, assessing Fonseca's attempts to discipline Aráuz and Aráuz's attempts to mobilize his power base against Fonseca. Finally, I show how Pedro Aráuz's efforts succeeded, allowing him to displace Fonseca as the FSLN's main commander.

Gaining control of the FER *cantera* increases Pedro Aráuz's relative power

This section first discusses the rise of Pedro Aráuz to the leadership of the FER *cantera*. I show how he managed to gain and maintain control of his power base, despite lacking the near-legendary militant trajectory of his predecessor, Oscar Turcios. Second, I compare Aráuz's power base with Carlos Fonseca's power base. Fonseca once more claimed complete formal power over the FSLN, while Aráuz held the most *de facto* power within the FSLN. The theory predicts a leadership dispute between these two commanders.

On September 17th 1973, Oscar Turcios and Ricardo Morales, the two highest ranking leaders of the FSLN after Carlos Fonseca, were detained by the Guardia Nacional carrying $20,000 in cash (Alegría and Flakoll 1982, 202). They were imprisoned while the guardsmen raided their

nearby safehouse, and extra-judicially executed the next day. Faced with a leadership vacuum, "those on the inside [of Nicaragua] automatically selected Pedro Aráuz Palacios [as National Coordinator] and organized themselves without taking into account those outside," that is, the exiled leaders in Cuba, Carlos Fonseca and Humberto Ortega, saying that "those on the outside didn't know what was happening; we're the ones doing the work."[312]

Pedro Aráuz Palacios (*Frederico*) was a university student at UNAN-León and a member of the FER's secretariat, who was recruited by the FSLN in 1969.[313] He quickly became Oscar Turcios' top lieutenant, and on Turcios' death, he was a natural choice for successor because "Oscar and Pedro were like two sides of the same coin. Oscar took him everywhere, so Pedro knew the whole structure, and that's why they decided on him."[314] Aráuz held two key roles that allowed him to swiftly consolidate the FER as his power base within the FSLN: first, he was in charge of FER recruitment, and second, he monopolized all urban communications with the guerrilla column led by Henry Ruiz in the Segovia mountains. In an interview with an FSLN commander who served as the main courier between León and the Segovias, I asked how Pedro Aráuz could be based in the city, but came to control a faction (the GPP) with most of its fighters in the mountain. The commander told me that

Pedro Aráuz settled into the absence left by Oscar Turcios and Ricardo Morales, and

the absence of Carlos Fonseca, because he was outside the country. So, he established

---

[312] Author interview on 6/18/2016 in Laguna de Apoyo with female former FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a historian and owner of a resort hotel.

[313] Author interview on 10/27/2016 in Managua with female FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a director of feminist / minority rights NGO.

[314] Quote by Mónica Baltodano (2010a), who served directly under Aráuz in the FSLN-GPP.

himself inside the country and that's how he rose up. There came a time in which he directed all the organizational scaffolding of the mountain, of the city, of the *campo.*

After this, the commander's son (who was listening in on the interview) clarified that, "[w]hat Pedro Aráuz did was to look for people inside the FER, the *Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario*. To look for people who would receive military training and after, send them to the mountain… He began to organize the city and started launching coups."[315] For students of the FER cantera, joining the FSLN meant military training under Aráuz and then heading to a guerrilla column in the mountainous Segovias. The mountain, in turn, proved to be an intense form of socialization. Unlike urban cadres, who were cycled between different cells, different safe houses, and often, different countries, serving in a mountain *foco* meant almost complete isolation from the world, for months or even years on end. As a result, relationships between the cadres in the mountain, most of which descended from university friendships, became particularly intense.[316] Moreover, as Pedro Aráuz controlled all information reaching the guerrilla column, they invariably heard only his accounting of events.

Pedro Aráuz's characteristics give striking evidence in favor of part of the theory put forward in this chapter (specifically, that the loyalty of a major dissident network is the key resource allowing a rebel commander to challenge for leadership). Aráuz became the leader of the FER *cantera* "by default;" unlike "Oscar Turcios and Ricardo Morales who had a long trajectory in the *Frente Sandinista*… Pedro Aráuz was relatively unknown."[317] Another interviewee pointed

---

[315] Interview with Author, 11/3/2016
[316] See especially Cabezas (1982) and Cabezas (1988).
[317] Author interview on 1/19/2017 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

out that he had become National Coordinator simply by "out-surviving" other leaders: "Those that stay alive end up accumulating more and more responsibilities, and he [Pedro Aráuz] was perhaps one of the people that survived the longest in clandestine work."[318] Aráuz could rely on the loyalty of others in the FER *cantera*, in which he had spent five years in leadership roles. Partisan loyalty is still evident in descriptions of Aráuz almost forty years after his death: one non-FER commander who clashed with him recalled him as "an everyday worker, quotidian, without much imagination, without ideological, political, or even strategic ideas" while another, who had worked with him but joined TI, described him as "very intelligent, more clever than intelligent, with a great talent for organizing, quite authoritarian and accustomed to wielding power alone… he showed that vocation for power in his role in the internal struggle."[319] Finally, a FER member who followed him to the GPP recalled Aráuz differently:

He had an enormous sense of fraternity… one time we arrived somewhere for a meeting and I entered first, followed by him. The house had a ladder to the other apartment and all of a sudden it came: BANG, BANG, BANG and the sound of people… The guy took refuge and it was a question of seconds in which thought your life was over, and the man had the presence of mind to grab and protect me. The action of that man, it left me truly moved, it's indescribable what it feels like to see yourself so close to death, because you can't think of anything but that you're going to die, and

---

[318] Author interview on 1/18/2107 in Managua with female FSLN commander, TI faction, currently a historian, MRS politician, and gay rights activist.

[319] Author interview on 1/19/2017 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS). and Author interview on 1/18/2107 in Managua with female FSLN commander, TI faction, currently a historian, MRS politician, and gay rights activist.

to have a light to protect me, that is something that left me truly surprised – that was

Pedro, what can I tell you?[320]

Such incidents, shared over many years of illicit organizing and militancy, forged strong links of allegiance between Pedro Aráuz and other members of FER.

On the other hand, Pedro Aráuz's command of the FER set him on a collision course with Carlos Fonseca. Oscar Turcios' death buried the power-sharing accord between him and Carlos Fonseca, allowing Fonseca to attempt to reclaim the mantle of unquestioned leader of the FSLN. Yet he would be stymied by the sudden and, to him, clearly unexpected rise of Pedro Aráuz. Armed with my theory, we are much less surprised by Aráuz's rise. By the time Pedro Aráuz assumed leadership of the FER in September 1973, it had become the most central *cantera* within the FSLN's network, with an Eigenvector centrality of 0.923.[321] By contrast, Fonseca's *canteras*, the

---

[320] Author interview on 10/27/2016 in Managua with female FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a director of feminist / minority rights NGO.

[321] The UNAN-León, the university in which the FER was strongest, was the most central node in the network dataset in 1973 with an Eigenvector centrality of 1. UNAN-León housed not only the FER, but an early branch of the *Movimiento Cristiano Revolucionario* (MCR), the other rapidly growing *cantera* at this time.

Figure 5-8 The FSLN in 1973 (red: Carlos Fonseca's power base, blue: Pedro Aráuz's power base)

JPN and PSN, had declined to 0.357 and 0.386, respectively, leaving him with a far less extensive power base than Aráuz's (see Figure 5-8, below, for a visualization of each leader's power base in 1973).

Aráuz's growing power base provokes a leadership dispute

Pedro Aráuz and Carlos Fonseca picked up where Turcios and Fonseca left off: with Fonseca as the formal leader of the FSLN, anxious to assert this authority, but with Aráuz commanding a far more extensive power base. Given this mismatch between formal power and *de facto* power, the theory again predicts a leadership dispute, predicts Aráuz as the disputant, and predicts an internal coup. Each prediction was borne out: a dispute between Aráuz and Fonseca commenced almost immediately after Turcios' death, this dispute would be far more severe than the previous dispute and would end in an internal coup, as predicted by the theory.

Leadership dispute: Carlos Fonseca vs. Pedro Aráuz

A leadership dispute between Carlos Fonseca and Pedro Aráuz began almost immediately after Aráuz's promotion. This section analyzes the conduct of this dispute, focusing especially on a) attempts by Fonseca, the formal leader, to impose internal discipline on Aráuz, and b) attempts by Aráuz to oppose these attempts at internal discipline by mobilizing his power base. I show that, as predicted by the theory, Aráuz was able to ignore Fonseca's disciplinary measures, and eventually imposed a dramatic revision of formal power that left Fonseca excluded from decision-making. The dispute thus ended in an internal coup.

When news of Oscar Turcios' and Ricardo Morales' death reached Carlos Fonseca and Humberto Ortega in Cuba, they sent back their own orders for replacing the fallen leaders, without taking into account the decision already made by the cadres inside Nicaragua. Fonseca ordered

Henry Ruiz to return from his guerrilla column in the Segovia mountains, and to assume the role

of National Coordinator (Baltodano 2010c).[322] Yet Aráuz had quickly consolidated control over

the FSLN's internal infrastructure and refused to comply. One informant told me that "Humberto

sent a letter signed by Carlos [Fonseca] to Pedro Aráuz Palacios and then Pedro Aráuz doesn't

give the letter to Modesto [Henry Ruiz], but rather keeps ahold of it. He says, 'Look. I'm going to

be the boss [*jefe*]."[323] For his part, Henry Ruiz confirmed this in an interview with Mónica

Baltodano, saying, "That [Fonseca] had named me [National Coordinator], they didn't tell me

anything. They hid that."[324] In response to Aráuz's disobedience, Carlos Fonseca attempted to

apply internal discipline: chastizing Aráuz harshly, Fonseca wrote that though the National

Directorate would demote him, Aráuz could remain in the FSLN:

> This is a sign of our desire not to show off our authority. Compañero Federico [Pedro
>
> Aráuz] is being given the chance to remain a member of the Organization even though
>
> his insubordination represents a crime which could—although we are not proposing to
>
> do this—be justification for his execution, expulsion, or suspension.[325]

This conciliatory, yet threatening language masked Fonseca's lack of concrete leverage

over Aráuz. For all of Carlos Fonseca's revolutionary mystique and moral authority he had spent

---

[322] Interview of Henry Ruiz with Mónica Baltodano (Baltodano 2010a).

[323] Author interview on 11/4/2016 in Estelí with male former FSLN commander, TI faction, now a retired military officer. According to this informant, putting Henry Ruiz in charge had been his idea – he had convinced Carlos Fonseca with stories of Ruiz's competent work in the mountains.

[324] Interview of Henry Ruiz with Mónica Baltodano (Baltodano 2010a).

[325] Carlos Fonseca Amador, "Reunión general para informar sobre problemas de la organización," Havana, 14 Nov. 1973, CHM reg. 00293, caja 2B, quoted in Zimmermann (2000, 178). Unfortunately, Zimmermann is the last researcher with access to the Centro de Historia Militar archives – likely closed due to her use of exactly these documents pertaining to the tendency dispute. Thus, useful context for this quote is unavailable.

seven years outside of Nicaragua. Pedro Aráuz could defy him "because he had dominion over the structures… Carlos didn't even know who was in the *Frente*, he didn't know and he didn't know how to find them."[326] The two sides settled into an uneasy stalemate.

While establishing authority over a discrete portion of the FSLN structure, Pedro Aráuz simultaneously worked to mobilize his power base and undermine loyalty to Fonseca. Luis Carrión recalled Pedro Aráuz saying, in this era, "If Carlos Fonseca comes, he has to start as a militant of the base, nothing more. He's got who knows how many years living outside the country, he doesn't know anything" (Baltodano 2010c). Another commander who later left the GPP for the TI told me that Aráuz had gone "from cell to cell weakening the figure of Carlos Fonseca in front of the cell… Saying that Carlos had been outside for a long time, that he hadn't been here biting the cable; he weakened Carlos' authority."[327] These appeals worked, because few FSLN members inside the country had extensive personal ties to Carlos Fonseca: most FER members had joined since 1967, the last time Fonseca had been leading the FSLN from inside Nicaragua.

The dispute once more came to a head in June 1974, when a cassette tape arrived from Humberto Ortega in Havana once again attempting to shuffle the internal leadership: Pedro Aráuz was to assume command of the mountain, Henry Ruiz would be National Coordinator, and Jaime Wheelock - who had spent the past several years in Chile and then Havana – would ascend to the National Directorate.[328] Each aspect of this attempt to restructure the internal leadership has a logic

---

[326] Author interview on 1/18/2107 in Managua with female FSLN commander, TI faction, currently a historian, MRS politician, and gay rights activist.

[327] Author interview on 1/18/2107 in Managua with female FSLN commander, TI faction, currently a historian, MRS politician, and gay rights activist. "Biting the cable" does not appear to be a widely-known Nicaraguan (or Spanish) expression, but it appears to mean something like "sharing the labor / dangers" in this context.

[328] Author interview on 6/18/2016 in Laguna de Apoyo with female former FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a historian and owner of a resort hotel. The first and second messages from the Cuban leadership are similar, raising suspicion that there was only a single message. But Matilde Zimmermann documents evidence showing that Fonseca

based on reasserting formal authority. First, sending Aráuz to take over the mountain was a form of internal discipline, something akin to a political exile intended to isolate him and remove him as a threat (a year later, when Pedro Aráuz likewise attempted to send Jaime Wheelock to the mountain, Wheelock accused Aráuz of attempting to turn the mountain into a "concentration camp" [Fonseca Amador, 1976: 28]). Finally, the promotion of Jaime Wheelock, who had never engaged in militant or clandestine work, to the DN was likely an attempt to weight the DN in favor of those in Cuba.

Aráuz and Eduardo Contreras (the commander in charge of Managua and Aráuz's top lieutenant) protested, arguing that this represented a top-down imposition from leaders whose time in the exterior had left them out of touch.[329] Humberto Ortega writes that Pedro Aráuz "questioned my and Carlos Fonseca's long stay in the Exterior, in the interest of lessening our authority and strengthening their position over the control of the Organization" (Ortega Saavedra 2004, 287). Contreras and Aráuz demanded that the National Directorate should consist only of leaders inside the country, that Jaime Wheelock's appointment to the DN be recalled, and that Carlos Fonseca should resign as Secretary General unless he returned to Nicaragua. Carlos Fonseca argued in favor of his returning to Nicaragua, likely "in the middle of 1974," but was opposed by Humberto Ortega and Jaime Wheelock (Fonseca Amador 1976, 14). They proposed that Wheelock enter instead, and he began to prepare.[330] In October 1974, Pedro Aráuz and Eduardo Contreras, convoking a national meeting of the internal leadership of the FSLN, passed a resolution stating that "in the

---

had chastised Aráuz prior to November 13th, 1973, and my interviewees and Baltodano (2010c) insist that the cassette arrived in June 1974. I am persuaded that there were two separate communications, because it would have made little sense to send Aráuz to the mountain (abandoning his critical organizing role) unless he had already disobeyed an earlier order.

[329] Author interview on 6/24/2016 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

[330] The exact chronology of these claims and recriminations from late 1973 to early 1975 is difficult to reconstruct with certainty. This is my best attempt based on the evidence.

present phase, the members of the National Directorate can only make use of their authority when located inside the country" (Fonseca Amador 1976, 11). This resolution would nullify Fonseca's authority entirely as long as he stayed in Cuba.

In December of 1974, Eduardo Contreras arrived in Cuba after the Chema Castillo raid with the Comando Juan José Quezada (henceforth JJQ). This spectacular operational success (described in the introduction) helped press the demands of the leadership inside the country. Indeed, the operation itself, "the capture of Chema Castillo's house and the liberation of the prisoners was also a mechanism to strengthen the internal leadership and their positions against the external leadership."[331] Carlos Fonseca and Humberto Ortega were, in essence, confronted with a *fait accompli*. Aráuz and Contreras could count on the personal loyalties of a majority of FSLN members in Nicaragua, and Contreras had gained the loyalty of guerrilleros in the Chema Castillo command and the freed prisoners, all of whom arrived with him in Cuba. Carlos Fonseca and Humberto Ortega backed down, affirming Pedro Aráuz's position and canceling Jaime Wheelock's appointment to the DN. Wheelock, already en route to Nicaragua to assume a commanding role, was left stranded in Mexico without position, command, or even orders. Critically, Fonseca and Ortega accepted Aráuz's and Contreras' resolution that they could not make use of their authority while outside Nicaragua, in effect placing all decision-making authority in Aráuz's hands.

Overall this had been an internal coup. The old leadership – Carlos Fonseca and Humberto Ortega –attempted to deploy internal discipline against an upstart commander, while Pedro Aráuz

---

[331] Author interview on 6/18/2016 in Laguna de Apoyo with female former FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a historian and owner of a resort hotel. See also Henry Ruiz's interview with Mónica Baltodano (2010a): "The operation's goal was to break out those compañeros who were in prison, and besides, to carry a message to talk to the Directorate in Havana, that is to say, Carlos Fonseca." Bayardo Arce told her: "I think it's because of that, in order to show those outside that we had consolidated and everything, that we began to put forward the operations."

mobilized his far larger power base and was able to ignore the sanctions. The old leaders were then confronted with an overwhelming coup coalition: the FER recruits in León and under Henry Ruiz in the mountain, new student movement recruits under Eduardo Contreras in Managua (which included the growing MCR *cantera*), and the members (and freed prisoners) of Eduardo Contreras' JJQ command. While the old leadership was not driven from the FSLN, they were reduced to something resembling an emeritus role. Day to day operational authority was now concentrated in Pedro Aráuz's hands – as my theory would predict based on the FER's dominant network centrality within the FSLN.

Assessing the second leadership dispute

Of the competing hypotheses, only H3 (state repression) can help explain the second leadership dispute. Indeed, there is strong evidence that state repression (H3), through the *leadership decapitation* mechanism, played a significant role in triggering the leadership dispute between Carlos Fonseca and Pedro Aráuz.[332] To score H3, I sought evidence that a decapitation event (the death of Oscar Turcios and Ricardo Morales in September 1973) reduced trust-bearing links between remaining leaders and / or produced uncertainty about the internal balance of power (McLauchlin and Pearlman 2012a).

Turcios' links to Fonseca were far closer than Aráuz's. While Oscar Turcios had both personal and strategic conflicts with Fonseca, the two had nearly a decade of shared history in the leadership of the FSLN at the time of Turcios' death.[333] Their dispute may have ended in a power-sharing agreement rather than a coup precisely because of the bonds of trust and respect built up

---

[332] The state had no need to use indiscriminate violence (H5b) during this period, and it thus cannot explain any of the disputes.
[333] As detailed in the assessment of the previous dispute.

over this time (though it must be allowed that this is conjecture). When the National Guard killed Turcios and Ricardo Morales in September 1973 and the FER's leadership devolved to Pedro Aráuz, these bonds were decisively cut. Carlos Fonseca, who had been exiled to Costa Rica and then Cuba during the entire period since Aráuz's 1969 recruitment, had never even met the Aráuz (Instituto de Estudio del Sandinismo 1985).

There is evidence that a resulting absence of trust played a role in the onset of the dispute: Fonseca wanted to replace Turcios with a commander with whom he maintained direct personal links. According to one elite FSLN commander, Carlos Fonseca tried to promote Henry Ruiz over Pedro Aráuz (the act which directly triggered the dispute) because he "probably thought it would be easier to work with Modesto [Henry Ruiz], because Modesto was more his generation" – even though Henry Ruiz was also a FER *cantera* leader and a proponent of the *foco*-based strategy.[334] Henry Ruiz himself asserted that, "[i]t's Humberto [Ortega] who pushes that decision, because when he returned [to Nicaragua] to see the other [commanders], he doesn't know anyone; the only one he knows is Henry Ruiz 'Armando.'"[335] This suggests, as per Staniland (2014), that the leadership decapitation event depleted horizontal bonds of trust and reciprocity between leaders that serve to ameliorate conflicts. Meanwhile, Fonseca's attempt to demote Aráuz (and its rapid failure) testifies to his uncertainty over the internal balance of power following Turcios' death (McLauchlin and Pearlman 2012a).

However, while leadership decapitation triggered the conflict between Fonseca and Aráuz, and thus can explain the timing of this one dispute even more precisely than my commander

---

[334] Author interview on 1/18/2107 in Managua with female FSLN commander, TI faction, currently a historian, MRS politician, and gay rights activist. This was likely another strategic miscalculation on Fonseca's part: as we shall see, Ruiz backed Aráuz to the hilt over the course of his leadership dispute with Carlos Fonseca.
[335] Interview with Henry Ruiz by Monica Baltodano (2010a). Ruiz is indeed the type to speak of himself in third person, including his codename "Armando."

constituency change mechanism, it cannot predict the identities of disputants nor the outcome of the dispute. From the perspective of the commander constituency change mechanism, the decapitation event served as an exogenous shock that triggered a latent dispute, one that was previously underway (between Turcios and Fonseca) and as-yet incomplete (because the FER continued growing at Fonseca's expense). Thus, commander constituency change and leadership decapitation *jointly* produced the leadership dispute. The leadership decapitation provided the immediate trigger for the dispute, but the commanders' respective constituencies determined that a dispute was in the offing, which two commanders would struggle for leadership, and that Aráuz would emerge victorious.

There is no evidence for Christia's (2012) asymmetric battlefield loss mechanism. Turcios' "accumulation of forces in silence" strategy, whose explicit goal was to recruit while avoiding losses, meant that there were no battles between 1971 and 1973 ("silence" would only be broken with the Chema Castillo raid in December 1974). My network dataset records only five battlefield deaths from 1971 to 1973, four of them in the attack that killed Turcios and Morales, set against unprecedented growth and recruitment for the FSLN as a whole.[336]

As discussed (and evidenced) in the overview, there was no evidence of significant external support (H4) recorded during the entire case. Thus, fungible or unbalanced external support cannot explain the dispute. For the dispute between Fonseca and Aráuz, there is also little evidence that ideological disagreements (H5) played a role. To score ideological differences, I seek evidence about the immediate trigger of the dispute, the rhetoric deployed by leaders throughout the dispute, and (if the rhetoric is ideological in nature), evidence that ideology was

---

[336] The fifth, of Bernardino Ochoa Díaz, was of a PSN campesino leader who sometimes collaborated with the FSLN. Compare this to 23 commanders, rank-and-file militants, and collaborators killed recorded for 1969 and 1970 in Díaz Lacayo (2010).

deployed as "cheap talk." While Oscar Turcios is held to have had strategic disagreements with Carlos Fonseca, by the time Pedro Aráuz rose to power, Fonseca had (a month earlier) already endorsed Turcios' *foco*-centric prolonged people's war strategy.[337] The rhetoric used by both leaders, reported in interviews and documents, makes no mention of ideological or strategic differences. As discussed earlier, the rhetoric centered on a) personnel reassignments ("We saw the assignments and came to the conclusion that Humberto [Ortega] was talking BS," said Bayardo Arce, "He didn't know how we were doing, that this wasn't like moving baseball players, that there had been accumulated experience."[338]), and b) resentment at the National Directorate (that is, Carlos Fonseca and Humberto Ortega) leading from Cuba rather than Nicaragua. Meanwhile, had Carlos Fonseca wanted to push back against Turcios' prolonged people's war strategy, his selection for the new National Coordinator, Henry Ruiz, would have been the least logical choice in the entire organization: Ruiz had been the sole commander of the FSLN *foco* for four years, and utterly devoted to the *foco* strategy.[339] This choice provides strong evidence that Fonseca's primary goal was promoting a competent, trustworthy lieutenant, not promoting an ideological vision.

In conclusion, only H2 (rising grievances, though the commander constituency change mechanism) and H3 (state repression, through the leadership decapitation mechanism) help explain the second leadership dispute and Pedro Aráuz's internal coup. However, in this dispute these act as "congruent" rather than "mutually exclusive" mechanisms (Zaks 2017, 6–7): they operate together to produce the outcome. Rising grievances created a combustible situation in

---

[337] Author interview on 6/18/2016 in Laguna de Apoyo with female former FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a historian and owner of a resort hotel.
[338] Interview with Bayardo Arce by Monica Baltodano (2010a).
[339] Interview with Henry Ruiz by Monica Baltodano (2010a).

which the formal leader of the FSLN did not possess the loyalty of its most powerful *cantera*, and

a leadership decapitation provided the spark necessary to initiate the predicted dispute.

Third leadership dispute

Figure 5-9 Luis Carrión Cruz in early 1980s (left) and present (right)[340]

Even before Pedro Aráuz's coup, the FSLN had incorporated a new *cantera*, the

Movimiento Cristiano Revolucionario (MCR). The MCR mobilized in response to the 1967

Roosevelt Avenue massacre, to the surrounding fervor in the student movement, and above all, to

the devastating 1972 earthquake in Managua. It would swiftly grow to become the second largest

cantera within the FSLN. Given this growth, my theory accurately predicts a leadership dispute

between Aráuz and the MCR's *cantera* leader, ending in a split.

---

[340] Images taken from http://q24n.com/abomb/2016/08/16/has-a-dictatorship-started-in-nicaragua/ and http://www.laprensa.com.ni/2015/12/05/politica/1948783-ex-comandante-luis-carrion-tambien-fue-despedido-de-la-uam.

Pedro Aráuz's overwhelming coup coalition immediately began to crack apart after 1973.

He could only fully rely on his FER *cantera*. The MCR *cantera* in Managua had promoted its own

leaders, foremost among them Luis Carrión, and Aráuz's former lieutenant Eduardo Contreras had

captured an independent power base as a result of the JJQ command. Faced with a declining share

of *de facto* power, Aráuz sought to preemptively head off challenges to his leadership. When MCR

leader Luis Carrión expressed doubts about the FSLN's strategic direction under Aráuz, Aráuz

responded with severe sanctions culminating in Carrión's expulsion from the FSLN. These

measures were only partially successful, as Carrión pulled most of his *cantera* and its allies into a

new splinter group, the FSLN-TP.

Rising grievances mobilize new dissident network: the *Movimiento Cristiano Revolucionario*

This dissertation borrows its conception of grievance-based anti-regime mobilization

from threshold models of collective action (Granovetter 1978; Petersen 2001). To remind the

reader, these models assume that individuals who are opposed to the regime will participate in

anti-regime political action when they observe a certain proportion of the population around them

(their individual *threshold*) participating in political action. Anti-regime grievances should lower

this threshold, so that individuals that have or form intense anti-regime grievances should mobilize

even when relatively few others do. The mobilization of the *Movimiento Cristiano Revolucionario*

strongly reflects this theoretical framework: its organizers were first motivated to anti-regime

activism by the second focusing event discussed above, the Roosevelt Avenue massacre, and by

their observations of widespread dissident activity. The dissident network began to grow rapidly

following the third focusing event: the December 1972 Managua earthquake and the regime

corruption that ensued. In interviews, an MCR founder confirmed the critical role played by these grievances in the mobilization and growth of the MCR.

In 1972, a group of well-off, Catholic university students in Managua, inspired by the efflorescence of liberation theology throughout Latin America, relocated to a Christian Base Community in the "impoverished slums" of the Managua neighborhood El Riguero (Foroohar 1989, 78–79).[341] The students began a course of reflection ranging from the Church's "preferential option for the poor" to Marxist social analysis. Allying with prominent figures in the popular church and other emerging Christian Base Communities (CBCs), they founded the *Movimiento Revolucionario Cristiano* (MCR), and graduated to political organizing in poor communities across Nicaragua. While based on evangelization and superimposed onto religious networks, one of its founders told me that the MCR "was not really a religious movement: it was political."[342] In an interview with me, he described his motivations for founding the MCR and the organizational process its founding entailed. As his narrative provides several important data, I quote it here at length:

> January 22nd, 1967 hit me hard… it was a massacre in the street, in the center of Managua, and I wasn't in the city at the moment, but I returned the next day and saw the patrols of the [National] Guard, the people running. One could still smell the tear gas, and I saw the news and the deaths… Later when I returned from the United States to Managua and entered the national university [UNAN-Managua] there was this movement, the *Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario*, the FER, that acted in coordination

---

[341] Since the 1950s, an UNAN campus and a private Jesuit university, the *Universidad Centroamericana*, had launched in Managua.
[342] Author interview on 1/19/2017 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

with the Frente [Sandinista]… And then I started to think how the popular movements and the protests had failed, and I started to remember everything, the crimes, assassinations, that I remembered from my childhood and adolescence that had already registered in my subconscious, and I started to understand above all the electoral frauds, all the manipulation… I'm talking about the year '71, right? that I enter the university and I would say that during the year '72 – I don't remember exactly when it was – that I and another little group began to feel the need to join the political fight. From the university, because that was the environment we were in; nonetheless, the FER wasn't for us… Let's just say they had a very strident style, not very thoughtful, a lot of activity but not much head, I don't know. I was in meetings with them but I never joined. So then, what we did was connect a number of people in the university through their relations with Christian groups, which we had established when we were high school students or a little later, and it was like a network, and after some sessions of analysis of the situation, discussions, etcetera, etcetera, we founded the *Movimiento Cristiano* that was specifically at that time for university students, but we proposed to leave the university and head to the popular barrios of Managua and do political organizing work with the people.[343]

Three details in this narrative help demonstrate that anti-regime grievances caused anti-regime mobilization in this case. First, the MCR founder confirmed that the 1967 Roosevelt

Avenue massacre was (at least upon later reflection) the definitive focusing event that shaped his anti-regime preferences and thus motivated his later political activity. This claim is especially credible because I did not ask about the massacre in the interview – the founder spontaneously referenced the event. Second, the founder pointed to the dissident activity around him (the FER) as a factor in his decision to mobilize – that is, his individual threshold was met. Finally, the founder describes how his mobilization as a low-threshold individual lead to the mobilization of a low-threshold network (his high school Christian group), thus creating a dissident network.

Mobilization leads the FSLN to seek to incorporate the MCR

While the MCR was dedicated to political organizing from the start, it was the third focusing event, the Managua earthquake in December 1972 and all its attendant suffering and regime abuses, that tipped them from political mobilization toward armed revolutionary mobilization. The dissident network itself, based in the poor Managua barrios that were hardest hit by the earthquake, began growing rapidly. FSLN commanders observed their increasing political visibility, then successfully sought out a relationship.

In an interview with Mónica Baltodano, Martha Lucía Cuadra, an FSLN member romantically linked to Ricardo Morales, described how the FSLN sought out new dissident networks in the aftermath of the 1972 Managua earthquake:

After the earthquake, we had a meeting: Oscar [Turcios], Ricardo [Morales], René Vivas, Mary Jean Mülligan, and I, there by the lake on the highway to Casares. In that meeting "El Ronco" Oscar Turcios, Sebastián, "Sabas" was his pseudonym, and "Ándres," that of Ricardo, explained the political situation and how the political conditions inside the Frente Sandinista had changed. They explained that we needed

to capitalize on all the upheaval and Somoza's robberies, right? It was a principal objective, to capitalize politically in order to capture and open more space in which the Frente Sandinista was moving. That is, open ourselves up to collaborators, to recruit doctors, people of different stratas, secretaries, all types of people, right? Not only *campesinos*… So after the earthquake, that's when they put forward the necessity of linking up with the *Movimiento Cristiano*.

One of the relatively few FER and FSLN members in Managua, Bayardo Arce, made contact with the MCR at this point. According the MCR founder,

On a day like any other, Bayardo Arce, who was a figure in the university well known for his link to the Frente, proposed to us that the Frente wants to speak with us… He had noticed us [because of our political activity and] our firm attitude of political opposition was visible in the university… We named two delegates, Roberto Gutiérrez and I was the other… Ángel Barrajón [a priest active in the MCR] facilitated our use of his office in the Colegio Calasanz [a Catholic high school] for the meeting and he was present in the meeting. Roberto Gutiérrez and I were at the meeting, and Ricardo Morales and Bayardo Arce. And look, the idea is that we were going to make an alliance, we the Christians and you the Sandinistas are going to make an alliance.[344]

---

[344] Author interview on 6/24/2016 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS). In his interview with Mónica Baltodano (2010a), Bayardo Arce remembers this a little differently than my informant:

Because of [the earthquake], I started recruiting leaders of the Movimiento Cristiano... I remember that afterwards we started negotiations with those young Christians; I say negotiations because they started to talk about an alliance between the Frente Sandinista and the Christians. Ricardo [Morales] said,

In short, the FSLN sought out newly forming dissident networks in the wake of the 1972 earthquake, a major focusing event for anti-regime grievances. It observed the MCR's political activity, approached its leaders, and forged a relationship. Once incorporated, the MCR became a *cantera*: MCR members began joining the FSLN, altering the FSLN's constituency and therefore its internal balance of power.

Growth of the MCR *cantera* increases Luis Carrión's relative power

The MCR *cantera* grew rapidly after the 1972 Managua earthquake and sent a substantial number of recruits to the FSLN. Most of these recruits maintained an identity as revolutionary Christians, distinct from the typically (though not always) secular students who joined the FSLN through the FER. As a result, the MCR constituted a growing power base for a rising FSLN leader, becoming the second most central *cantera* behind the FER already by the end of 1973. In this case, my theory accurately predicts a leadership dispute between the incumbent (Pedro Aráuz) and the leader of the MCR *cantera*, Luis Carrión. This dispute took place in 1975.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the 1972 Managua earthquake hit hardest in precisely the marginal barrios where the popular Church and the MCR had set down roots (Foroohar 1989, 119–30). This had two consequences for FSLN's constituency. First, according to Foroohar, as the government response to the earthquake was anemic, the popular Church and the MCR were at the forefront of earthquake relief and absorbed a large influx of Christian individuals who desired to take part in relief. Thus, the MCR grew dramatically after the earthquake. Second, for those already

---

'Those guys are crazy, talking about alliances;' I stayed there, still doing the work with them because there was a relationship there in the university, until they agreed to join the Frente, now without this idea of an alliance.

active in the dissident network, the earthquake tipped them from political activism to revolutionary mobilization. After the MCR leadership began coordinating with the FSLN, its members began joining the rebel organization. Dulce María Guillén describes the process (Alegría and Flakoll 1982, 192):

> First, a process of political identification [with the FSLN] began taking place. The leaders joined directly and, little by little, the rest of us joined up… The *Movimiento* became what at that time we called an intermediary organization. The *Movimiento Cristiano* didn't disappear when those who started it joined [the FSLN], but rather continued growing with new people, and this came to be a first step to reaching the *Frente Sandinista*, above all for the Christian youth sector.[345]

At this time, Aráuz's FER *cantera* remained central to the FSLN's expansive structures in León and northwestern Nicaragua. However, Managua, as the seat of state power, had much smaller FSLN structures and a relatively underdeveloped student movement: by 1974 "in Managua there were many more people in the *Movimiento Cristiano* than the FER – the FER [in Managua] was weak."[346] As a result, Aráuz had "less dominion, less control, less presence" in Managua.[347] Meanwhile, MCR leader Luis Carrión rapidly rose to an elite position in the FSLN's hierarchy due to his key role in founding the MCR *cantera*: when he "joined the *Frente Sandinista*, he did so as the leader of an organized group of people, not as an individual, and without idealizing the *Frente*

---

[345] C.f. to the almost identical description to the FER above. Dulce María Guillen goes on to explicitly compare the MCR to the FER as an intermediary organization.
[346] Author interview on 1/19/2017 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).
[347] Author interview on 1/19/2017 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

and its leaders."[348] FSLN recruits from the MCR had significant relationships with each other that dated from years of Christian activism: "All of those that entered in those two years after, '73, '74, they were people who already had organized *barrios*, who had organized networks in the *campo*, that had done thousands of things."[349]

Of the five students who founded the MCR,[350] three became prominent FSLN commanders. Luis Carrión Cruz, son of a wealthy businessman, emerged as the principle leader of the MCR *cantera*. The other MCR leaders passed rapidly into the underground after joining the FSLN, while Luis Carrión remained in charge of the *cantera*'s political mobilization and recruitment until 1974 (Baltodano 2010c). This gave him the opportunity to form a shared "relations of trust, [to have] personal relations with all the chiefs, a history of shared labor, and in many cases even friendship that served to maintain unity," and led most lower-ranked members of the MCR *cantera* to remain loyal during the leadership dispute.[351]

Table 5-5 Cantera centrality of the MCR

	Cantera centrality (Eigenvector)	
Year	FER	MCR
1972	1	0.127
1973	0.923	0.503
1974	0.911	0.512
1975	0.925	0.555

---

[348] Author interview on 1/19/2017 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

[349] Author interview on 12/12/2016 with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.

[350] They are Joaquín Cuadra Lacayo, Roberto Gutiérrez, Salvador Mayorga, Alvaro Baltodano, and Luis Carrión (Foroohar 1989, 78–79).

[351] Author interview on 1/19/2017 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

Table 5-5, above, compares the Eigenvector centrality of the FER *cantera* and the MCR *cantera*. The FER remained the most central *cantera* within the FSLN, but the MCR surged into the second position in 1973 and continued growing afterwards. Again, Figures 5-10 and 5-11, below, visualize the relative growth of the MCR *cantera* – Luis Carrión's power base – in two network graphs depicting the FSLN's internal structure in 1972 and 1975. The MCR was still a weaker power base than the FER, and thus not a strong threat to overthrow Pedro Aráuz. However, it possessed three traits that may have worried Aráuz. First, it had a distinct identity from the FSLN, an independent organizational trajectory, and its own leader. Thus, the MCR could not be readily controlled. Second, it was still growing and already dominated Managua, Nicaragua's capital. Third, if its leader allied with other *cantera* leaders potentially hostile to Pedro Aráuz (such as Carlos Fonseca, or the increasingly independent Eduardo Contreras), they could form an overwhelming coup coalition and deprive Pedro Aráuz of his leadership. This worry must have been especially acute, given that Aráuz, having taken over formal power in an internal coup, lacked Carlos Fonseca's legitimacy.[352] In sum, Pedro Aráuz's eroding power base in the face of not one but two potential rival leaders (Carrión and Contreras) made a leadership dispute likely.

---

[352] As we shall see in Aráuz's conduct during the fourth dispute, he maneuvered to address this legitimacy gap by allying with Carlos Fonseca.

Figure 5-10 FSLN in 1972 (blue: Pedro Aráuz's power base, green: Luis Carrión's power base)

293

Figure 5-11 FSLN in 1975 (blue: Pedro Aráuz's power base, green: Luis Carrión's power base)

294

Carrión's growing power base provokes a leadership dispute

Given the growing relative power of the MCR cantera, my theory predicts a leadership dispute between its leader and the incumbent. This should be a challenging test for my theory, because other than being a cantera leader, Luis Carrión possessed few attributes that would lead us to expect his involvement in a leadership dispute. Having only officially joined the FSLN in 1974, he was a recent recruit, he had no military achievements, and he was of relatively low rank. Yet this unlikely prediction proved accurate, providing strong evidence in favor of my theory. My theory also predicts that the dispute would end in a split because the MCR's centrality remained lower than the FER's, and that the MCR's leader (Luis Carrión) would form a splinter group. This prediction also proved accurate. Tensions between Pedro Aráuz and three FSLN commanders, Jaime Wheelock, Roberto Huembes, and Luis Carrión, began in 1975, about two years after the MCR began growing. A leadership dispute ensued, and Luis Carrión, along with the other two commanders, formed the Tendencia Proletaria (FSLN-TP) at the end of 1975. The creation of the TP splinter group fragmented the anti-Somocista rebel movement, as Nicaragua afterwards hosted not one, but 1.6 effective rebel groups.

Leadership dispute: Jaime Wheelock, Luis Carrión, and Roberto Huembes vs. Pedro Aráuz

The third leadership dispute differs from the first and second in two key respects. First, while in previous disputes the challenger initiated the dispute to gain more formal power, this time the incumbent, Pedro Aráuz, initiated the leadership dispute to defend his position of formal power against rising dissent in the ranks. Second, Pedro Aráuz was challenged not by one but by a coalition of three subordinate FSLN commanders, Jaime Wheelock, Luis Carrión, and Roberto Huembes. Of these three, only Luis Carrión was a *cantera* leader. This allows us to observe how

Aráuz's attempts to impose internal discipline succeeded or failed depending on the extent of their target's power base. In short, Aráuz was able to impose internal discipline on Jaime Wheelock, but his attempts to impose internal discipline on Luis Carrión went awry. Carrión fought back, taking most of the recruits from his MCR *cantera* with him to his FSLN-TP splinter group.

My data for this dispute are detailed, but suffer from a serious limitation: most details come from two interviews with a single interlocutor who was very close to the FSLN-TP leadership, as well as an interview given by TP leader Luis Carrión to Mónica Baltodano (2010a).[353] Such details were not available elsewhere, in part because most involved parties had an incentive to obfuscate this embarrassing episode, and in part because most actors involved died before 1979. The events were indeed relayed to me in a partisan manner, with an effort to depict Pedro Aráuz as strident and "authoritatian,"[354] and to blame him for the dispute. However, there is documentary evidence that Aráuz employed severe sanctions against his challengers: a declaration expelling Wheelock, Huembes, and Carrión from the FSLN survives, published by Argentinian journalist Federico Volpini (1987), and Carlos Fonseca (1976) references it as well. Another episode, in which Aráuz's lieutenants dragged Huembes and Carrión to the Venezuelan embassy at gunpoint, had many contemporary witnesses and was widely known within the FSLN. If there is any systematic bias in the account given, it would be to play down or omit provocations by the challengers against Aráuz. Thus, while I am confident that Pedro Aráuz employed severe sanctions, I am less confident that his actions were preemptive, as told by my main source.[355]

---

[353] I expect the perspective offered to differ very little in these three interviews.

[354] Author interview on 6/24/2016 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

[355] Specifically, it seems unlikely that the sanctions were levied due to humble demands for strategic discussions. That said, and as discussed in the analysis below, Aráuz *did* have strong incentives to act preemptively, so I still consider this claim credible if far from certain.

A brief recap of one aspect of the second dispute will be helpful here for understanding the third dispute's trigger. During Pedro Aráuz's earlier dispute with Carlos Fonseca in 1973 to1974, both leaders sought to control the National Directorate. Fonseca tried to place one of his lieutenants, Jaime Wheelock, on the National Directorate, and to give him a position of authority within Nicaragua. Aráuz and his lieutenants opposed Wheelock's promotion. When Aráuz won the dispute, displacing Fonseca in an internal coup, Jaime Wheelock was left stranded in Mexico. He had been en route to Nicaragua to assume a command that no longer existed. He chose to enter Nicaragua to incorporate into the Managua structures of his own volition in early 1975, somewhat "resentful of the people in Cuba" for being denied the promised position in the DN.[356]

When Wheelock arrived in Nicaragua, Aráuz did not initially regard him suspiciously, but gradually came to worry that Wheelock was still an agent of the now-toothless leadership in Cuba.[357] Meanwhile, Wheelock began cultivating relationships with key FSLN leaders in Managua, including the city's new chief of operations Roberto Huembes[358] and the MCR leader Luis Carrión. Wheelock relayed some of the strategic debates among FSLN members in Cuba, where Humberto Ortega was pushing for an urban insurrectionist strategy based on broad alliances with opposition groups and parties, and the three commanders in Managua began pressing Pedro Aráuz for changes in strategy.[359] Aráuz responded with a second effort at a "disciplinary"

---

[356] Author interview on 1/19/2017 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

[357] Author interview on 6/24/2016 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

[358] Huembes took over command of Managua after Eduardo Contreras left with the JJQ command for Cuba.

[359] Author interview on 6/24/2016 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

solution:[360] he ordered Jaime Wheelock to the guerrilla *foco* in the mountain with the pretext that he would write a history of the *campesino* struggle ("So then, that sounded false, right?" Luis Carrión told Mónica Baltodano).[361] Wheelock refused, at this point referring to the mountain as a "concentration camp," but eventually agreed to return to exile where he would build support networks for the FSLN in the exterior.

This was the second time that Aráuz had been able to impose internal sanctions on Wheelock. That Wheelock accepted exile once more demonstrates that a discontented leader needs a power base – a substantial, loyal group of fighters – to foment a splinter group or an internal coup. Wheelock was not a *cantera* leader. He had joined the FSLN through the FER but spent little time in the urban underground and none in the mountain *foco* (United States, Department of State, and Office of Public Affairs 1988). Rather, he had spent all of his time since joining the FSLN studying in Salvador Allende's Chile or writing orthodox Marxist analyses of Nicaraguan history in Cuba. By the time he returned to Nicaragua, he had no organic links to any major *cantera* – the militants inside Nicaragua "didn't know him and didn't recognize him."[362] His power base within the FSLN was thus limited to a handful of personal friends.

Roberto Huembes and Luis Carrión continued to press for strategic changes. According to my interlocutor close to the TP leadership:

---

[360] Author interview on 1/19/2017 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).
[361] Baltodano (2010c). Ironically, Fonseca had given Aráuz the same order during their leadership dispute.
[362] Author interview on 6/18/2016 in Laguna de Apoyo with female former FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a historian and owner of a resort hotel.

We didn't have a totally clear idea of what they would do, but we were convinced that what [the FSLN] were doing wasn't enough – that it needed adjustments, it needed to bring the masses into the fight, that it needed a strategy to take full advantage of all the factors that were turning against the dictatorship.[363]

Aráuz responded once again with internal disciplinary measures, this time ordering Roberto Huembes to head to the mountain. Instead of accepting, he and Carrión decided to resign from the FSLN, and began drafting a letter of resignation outlining their complaints. Before they were able to resign, Aráuz's lieutenants expelled them from the FSLN, depositing them at gunpoint in the Venezuelan embassy, where they were ordered to request political asylum and to accept exile from Nicaragua.[364] However, instead of accepting discipline, Carrión and Huembes decided to fight back. They left the embassy and made contact with Jaime Wheelock, already in exile in Costa Rica. The three commanders decided to reorganize as a splinter faction, each drawing on their relations with other members of the FSLN to retain whatever portions of the FSLN structure that had been under their command.

This sequence of events raises two questions. First, why did Pedro Aráuz respond with such severe sanctions to relatively minor acts of insubordination? In interviews, my informant referenced Aráuz's calculations of relative power. Specifically, Aráuz became increasingly suspicious that his former lieutenant Eduardo Contreras had "made a turn" while in Cuba, and was

---

[363] Author interview on 1/19/2017 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

[364] Mónica Baltodano's interview with Luis Carrión in Baltodano (2010c).

preparing to ally his own growing power base with Carlos Fonseca's.[365] This suspicion was stoked by Contreras' messages from Cuba, which began to push for a strategic refocus from the guerrilla *foco* in the mountain to an urban insurrectionist strategy pioneered by Humberto Ortega.[366] My interlocutor's assessment that Aráuz was preoccupied by relative power concerns is consistent with the *cantera* centrality statistics. If Contreras were able to join his JJQ command (centrality of 0.549 in 1975) with Carlos Fonseca's JPN and PSN *canteras* (0.296 and 0.305 in 1975), it would be a match for Aráuz's coalition in a leadership dispute. Meanwhile, Aráuz had reasons to be suspicious of Roberto Huembes' and Luis Carrión's ultimate loyalty, since they had been under Contreras' command before he left for Cuba. If Luis Carrión's MCR (0.555 in 1975) were added to Contreras' JJQ and Fonseca's JPN and PSN, it might constitute an overwhelming coup coalition. Aráuz's decision to apply severe sanctions are most intelligible as an attempt to preempt a balance of power that was rapidly shifting against him.

Second, why did Pedro Aráuz's sanctions fail? Or rather, why did they succeed with Wheelock, yet fail with Huembes and Carrión? According to my interlocutor who was close to the TP leadership, the key was drawing on their strong network of relationships. My interlocutor told me that Luis Carrión

> organized the Movimiento Cristiano, through which many people entered the Frente, and with whom he had a history of many years of work, of struggle, of friendship. Huembes had another type [of network] that I don't know as well, but he also had

---

[365] Author interview on 6/24/2016 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

[366] Author interview on 1/19/2017 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS) and Belli (2002).

relationships… Wheelock had a history with people that had maybe been with him in Chile or with whom he had linked up in Cuba, who trusted him, though less than in [Carrion and Huembes'] case as they had an entire structure.[367]

The importance of the *cantera* to not only mobilize fighters but to structure their choices throughout conflict is particularly pronounced here. Roberto Huembes had been a major FER figure. Yet relatively few other FER members followed him to the FSLN-TP. *Canteras* embedded FSLN recruits in a latticework of overlapping relationships, of which a relationship with Huembes would just be one. Splintering with Huembes would mean breaking with the majority of those relationships. This only occurred for those with whom Huembes had particularly strong relationships. As long as a critical mass of FER members remained loyal to Pedro Aráuz, the social mechanism against defection was very strong. Though Luis Carrión was technically the junior partner in the TP, it was his *cantera* that enabled the three leaders to form the FSLN-TP.

It would be difficult to explain Wheelock, Huembes, and Carrión's success in forming the FSLN-TP without taking into account Luis Carrión's role as the leader of the MCR *cantera*. Of the three, only Huembes had any repute as a militant. Luis Carrión had only been an FSLN member for two years and had only recently begun clandestine work. In a vituperative analysis following the split, Carlos Fonseca lamented that Luis Carrión,"a person of bourgeois extraction and a non-Marxist ideological formation… was entrusted with a position of high responsibility in the Managua region" (Fonseca Amador 1976, 26). Fonseca called Jaime Wheelock a "hesitant militant" and decried the disrespect that "persons with a few weeks of clandestine work [have

---

[367] Author interview on 1/19/2017 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

demonstrated] against those who have dedicated their entire lives to the Revolution" (Fonseca Amador 1976, 28).[368] Yet despite a lack of reputation or a history of successful militancy, the three FSLN-TP leaders were able to draw a significant minority of the FSLN ranks with them into their splinter group. The bulk of these fellow defectors were recruits from Luis Carrión's MCR *cantera*.

In conclusion, the conduct of this dispute closely matched the expectations of my theory. Pedro Aráuz, an incumbent invested with more formal power than his challengers, attempted to exercise that formal power through the use of internal sanctions against his challengers. The sanctions worked on a challenger who lacked a significant power base of his own. On the other hand, when Aráuz attempted to sanction a *cantera* leader, Luis Carrión, his efforts neither succeeded nor entirely failed. Carrión was indeed forced out of the FSLN, but by mobilizing his *cantera*, he had enough *de facto* power to form a viable splinter group. As a result, the anti-Somocista rebel movement fragmented, and now had 1.6 effective rebel groups.

Assessment of competing hypotheses

Competing hypothesis do not adequately explain the third dispute. While the FSLN did suffer through state repression (H3) prior to split, there is no evidence that it depleted trust-bearing ties between the disputants or disproportionately affected the MCR *cantera*. The FSLN received no substantial external support (H4) during this time period. Finally, while the third dispute had a strong ideological content and was at least in part triggered by ideological differences, there are many indications that much of this was "cheap talk" that would not have led to rebel fragmentation were it not for changes in the relative balance of power between rebel leaders.

---

[368] By the time Fonseca wrote these words in praise of Pedro Aráuz, the feuding coalitions had realigned, and Fonseca found himself on his former rival's side.

In this case, there is little evidence to support H3, that state repression caused the dispute between Aráuz and Wheelock, Carrión, and Huembes, through either the *leadership decapitation* mechanism or the *asymmetric battlefield losses* mechanism. Though the deaths of Oscar Turcios and Ricardo Morales occurred a little less than two years before the onset of this dispute, only one of the disputants, Roberto Huembes, had close ties with either fallen leader.[369] Jaime Wheelock (who instigated the dispute) arrived in Nicaragua after Turcios' death,[370] while Luis Carrión joined the FSLN after Turcios' death.[371] Thus, there is little evidence that the loss of trust-bearing relationships precipitated the dispute.

The FSLN suffered significant battlefield losses throughout 1975 as the Somoza regime responded to the Chema Castillo raid with a wide-ranging crackdown. Its most significant losses occurred in early August, where eight militants were ambushed and killed at an FSLN training school in El Sauce, just outside of León (Ortega Saavedra 2004, 285), while the National Guard put up "a State of Siege and strong repression" against the guerrilla bases in the mountains throughout the entire year.[372] The *asymmetric battlefield losses* mechanism holds that these losses should spur the afflicted rebel subgroup to seek strategic changes through an internal coup or organizational split. However, there are three reasons why the state repression suffered by the

---

[369] Author interview on 6/24/2016 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

[370] The personnel reshuffle that led to Wheelock's arrival in Nicaragua occurred because of Turcios' death, and his subsequent demotion could be taken as evidence that the leaders were uncertain of the balance of power. However, by the time Wheelock instigated the third dispute, the balance of power had long since been settled in Aráuz's favor, a sequencing that shows that this uncertainty was not an immediate cause of the dispute – rather, Wheelock's resentment over his demotion was. Nonetheless one could make the argument, perhaps implicit in Staniland's (2014) vague formulation, that leadership decaptitations predictably unsettle rebel group leadership in diverse and unpredictable ways.

[371] Interview with Luis Carrión by Mónica Baltodano (2010c).

[372] According to Baltodano (2010a).

FSLN in 1975 fails to meet the expectations of the *asymmetric battlefield losses* mechanism. First, the leadership dispute between Aráuz and Wheelock, Carrión, and Huembes began in February, before most of these losses occurred.[373] Second, the weight of state repression fell on Aráuz's León-based FER *cantera*, as student movement militants disproportionately made up the El Sauce school and the Segovian guerrilla *foco*.[374] However, it was the leaders of the Managua structures and the MCR *cantera* that pushed for strategic changes, contrary to the predictions of the the mechanism. Third, battlefield losses were not referenced by the principal actors in this dispute; Luis Carrión, in his interview with Mónica Baltodano, makes clear that it was not the FSLN's losses, but rather the Chema Castillo raid's success in sparking a popular reaction in Managua that inspired the challengers' strategic demands: "[t]here's a potential here much greater than what we had imagined and what we had reached, that's what we said."[375] In sum, although battlefield losses were observed, the asymmetric battlefield losses mechanism's observable implications were not observed, nor did I observe any other causal process observations that readily link battlefield losses with the third dispute.

H4 (external support) fails to explain this split, as (once again) neither side received sponsorship from an external power. H5, ideological disagreements (in particular its strategic dimension) performs far better in terms of explaining this dispute. That evidence in its favor comes from sequencing and elite rhetoric, although this is also undermined by some indications that ideological commitments were "cheap talk." First, the sequencing given by the challengers identifies ideological disagreement as the proximate cause of their dispute with Pedro Aráuz. There

---

[373] Interview with Luis Carrión by Mónica Baltodano (2010c).
[374] Indeed, Henry Ruiz's guerrilla foco was the only FSLN subgroup that faced an existential crisis as a result of casualties in 1975, and he stayed loyal to Pedro Aráuz until Aráuz's death in 1978.
[375] Interview with Luis Carrión by Mónica Baltodano (2010c).

was also, in their account, ideological rhetoric, even if it wasn't "totally clear." However, there is also evidence that, to some extent, the challengers' ideological rhetoric was "cheap talk."

First, even though Jaime Wheelock's was the principal ideologue and initial instigator among the challengers, there are some indications that his motives for challenging Aráuz's leadership may have been more emotional than ideological. He was certainly bitter with Aráuz for rejecting his promotion to the National Directorate, and as Luis Carrión told it, "he came, let's say, a little resentful against Carlos [Fonseca] and Humberto [Ortega] because they left him hanging in mid-air [*colgado de la brocha*] on his way [to Nicaragua]."[376]

Second, as noted by an informant close to the TP leadership above, Wheelock, Carrión, and Huembes entered the dispute with only a vaguely shared idea of increasing emphasis on broad alliances political work. The same informant made clear to me that the elite coalition owed as much to balancing against Pedro Aráuz and his lieutenants as it did to ideological commitment:

> Maybe if things had followed another course, we wouldn't have united so much, but to the extent that they [Pedro Aráuz and his lieutenants] repressed us we joined together to defend ourselves better. I think that was the genesis [of the coalition]. There *was* also a principle of identification and political sympathy that afterwards strengthened and deepened – but it was more a defensive action so that they couldn't grab us one by one.[377]

---

[376] Interview with Luis Carrión by Mónica Baltodano (2010c).
[377] Author interview on 1/19/2017 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

In an interview with another scholar, Jaime Wheelock (immediately following a lengthy exposition of the different tendencies' ideologies) said, "At heart it was also a struggle for political hegemony that took the form of a strategic discussion" (Hellmund 2013, 162).[378]

Third, there are many indications that specific formulations of strategy and ideology followed the leadership struggle, rather than preceding it. For example, when the leaders of what would later become the TP were expelled from the FSLN, they retained links to relatively untested MCR cadres and a handful of other FSLN militants in Managua through pre-existing network ties. However, they lacked ties to experienced urban and rural cadres in León and the mountainous north. Following the rupture, they developed a strategy of urban organization of industrial workers, justified in an orthodox interpretation of Marxism. This strategy emerged less from their shiftting ideological commitments than from the nature of their remaining network links after the split. The urban-based strategy was then projected backwards and reinterpreted as a cause of the dispute, rather than an outcome. As one FSLN commander summarized the process,

> When this division took place, Luis [Carrión] is as clear as can be that they didn't have a Marxist-Leninist thesis; that was a construction made later… And this typically occurs in these processes of division. The processes of division, when they get started with personal problems, they need a self-justification in front of the militants, in front of the base, and then you end up creating that self-justification, creating a proposal of identity. To establish for oneself an identity.[379]

---

[378] Jaime Wheelock has written several books analyzing Nicaragua from an orthodox Marxist perspective, including one, *Imperialism and Dictatorship*, published at the height of his conflict with Aráuz in 1975.
[379] Author interview on 6/18/2016 in Laguna de Apoyo with female former FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a historian and owner of a resort hotel.

In sum, the ideological changes pushed by the future leaders of the FSLN-TP were both genuine and instrumental, and while they played a causal role in producing the third leadership dispute, the dispute itself endogenously contributed to hardening and deepening the ideological differences. Furthermore, the role of ideological differences again appears to trigger a latent dispute made likely by a rapidly changing balance of power between *cantera* leaders. The challengers did not have the intention of founding a splinter group, but rather of influencing the FSLN's strategic direction. Both Pedro Aráuz's strong disciplinary reaction, best explained through reference to his relative power calculations, and Luis Carrión's MCR *cantera* were necessary in order to transform the challengers' strategic differences into a distinct rebel organization.

Fourth leadership dispute

Figure 5-12 Eduardo Contreras Escobar[380]

In 1976, the FSLN endured a second organizational split along similar lines as the first: Pedro Aráuz, now allied with his one-time opponent Carlos Fonseca, attempted to exclude Eduardo Contreras from the organization; in response, Contreras and his allies formed "an autonomous group": the FSLN-TI (Ortega Saavedra 2004, 292). The commander constituency change mechanism can be observed operating between rising grievances and the ultimate degree of rebel movement fragmentation in the FSLN's first three leadership disputes. It is less successful at explaining the fourth. While the challenger in the fourth dispute, Eduardo Contreras, had a strong power base, it was not composed of a *cantera*. Thus, the first two steps of the commander

---

[380] Image taken from https://avegasalablanca.wordpress.com/2014/08/23/biografias-eduardo-contreras-escobar/.

constituency change mechanism (grievances mobilizing a dissident network, rebel incorporation of a dissident network) were not observed.

Eduardo Contreras did, however, cultivate a functional equivalent of a *cantera*: a large and enduring *operational network*. Eduardo Contreras' Juan José Quezada (JJQ) command gave the leader a power base with a network centrality comparable to Pedro Aráuz's FER. Thus, the mechanism's third step, the relative growth of a leader's power base, is observed, and my theory predicts a leadership dispute between the challenger, Eduardo Contreras, and the incumbent, Pedro Aráuz, ending in an organizational split. Both predictions are accurate.

In order to explain this split, I must compliment the commander constituency change mechanism with an additional concept: the organizational network. Because the first two steps of the mechanism are not observed, this analysis of the fourth dispute demonstrates that grievances and *cantera* incorporation are not always the cause of rebel group leadership disputes and splits, weakening support for the overall explanatory framework of this dissertation. On the other hand, because the final two steps *are* observed, the analysis of the fourth dispute should increase our confidence in a core claim of this chapter: that rebel leadership disputes occur when a challenger's *de facto* power, measured in loyal fighters, is substantially less than her formal power within a rebel group's hierarchy.

An alternate *power base*: operational networks

While the commanders discussed so far gained a constituency of loyal fighters through organizing or directing a *cantera*, this was not the only way to cultivate a power base. Some commanders can win the loyalty of fighters who are members of their *operational network*. I define an operational network as the collection of individuals directly participating in military operations

and the relations between them. In ordinary language, this definition encompasses squads, units, platoons, commands, cells, and *focos*, among other terms.

Military operations involve two phases which may produce camaraderie among participants. First, fighters must train together, which improves inter-group communication and cohesion (King 2006). Second, operations may last for a significant amount of time, in which fighters have the opportunity to develop strong personal bonds with their brothers- and sisters-in-arms. As Shils and Janowitz (1948, 285) write in their classic article, "when isolated from civilian primary groups, the individual soldier comes to depend more and more on his military primary group. His spontaneous loyalties are to its immediate members whom he sees daily and with whom he develops a high degree of intimacy." In the military sociology of conventional armies, studies of soldier loyalty, cohesion and desertion typically focus on operational networks' internal, horizontal (with other units), and vertical (with the military brass or organization) relations (Siebold 2007).

Nonetheless, in the FSLN I was only able to identify one operational network (the JJQ) that also functioned as a leader's power base. There are three reasons why this may be the case. First, in the FSLN, most operational networks were relatively small and transitory. Urban clandestine work found safety in invisibility and in lack of numbers; thus, cells of four or five were typical.[381] Operational networks of this size were not large enough to register a high Eigenvector centrality and therefore couldn't serve as an adequate power base. Second, to stay one step ahead of informants, FSLN members were often shuffled between urban cells, leaving them with

---

[381] Author interview on 6/18/2016 in Laguna de Apoyo with female former FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a historian and owner of a resort hotel, and author interview on 10/27/2016 in Managua with female FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a director of feminist / minority rights NGO.

relatively little time for interpersonal bonding. It is not surprising that in interviews and memoires, recollections of interpersonal feuds and frictions are just as common as affection in FSLN members' memories of the urban underground.[382] Third, in practice, *canteras* and operational networks often overlap in guerrilla warfare. As dissident networks were incorporated, recruits from the same *cantera* trained together and fought together. The guerrilla *foco* in the Segovia mountains is the clearest example of this: while – in contrast to the urban guerrillas – fighters in this *foco* suffered isolation for years on end and developed deep bonds of affection for one another,[383] they were also predominantly students recruited through the FER.[384] Thus, the *foco* operational network tended to *reinforce*, rather than conflict, with the *cantera*'s role in structuring fighter loyalty.

Given these disadvantages, how could an FSLN operational network leader secure the loyalty of their operational network during a leadership dispute? In the next section, I discuss how a unique confluence of circumstances led to the creation of the JJQ, an operational network that – although not based on a preexisting *cantera* – was large, enduring, and loyal to Eduardo Contreras.

Creation of the JJQ operational network increases Eduardo Contreras' relative power

Eduardo Contreras, unlike Carlos Fonseca, Oscar Turcios, Pedro Aráuz, and Luis Carrión, could not boast his own *cantera*. He alone out of all the FSLN leaders was able to build his power base on top of an operational network. There appear to be three factors allowing him to do so: 1)

---

[382] Author interview on 10/27/2016 in Managua with female FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a director of feminist / minority rights NGO, author interview on 11/4/2016 in Estelí with male former FSLN commander, TI faction, now a retired military officer, author interview on 6/24/2016 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS). See also Herrera et al. (2013) and Belli (2002).
[383] See, for example, the title of one of FER and *foco* member Omar Cabezas' (1988) books, *Love Song for the Men*.
[384] Author interview on 10/13/2015 in Managua with historian of the student movement at UNAN-Managua.

his visible leadership skills, 2) the remarkable success of the Chema Castillo raid, and 3) most importantly, all the individuals in his command and freed by his command spent two years isolated together in Cuba. This allowed them to cohere there as a distinct group.[385]

Eduardo Contreras was recruited in 1969 while studying in Germany, then trained with Al-Fatah in Palestine with several Nicaraguan graduates of the Patrice Lumumba University.[386] On account of his military training and evident talent, Contreras rose to be *responsable* of Managua in 1973, which up until then had little FSLN presence. In 1974, as discussed in the analysis above of the second dispute, the internal leadership under Pedro Aráuz was seeking leverage against Carlos Fonseca in Cuba. Pedro Aráuz met with his two top lieutenants, Henry Ruiz and Eduardo Contreras, and they decided to "carry out an action of political content that would reverberate as much among the masses in Nicaragua as it would abroad."[387] They decided to seize the house of a prominent regime official, Chema Castillo, during a 1974 Christmas party, and trade the high-ranking hostages for Sandinista prisoners. Contreras led the Comando Juan José Quezada (JJQ) in charge of the operation. When the operation succeeded, making national and international news, Contreras became the most well-known leader within the FSLN after Carlos Fonseca. Contreras negotiated personally over the phone with Somoza, who agreed to release eight FSLN prisoners in exchange for the hostages (Wheelock 1979). The hostage-takers and liberated prisoners left for Cuba on airplanes delivered to them by the Somoza regime, with the streets filled with crowds

---

[385] The raid also appears to have endeared Eduardo Contreras to Humberto Ortega, as his brother Daniel had been among the freed prisoners. Carlos Fonseca, after breaking with Humberto Ortega, decried his attachment to "consanguine ties" as a form of "liberalism" (Fonseca Amador 1976, 9)

[386] *La Barricada* 11/7/1987, p. 3.

[387] Eduardo Contreras, quoted in Wheelock (1979, 56).

cheering their progress to the airport.[388] Contreras had made himself the face of the operation, becoming the first Sandinista popularly known as *Comandante Cero*.[389]

Aside from his newfound stature among the FSLN rank-and-file and the public at large, the operation gave Contreras a concrete power base: the JJQ, which included the members of the command and the liberated prisoners who arrived together in Havana.[390] The JJQ was decidedly not a *cantera* in which members shared pathways through mobilization and recruitment spanned years. According to Contreras, "[t]he members of the Command were selected and extracted from distinct regions of the country, and knew each other only by the number assigned them within the three squads we organized" (quoted in Wheelock 1979, 56). What allowed these strangers who referred to one another by numbers to cohere into the FSLN's most central power base?

Three factors were responsible. First, the Command underwent three months of extensive training together: "From the beginning of October, they followed a rigorous training regimen starting from six in the morning with physical exercises and simulations, that concluded at six in the afternoon in 'combat-ready' positions."[391] This training period, twice as long as the US Army's six-week boot camp, offered participants ample time to form strong interpersonal bonds and to increasingly identify with the Command. Second, after the operation itself, all thirteen command

---

[388] Author interview on 6/24/2016 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

[389] By custom, commanders of specific operations were identified by number according to their rank during that operation. The individual in charge would be Comandante Cero, the second-in-command would be Comandante Uno, the third Comandante Dos, and so forth. After Contreras' death, Edén Pastora would become popularly known as Comandante Cero following his leadership of an even more audacious operation, in which the FSLN captured the National Palace while the Nicaraguan Congress was in session.

[390] This included José Benito Escobar and Daniel Ortega, whose seven years in prison was one of the longest stretches for any Sandinista. Interview in Managua, 3/8/2016.

[391] Eduardo Contreras quoted in Wheelock (1979, 56). As the JJQ didn't know when a suitable Somocista dinner party would present itself, the Command ended every night in a state of combat-readiness in case the scout teams reported back that conditions were ripe.

members and eight freed prisoners landed together in Cuba, where because of logistical and security challenges most remained unable to return to Nicaragua for nearly two years. This time of forced cohabitation provided additional opportunities to cohere as a group, which may be why almost all of these 21 later followed Eduardo Contreras into his *Tercerista* tendency (FSLN-Tendencia Insurreccional, or TI).[392] Third, the fact that they were "selected and extracted from distinct regions of the country" meant that the members of the group possessed strong ties to several different *canteras*, while the liberated prisoners were mostly elite commanders from the FSLN's earliest cohorts. The JJQ therefore attained an Eigenvector centrality out of proportion with a simple count of its members. In practical terms this meant that members of the JJQ could draw on preexisting relations of trust to facilitate coalition-building with other centers of the FSLN's organizations.

At the beginning of 1975, immediately after the raid, the JJQ operational network possessed an Eigenvector centrality of 0.549, third behind the FER (.925) and MCR (.555) *canteras*. In mid-1975, the FSLN-TP splintered, taking most of the MCR recruits with it. After removing the members of FSLN-TP from my network dataset, I re-calculated the FSLN's

---

[392] José Benito Escobar and Lenín Cerna are the only partial exceptions – both left the TI in 1978 to join the GPP. Both were among the FSLN's earliest leaders, having joined in 1961 through the JPN and BSA, respectively, and were closely linked to Carlos Fonseca.

Figure 5-13 FSLN in 1975 (blue: Pedro Aráuz's power base, yellow: Eduardo Contreras' power base)

315

Eigenvector centralities for 1975. This revealed a starkly divided organization: Pedro Aráuz's FER (.927) and Eduardo Contreras' JJQ (1.0) are far and away the most central nodes, and at near parity with each other. Again, I produce the network graph below in Figure 5-13, where the dynamic is unambiguously visualized.

Eduardo Contreras's growing power base provokes a leadership dispute

Although power bases formed from operational networks are exogenous to the commander constituency change mechanism, in theory they should produce the same dynamics as a *cantera*: they should elevate a challenger, and threaten the incumbent. If this is the case we should expect a leadership dispute between the incumbent Pedro Aráuz and the challenger Eduardo Contreras. Because the two leaders' power bases were so evenly matched, the theory also predicts that the dispute's outcome would be an organizational split. Both predictions are accurate.

Leadership dispute: Eduardo Contreras and Humberto Ortega vs. Pedro Aráuz

A leadership dispute between the incumbent, Pedro Aráuz, and his challenger, Eduardo Contreras, raged over the course of 1976. My theory accurately predicts an organizational split, as neither leader had the *de facto* power to overcome the other. The conduct of this dispute also included two behaviors expected by the mechanism: internal sanctions and coalition-building. First, Aráuz attempted to invoke his formal power over Contreras. When this attempt failed, Aráuz sought to increase his formal power by allying with the deposed but still respected Carlos Fonseca. Meanwhile, Contreras attempted to construct a coalition that would be large enough to defeat his rival, allying with Fonseca's former lieutenant Humberto Ortega and feeling out an alliance with the FSLN-TP. When Fonseca perished in a National Guard ambush in November 1973, Aráuz gave up on his efforts to control the entire FSLN and split the rebel organization a second time.

At the end of 1974, Eduardo Contreras' arrival in Cuba – where he "arrived vested with all the authority of a successful, spectacular blow" against the Somoza regime – radically shifted the balance of power between himself and Pedro Aráuz.[393] More practically, he arrived with his entire assault team and the senior FSLN prisoners freed through hostage negotiations: 21 individuals in all, including several elite commanders, a substantial proportion of the FSLN's total membership of approximately 100 militants. One interviewee told me that at this point Contreras "aspired to be the maximum leader" of the FSLN, replacing both Carlos Fonseca as titular leader and Pedro Aráuz as *de facto* leader of the organization.[394] According to Belli (2002, 109–10), in Cuba Eduardo Contreras began to shift his strategic leanings from Pedro Aráuz's *guerra popular prolongada* to the insurrectional strategy proposed by Humberto Ortega. More practically, by allying himself with Ortega, Contreras supplemented his power base. Ortega was a leader of the BSA *cantera* (centrality of .170 in 1975) which, though small, contained several elite commanders.

As Contreras attempted to influence the FSLN's overall strategic direction, Pedro Aráuz invoked his formal power, leaning on the resolution that Aráuz and Contreras had used to strip Fonseca of his decision-making powers the previous year. Carlos Fonseca, with perhaps a bit of bitterness and certainly some sarcasm, sums up the dispute over formal powers in March 1976:[395]

> All this makes it opportune to allude to the resolution taken in the national meeting in
> October 1974, whose contents were that in the present phase, members of the National
> Directorate can only make use of their formal powers [*atribuciones*][396] when located

---

[393] Author interview on 6/18/2016 in Laguna de Apoyo with female former FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a historian and owner of a resort hotel.
[394] Author interview on 6/24/2016 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).
[395] Fonseca stayed with his new ally Aráuz in Nicaragua between December 1975 and February 1976. Thus, Fonseca's words here almost certainly reflect Aráuz's perspective as well.
[396] "Formal power" is close to an exact translation of *atribución*.

in the interior of the country [Nicaragua]. He [Eduardo Contreras] that subscribed to this thinks that in future situations that decision could lose its validity, and that it could be possible for certain members to conserve *their formal powers* although they are located outside the country. He *that subscribed was outside the country when that resolution was taken, and he considered it reasonable, obeying it…*[397] It is not correct that the brother *Noel* [Contreras], who subscribed to that decision, is doing his part to violate it. We hate to put a personal gloss on this whole problem, but we see that certain compañeros are partisans of certain rigorous measures when they don't affect them personally, but are opposed to those measures when they affect them personally.[398]

Disregarding Pedro Aráuz's explicit denial of permission, Contreras and Ortega met with Jaime Wheelock in Costa Rica, seemingly in an attempt to reincorporate the embryonic FSLN-TP into the FSLN structures on their side of the expanding leadership dispute (Fonseca Amador 1976, 5). This would have aligned Contreras and Ortega's bases, dominant in Cuba, with a structure inside Nicaragua large enough to challenge Aráuz's authority there. Fonseca complained, "once the two brothers met with Wheelock, not only do they end up influenced by him, they don't even undertake the effort to also listen to the point of view of the compañeros of the Direction in the interior [i.e., Aráuz]" (Fonseca Amador 1976, 7). After siding with Wheelock, Contreras and Ortega mobilized their own power base against Aráuz: "They decide to carry the discussion to the bases of the organization in the exterior [of Nicaragua], at the same time as they foment it in the bases in the interior to which they can gain access" (Fonseca Amador 1976, 8).

---

[397] Contreras was in fact inside the country, attending the national meeting in October 1974 when that resolution was taken. I assume Fonseca was thinking about January 1975, when Contreras arrived in Cuba and imposed the resolution on Fonseca.
[398] Fonseca Amador (1976, 11).

Although Pedro Aráuz had overturned Carlos Fonseca's leadership in the second leadership dispute, he now needed him and asked Fonseca to join him inside the country: "Aráuz, who had ranted against Carlos Fonseca, when the crisis came he needed to reinforce his authority because he didn't have the authority. And Carlos Fonseca was a mythic figure."[399] He increasingly relied on Tomás Borge, his second-in-command and one of Fonseca's oldest and closest friends, as a way of building trust with Fonseca.[400] The underlying logic seems to be that, Fonseca's legitimate claim to formal power, combined with Aráuz's still substantial power base, would be enough to reassert the incumbent's authority over Eduardo Contreras and Humberto Ortega.

Fonseca arrived in Nicaragua in December 1975 and stayed with Aráuz for three months in a safehouse outside Managua (Zimmermann, 2000: 186). Then he called for a meeting of all major FSLN commanders, to be held at Zínica in northern Nicaragua, where flanked by Henry Ruiz's guerrilla *foco*, his plan was to reimpose his personal authority and thereby unify the two factions forming inside the FSLN under Aráuz and Contreras (Blandón 2013; Rivera Quintero and Ramírez 1989).[401] Carlos Fonseca's gambit failed. He never reached the *foco*; instead he was caught and killed in November 1976 by the National Guardsmen (Instituto de Estudio del Sandinismo 1985).

Already during Fonseca's time isolated in the mountain, Aráuz had closed his structures to the FSLN members in Cuba. In response, Contreras and Ortega reentered Nicaragua in mid-1975, and, calling a meeting of elite FSLN commanders linked to them by *cantera* or Contreras'

---

[399] Author interview on 6/24/2016 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).
[400] It appears that his strategy of wooing Carlos Fonseca was based in large part on promoting and complementing Borge, for whom Fonseca had a deep affection.
[401] See also Henry Ruiz's interview with Mónica Baltodano (2010c). There is no evidence in any sources that he thought to reintegrate Jaime Wheelock, Roberto Huembes, and Luis Carrión.

operational command in Masaya, founded the FSLN-*Tendencia Insurreccional* (FSLN-TI, also called *Terceristas*) (Baltodano 2010b; Ortega Saavedra 2004, 292). With Fonseca's death, Pedro Aráuz was left without his major ally and did not have a realistic chance to build a larger coalition than Eduardo Contreras'. Unable to win the leadership dispute, he settled for a draw: he formed a rump FSLN he called the FSLN-*Guerra Popular Prolongada* (FSLN-GPP), and sent directives to his fighters that "the comrades from the other tendencies, from the Tercerista tendency and the Proletaria tendency, were to be considered as traitors" (Rivera Quintero and Ramírez 1989, 141–42). The Sandinista rebel movement, already divided into two organizations, had now fragmented again into three.

As in the previous dispute, I argue that these leaders' actions result from relative power calculations, with loyalty of *canteras* as the core currency of power. Evidence to support this argument requires access to the leaders' decision-making process which kept private, owing to its tawdry nature. Yet Bayardo Arce, recalling the period directly after the fourth dispute in late 1976, provides strong evidence that Pedro Aráuz interpreted the leadership disputes in exactly these terms. After the death of Carlos Fonseca, Arce told Mónica Baltodano (2010a), the mountain *foco* was isolated and his new recruits in the city were poorly trained:

So Pedro Aráuz had the big dilemma of who would be responsible for training. In that era Pedro and I were practically directing the city and the campo, Pedro is in charge and I'm there with other people, of course. Pedro meets with me and at last decides that he'll go take charge of the training; he goes with the trainees and I stay in charge of the work here, I remain in charge even of his own safe house. And when he returns and I send for him, he does a self-criticism [session] with me... then he tells me that he went [to run the training] because he that leads [*jefear*] the combatants is who has the

real power. And if he had sent me, I would have had the real power, and that even so

he came back afraid that I had made a play, an ambush, something like that to control

the GPP.

In sum, while the conduct of this dispute is complicated, it exhibits the main observable

implications of the commander constituency change mechanism. The incumbent, Pedro Aráuz,

invoked his formal power while the challenger, Eduardo Contreras, fought back by mobilizing his

power base. The leaders involved in this dispute also attempted to build larger coalitions by allying

with other leaders, which is consistent with the mechanism but little observed in the previous

disputes. Finally, neither leader had the *de facto* power to overcome his rival, so each was forced

to settle for an organizational split, as predicted by my theory.

Assessment of fourth dispute

An analysis of this dispute provides no support for H2 (rising grievances) and only mixed

support for the commander constituency change mechanism. One of the key steps is present:

Eduardo Contreras' growing power base posed a significant threat to Pedro Aráuz's leadership,

leading to the predicted dispute and split. However, Eduardo Contreras did not cultivate the loyalty

of a *cantera*; rather, he gained the loyalty of a sizable operational network by means of his military

exploits. This dynamic is disconnected from the patterns of grievance formation and dissident

network mobilization at the heart of the civilian constituency theory. Yet, precisely because they

are functionally equivalent and lead to leadership disputes with identical structures, the role of

operational networks should be seen as complementing and completing, rather than competing

with, the role of *canteras* mobilized by rising grievances in our theories of rebel fragmentation. In

future research on rebel fragmentation the role of operational networks deserve greater scrutiny, despite the data collection challenges that entails, in order to form a more complete theory.

There is little evidence for H3 (state repression). My network dataset records no significant leadership decapitation event between Oscar Turcios' and Carlos Fonseca's death (which was the culmination, rather than the cause, of the division between FSLN-GPP and FSLN-TI). The asymmetric battlefield losses mechanism is not well-supported either. As discussed during the analysis of the third, 1975 saw a series of battlefield setbacks, most notably the loss of eight militants at El Sauce in August. In his description of the tendency dispute, Carlos Fonseca cites this incident while accusing Humberto Ortega and Eduardo Contreras of being afraid to enter the country. "There's definitely desperation on Pedro Antonio's [Ortega's] and Noel's [Contreras'] part," Fonseca writes, adding that his opponents have invented strategic and ideological disagreements to cover for their fear: "what's not alright in all this is that they don't speak clearly about it… they're hiding their understandable, overwhelming doubts with a torrent of words, which principally boils down to the texts they've written" (Fonseca Amador 1976, 16). However, those killed at El Sauce (and in the guerrilla *foco*) were members of Pedro Aráuz's *cantera*, not Eduardo Contreras', as Christia's asymmetric battlefield losses mechanism predicts. Moreover, Fonseca's accusation that Contreras and Ortega were afraid was more polemical than reality (even he confesses that the claim was hard to square with Contreras and Ortega's proven militancy). It would be belied shortly after the split, as Eduardo Contreras entered Nicaragua to construct new TI structures (and was killed shortly afterwards, like Fonseca, in November 1976).[402]

External support (H4) is not well supported either, though one informant suggested that it may have made a difference in this dispute. Eduardo Contreras' Chema Castillo raid convinced

---

[402] Zimmerman (2000, 203)

the Cuban government to back him over Carlos Fonseca: "The backing of the Cubans, or that is the Cuban government gave a big help to the group that arrived from here with the prisoners in Havana. Backing that Carlos Fonseca never had – Carlos Fonseca didn't know Castro in person."[403] While actual Cuban materiel was not forthcoming until 1979, it seems possible that the *belief* that Contreras had Cuban backing played a role in Pedro Aráuz's decision to close the GPP structures.[404] With a large rebel constituency, external support from Castro (a near-mythological figure to FSLN militants), and a possible rapprochement with the TP, Humberto Ortega and Eduardo Contreras would have represented a highly credible threat to overthrow Aráuz in the FSLN hierarchy. However, I should hasten to add that the informant who suggested this was an FSLN-TP commander who was neither in Cuba nor had access to Aráuz's decision-making during the fourth dispute. Other data points, from memoires of militants and commanders who were actually in Cuba at the time, contradict this view.[405] Specifically, Contreras' FSLN-TI didn't receive Cuban recognition until 1978. Until that point, only Aráuz's GPP had an office in Havana, as the Cubans preferred their *foquista* strategy, drawn as it was from the M-26-7's experience (Belli 2002; Ramírez 2015, 158).

Finally, there is only mixed support for ideological and strategic disagreement in this case (H5) in the sequencing, rhetoric, and evidence for elite "cheap talk." Like the previous dispute, its immediate trigger (Contreras' and Ortega's meeting with Jaime Wheelock in Costa Rica, in which they agreed with his position) had ideological content, and strategic differences did feature in the

---

[403] Author interview on 6/24/2016 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).
[404] This belief, however, also appears to have been wrong. While Contreras found himself in Cuba's good graces, his TI didn't receive any actual Cuban aid or recognition until 1978. Until that point, only Aráuz's GPP had an office in Havana, as the Cubans preferred their *foquista* strategy (Ramírez 2015, 158).
[405] It's also worth stating that the assertion that Aráuz was concerned about Cuban support for Contreras is based on limited interview evidence.

rhetoric of disputants on both sides. But again, there is evidence for "cheap talk": strategic positions were instrumentalized according to the needs of individual FSLN leaders. For example, Humberto Ortega

> migrates to Costa Rica without any intention of entering Nicaragua and as Henry Ruiz rightly said, what's he going to come back for? He's an ungainly, skinny man with [health] problem who can't shoot. So what's he going to come do in an armed struggle? So he stays there, but he develops the thesis that affirms that the leadership doesn't necessarily have to be inside, right?[406]

Similarly, Pedro Aráuz made little exception to Contreras' strategy of visible urban operations until they ended up on opposite sides of a leadership dispute – indeed, Aráuz and Contreras had planned the Chema Castillo raid together. Rather than guiding differences in strategy on the ground, claimed strategic differences acted as claims to rightful leadership, "because obviously if someone accepts this new vision, well, those who were the creators and promoters [of the old vision] cease to be the leaders, of course. That is, you can't hold on to leadership if you've been upholding a failed thesis, right?"[407] The most telling data point that strategic differences between the FSLN-GPP and the FSLN-TI amounted to "cheap talk" is that the TI and the GPP independently planned to capture the National Palace in 1978 – the quintessential urban commando raid, ostensibly TI's strategic innovation. They only discovered

---

[406] Author interview on 6/18/2016 in Laguna de Apoyo with female former FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a historian and owner of a resort hotel.
[407] Author interview on 6/24/2016 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).

the parallel plans through back channel dialogue in Costa Rica. Unable to agree on a joint operation, the TI carried out the raid first, and to the surprise of the GPP.[408]

In sum, while ideological differences may have again triggered various episodes within the dispute, and lent differing identities to the disputants, there is little evidence that disputants *in their actions* were motivated by their ideological commitments as opposed to their relative power. There is even less evidence in the fourth and final dispute that state repression or external support played a causal role. Meanwhile, though the role of rising grievances are not supported in the fourth dispute, a comparison of rebel leaders' relative power, unlike ideological differences, still successfully predicts the timing of disputes, identities of disputants, and outcome of disputes.

The difficulty of explaining dispute timing

The above analysis leaves one significant question unanswered: what explains the precise timing of leadership disputes? More specifically, why do some disputes initiate early, when the incumbent retains his relative power advantage or parity with the challenger, while other initiate later, when the challenger has gained the advantage. The question of precise timing is important, because it determines whether or not the rebel group will split – fragmenting the rebel movement – or be subjected to an internal coup, which does not affect the dependent variable.

Unfortunately, the precise timing of disputes is difficult to predict. On the one hand, changes in the relative balance of power give both old and new leaders strong incentives to initiate disputes: challengers desire formal power commensurate to their *de facto* power, and incumbents to retain their formal power despite their eroding *de facto* power. Yet this structural cause of disputes is different from the precise trigger of disputes. Predictable disputes are unpredictably

---

[408] See interview with Henry Ruiz by Mónica Baltodano (2010a).

triggered by the vagaries of individual leaders' decision-making processes, which are subject to uncertainty, miscalculation, conflicting incentives, learning, the content of interpersonal relationships, and certainly not least, the content of individual personalities.

Leadership disputes begin when either the incumbent or the challenger decides to revise the status quo. The incumbent has an incentive to do so earlier (when a potential challenger is still weaker) but uncertainty on several fronts may lead to miscalculations. First, disputants are likely to be unsure of the extent of their and their rival's relative power. Subordinates' loyalties are private information that may be falsified (hence the usefulness of *canteras* as a heuristic for assessing the loyalties of a substantial number of militants). For example, Agustín Lara Valdivia,[409] Leticia Herrera (2013, 200), and one of my informants[410] all described the great lengths that Pedro Aráuz went to in order to ascertain commander loyalties when he was the incumbent. Following this, the challenger has an incentive to wait to initiate a dispute until his power base is overwhelming, but can't be sure his power base will actually continue growing. Maybe new recruitment will stagnate and loyal *canteras* suffer attrition? Maybe now is his best chance? Maybe the best moment has already passed? Maybe he has miscalculated and overestimated the number of people loyal to him?

Second, leaders cannot be certain of their rival's intentions, or even if they are potential rivals at all. The power plays of his challengers seems to have side-struck Carlos Fonseca, who, as the FSLN's founder and "indisputable leader, bearing a mystique and unquestionable authority,"[411] may have assumed that his hold on the FSLN was secure. His decade-long relationship with his

---

[409] In interview with Mónica Baltodano (2010c).

[410] Author interview on 12/12/2016 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.

[411] Author interview on 6/18/2016 in Laguna de Apoyo with female former FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a historian and owner of a resort hotel, in the context of explaining to me exactly how that unquestionable authority came to be questioned by Oscar Turcios.

first challenger, Oscar Turcios, may also have contributed to Fonseca's complacency (and help explain why their dispute ended in a power-sharing accord, rather than a coup). Even if Carlos Fonseca had been more conscious of his slipping relative power and Turcios' designs, it would have hurt the FSLN as a whole to expel or demote Turcios, who was, after all, a highly successful organization-builder. This highlights the mismatch in incentives between incumbent leaders who must be wary of competent commanders and rebel organizations whose existential struggle with the state depends upon the cultivation of competent commanders. Given uncertainty and misaligned incentives, it is not surprising that Fonseca made little attempt to control his rising lieutenant until it was too late to do so.

Third, these miscalculations and misjudgments are subject to learning by disputants over time. For example, while Carlos Fonseca was complacent with Oscar Turcios, he immediately tried to replace Pedro Aráuz with someone he thought would be more politically dependable (Henry Ruiz). In turn, Pedro Aráuz, after taking power in a coup, was explicitly aware both that he lacked legitimacy and that his leadership depended on maintaining a relative power advantage over his subordinates. Aráuz cultivated the loyalties of new *canteras* (for example, by training incoming recruits himself, rather than allowing his lieutenant Bayardo Arce to lead the training), and preemptively struck down rising threats to his leadership at the first sign of challenge (expelling Jaime Wheelock, Luis Carrión, and Roberto Huembes), while seeking to shore up his legitimacy (allying with Carlos Fonseca against Eduardo Contreras). Aráuz had learned early on that his top lieutenants were the main danger to his leadership and developed a comprehensive strategy to maintain formal power.

Incumbents' learning extended to operational networks as well. Eduardo Contreras had no loyal *cantera*, but became a powerful challenger after leading a spectacular operation and

327

gaining the loyalty of his operational network. In 1978, Humberto Ortega, now clearly the leader of the FSLN-TI, wanted to plan an *even more* spectacular operation: the capture of the National Palace with Congress in session (called *Operación Chanchera*, or "Pigsty"). However, he couldn't lead it himself, as he had been shot and crippled in 1970, and he didn't want to create a new Eduardo Contreras who could challenge his power.[412] Though Ortega could have chosen from several competent and daring lieutenants, instead he sought out Edén Pastora, off fishing sharks in Costa Rica after a brief stint in the FSLN several years previously (Ramírez 2015). Pastora's lack of ties with others in the FSLN was, for Ortega, his principal virtue: even those in his new operational network distrusted him for his dilettantism and and his political orientation (he was closely linked to the Conservative Party and by no means a Marxist).[413] Indeed, while he led the operation, once the command team had captured the Palace, Pastora wasn't even allowed to take part in the actual negotiations, which were directed by proven FSLN commander Dora María Téllez, his "political advisor."

In conclusion, uncertainty, miscalculation, and learning, along with the personality traits of individual leaders, all play a role in determining whether a leadership dispute initiates early, when the incumbent retains an advantage or parity, leading to a split, or late, when the challenger has gained the advantage, leading to an internal coup. Thus, we may predict that when grievances rise, both internal coups and organizational splits within rebel groups become more likely. However, we may not predict *ex ante* whether an internal coup or an organizational split is more likely or when in the trajectory of a latent dispute such a concrete outcome will materialize.

---

[412] Author interview on 1/18/2107 in Managua with female FSLN commander, TI faction, currently a historian, MRS politician, and gay rights activist.
[413] Author interview on 1/18/2107 in Managua with female FSLN commander, TI faction, currently a historian, MRS politician, and gay rights activist.

Conclusion

This chapter raises a large number of issues that are worth investigating in more detail. First, why are most historical accounts of the factional divisions by participants and scholars so vague on the underlying causes and details?[414]The main problem of reconstructing the history of a clandestine organization is that participants knowledge of events is limited by compartmentalization; in network analysis terms, they can see only their immediate ego-centric network, but not events within the organization as a whole. In an environment as low-information as a clandestine rebel group, this structural blindness may even extend to leaders. Thus, one informant, a high-ranking commander in the FSLN-TI, told me she wasn't even aware of the divisions until 1977 – two years after the first split - because her immediate superior, José Benito Escobar, simply never disclosed them.[415] Given the extreme fragmentation of knowledge about the FSLN's leadership struggles, interview research on its own was unlikely to shed enough light on the events in question. Thus, this chapter highlights the utility of formal network analysis, no matter how simple, in overcoming the limitations of ego-centric interview research. However, constructing network maps bears intense data requirements that are also unlikely to be met by the records of a clandestine rebel group. In this the FSLN's eventual victory, and the many projects of historical memory surrounding the group, made it exceptional.

Second, if the FSLN is exceptional, to what extent are this chapter's findings generalizable? For example, the FSLN's small size meant that relations between its leaders and rank-and-file militants were intimate, in a way that certainly would be unlikely for, say, the 60,000-strong Taliban in Afghanistan (Dawi 2014). Would the dynamics sketched out in this chapter scale

---

[414] Among others, see Zimmermann (2000) and Hellmund (2013).
[415] Author interview on 1/18/2107 in Managua with female FSLN commander, TI faction, currently a historian, MRS politician, and gay rights activist.

up to such a large group? Meanwhile, this chapter explored a case in which the relationship between civilian grievances and subsequent mobilization was unusually clear. Yet in most cases, the relationship is complex, multi-causal, and in some, non-existent. Do rising grievances continue to affect rebel movement fragmentation in multi-generational conflicts, as in Colombia or Palestine, where militancy has become a durable feature of the political and economic system? Would it produce similar affects in wars where rebel groups resort to kidnapping new recruits, as in Uganda? These questions must remain open pending further research.

Nonetheless, there are some examples that suggest that if scholars looked, they may well find these dynamics outside of Nicaragua. For example, Kenny (2010, 539) reports that the Irish Republican Army's 1969-1970 split into the evenly-sized Provisional Irish Republican Army and Official Irish Republican Army "was as much a battle among political entrepreneurs for control of the flood of potential new recruits as it was the fragmentation of a pre-existing organization." Stepping outside of the civil war context (but remaining within revolutionary organizations), Shiela Fitzpatrick (1984), in her analysis of the leadership struggle between Joseph Stalin and the war hero Leon Trotsky, points out that "Stalin had none of the attributes that the Bolsheviks normally associated with outstanding leadership." Rather, as General Secretary he "was in a position to manipulate what one scholar has labelled a 'circular flow of power'": by controlling recruitment to the Communist Party, he was able to both stock the Party's ranks with loyalists and to assure their continued loyalty. Even as far afield as the Roman Empire during the Crisis of the Third Century (235-284 AD), when rival imperial claimants split – fragmented – the empire into three parts (Collins 2010),

> [t]he basic problem remained the need for the emperor to be in more than one place at
> the same time, at least in periods of military crisis. He had to command his forces in

person, but if more than one frontier was threatened or if a mixture of internal and external threats needed to be countered, control over a significant body of troops had to be delegated to a subordinate general. Success on the part of this man, or even just the prospect of the cash payment traditionally given out on the occasion of a change in the holder of the imperial office, could lead his army to proclaim him emperor.

In this way the basic ingredients for leadership disputes put forward in this chapter – a disjuncture between formal and *de facto* power, with the currency of *de facto* power the loyalty of subordinates gained through recruitment or operational control – appear common to poorly-policed human institutions, great and small.

6. VANGUARD AND UMBRELLA UNITY

Introduction

Scholars in recent years have focused on explaining rebel fragmentation – why do rebels become increasingly divided amongst themselves? However, given the difficulty of collective action under the anarchic conditions of civil war, unity, rather than fragmentation, may be the more puzzling phenomenon. There are two ways that a rebel movement may achieve some measure of unity: a single rebel organization may monopolize it, or several rebel organizations may place themselves under the joint leadership of a single umbrella group. Neither of these outcomes has been adequately explained in the literature.

This chapter examines how the FSLN achieved and maintained a unified rebel movement in two periods marked by strikingly different circumstances. During my first case, from 1961 to 1974, the FSLN was a small, vanguard revolutionary group operating at an enormous disadvantage to the regime, and, until the end of the 60s, alongside limited anti-regime mobilization among other sectors of Nicaraguan civil society. In my third case, in 1979, the FSLN was an umbrella group that coordinated a massive, and ultimately successful, insurrection against the regime with participation from almost sector of Nicaraguan civil society. While the mechanisms leading to rebel unity in each period were in many ways distinct, they had one major aspect in common, in line with the civilian constituency theory: the FSLN drew upon social ties cutting across and connecting nearly every participating civilian group throughout the country.

The first section of the chapter considers why, between 1961 and 1974, the FSLN became and remained the only significant rebel group challenging the Somoza regime. Explaining this has

two parts. First, how did the FSLN avoid the leadership disputes and organizational splits that divided the movement in the mid-1970s? I show that, given relatively low grievances at the time, anti-regime civilian mobilization was limited. The FSLN incorporated available dissident networks early in this period, but its subsequent attempts to expand failed. As a result, no new leaders or *canteras* arose to challenge Carlos Fonseca's leadership or the organization's structural integrity. Second, I explain why no independently-mobilized rebel groups were able to get off the ground during this period: given limited civilian mobilization and the FSLN's investment in uncovering and incorporating dissident networks, second-moving rebel groups had even less room for expansion.

Next, the chapter considers why the distinct rebel organizations into which the FSLN had fragmented in the mid-1970s, considered in the last chapter, (re)merged together into an umbrella group by 1979. Rebel organizations that join umbrella groups sacrifice some of their autonomy, control over ultimate war aims, and sometimes even their distinctive identity. Explaining why rebel groups do so despite these costs entails answering a slew of interrelated research questions: why do stronger rebel groups choose to incorporate others and relinquish a measure of control, instead of defeating or ignoring their weaker rivals? Why do weaker groups accept subordination, rather than seek out a separate peace or defect to the state? What role do external powers play? Above all, how do rebel organizations negotiate and build trust under conditions of extreme anarchy? The second part of the chapter examines these questions in the context of the FSLN's third period, to explore the processes leading to the 1979 creation of the Joint National Directorate. I argue that the mass insurrection unleashed by the assassination of opposition figure Pedro Joaquín Chamorro played a key causal role: the influx of new, low-information recruits diluted loyalty to distinct rebel factions, while mid-level commanders in different factions who were keen

to cooperate found themselves able to communicate through the factions' shared civilian networks. However, I trace the substantial role played by other hypotheses: the growing opportunity for victory and indiscriminate state repression made cooperation between factions strategically valuable, while unbalanced external support led to the rapid growth of the FSLN-TI, which helped force other factions to the negotiation table. Even ideological differences over the role of building guerrilla *focos* and the possibility of stoking urban insurrections lost their force after the insurrections had manifestly begun. In sum, a complex array of factors pushed and pulled the three FSLN splinter groups toward reunification. It remains to be seen if these explanations can explain umbrella group formation more generally.

Explaining unity I: vanguard unity

My first case studied in this chapter examines the anti-Somocista rebel movement's unity from 1961 to 1974. Below, Figure 6-1 depicts the dependent variable, rebel movement fragmentation, during this time period.[416]

---

[416] This chart is a truncated version of Figure 4-1 in Chapter 4.

	Year	Effective number of rebel groups
FSLN	1961-1967	1
FSLN FARN	1968-1972	1.22
FSLN	1973-1974	1

Figure 6-1 Anti-Somocista rebel movement fragmentation from 1961-1974

As can be seen, the FSLN managed to remain internally unified and to maintain near-total hegemony over the tiny Nicaraguan armed movement from its founding in 1961 until it began to succumb to leadership struggles in the early 1970s. It did so for over a decade, despite devastating battlefield setbacks, the imprisonment of most of its top leadership, a balance of power overwhelmingly favoring the state, a near-complete lack of external support, and numerous minor defections over ideological disagreements. In order to achieve this unity, the FSLN could count on its organizational strength – it was highly "stationary." Yet as the last chapter made clear, though important, a stationary rebel type was not a sufficient condition to remain unified during periods of heightened grievances and dissident mobilization. The FSLN was also able to remain unified and hegemonic precisely because the level of societal grievances throughout the 1960s was mostly low.

Civilian mobilization failure and rebel unity

In this section I show why rebel movements are less likely to be fragmented when grievances are low. Processes that lead to fragmentation, such as the commander constituency

335

change mechanism (see Chapter 5) or the mobilization of independent rebel groups, occur when

rebels can mobilize civilian dissident networks. This is because both challengers to existing rebel

leaders and would-be independent groups must rely on an influx of new recruits, which they gain

from incorparating dissident networks (*canteras*). When grievances are fewer or weaker, there are

few, if any dissident networks to incorporate, and these two processes that fragment rebel groups

should not occur. Under these conditions, rebel movements are likely to remain concentrated in

small, homogenous rebel group, whose incumbent enjoys a stable power base. This is especially

the case when the first-moving rebel group is stationary, like the FSLN, and capable of

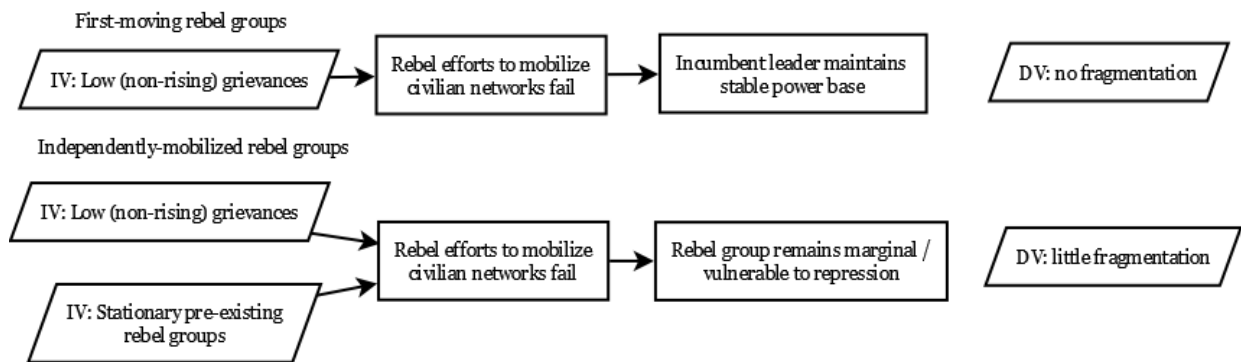monopolizing a small pool of dissidents. Figure 6-2, below, portrays these processes.

Figure 6-2 Civilian mobilization failure

These processes are not mechanisms, as the low grievances do not *cause* rebel unity.

Rather, when grievances are low, the mechanisms that cause rebel fragmentation are less likely to

occur. However, this non-causal relationship still has observable implications. Specifically, we

should expect pre-existing rebel groups' attempts to mobilize civilian networks, and independent

rebel groups attempts to mobilize at all, to fail when grievances are low.[417] Such failures have indeed been recorded in the historiography of the anti-Somocista , albeit often with a euphemistic gloss, and can be recognized by a) an investment of effort in civilian mobilization that b) produces few recruits or c) recruits of very low quality (suggesting that the rebel group was unable to be selective in its recruiting). Second, we should observe that, during periods of low grievances, the constituent *canteras* of established rebel groups remain relatively stable, while mobilizing independent groups should remain marginal or vulnerable to state repression (i.e., dismantled with minimal effort on the part of state forces)

Unity within the FSLN: failed expansion

How, during the first case (1961-1974), did the FSLN avoid the organizational splits to which it succumbed during the second case (1975-1978)? I show that FSLN's success in remaining unified was due to its failure to expand during this period of low anti-regime mobilization. Carlos Fonseca cultivated the loyalty of the FSLN's initial recruits and *canteras*. With few new recruits and no new *canteras* throughout the mid-1960s, there was no new independent power base to fuel a leadership challenge, and potentially divide the organization. Carlos Fonseca could rely on an unbalanced distribution of power in his favor until the beginning of the 1970s. Only then did the leadership disputes that would tear apart the FSLN begin.

Low grievances doom the FSLN's civilian mobilization efforts

As predicted by the civilian constituency theory, the FSLN remained small but unified during its first decade because civilian grievances were low. A number of dissident networks

---

[417] It is still likely that independent groups will attempt to mobilize when grievances are low, due to the efforts of zero-threshold actors.

mobilized (and many were incorporated into the FSLN) in a euphoric burst of anti-regime activity from 1959 to 1962, following the Cuban revolution. However, six years of stagnation followed: because civilian grievances (or at least anti-regime mobilization) decreased, no new *canteras* mobilized until the FER's growth in 1968. The relative strength of the FSLN's constituent *canteras*, whose shifts caused a series of escalating leadership disputes from 1971-1976, remained stable until the end of the first period. The small number of Nicaragua's dissident networks also meant that the FSLN's first-period *canteras* were directly recruited by, and their members owed personal loyalty to, the FSLN's founder Carlos Fonseca. Thus, no independent power base formed from which another rebel commander could challenge Fonseca for control of the FSLN. No challenger emerged even after military catastrophes or Fonseca's imprisonments and exiles. Meanwhile, ideological disagreements led to defections or expulsions rather than leadership struggles and major splinters.

The Cuban revolution was an iconic event that lead to moderate levels of civilian mobilization in Nicaragua: not only zero-threshold actors, but a number of low threshold networks such as the PSN and young Conservative Party activists mobilized militantly, organizing guerrilla *focos* (see Chapter 4). Similarly, an effervescence of broad social movements followed in the wake of the revolution (Gould 1990; Guevara López 2008). However, militant anti-regime activity had subsided in the student movement by 1962 (Blandón 2011, 660; Booth 1985, 112); campesino agrarian movements were "demobilized" by land reform in 1964 (Gould 1990); and Carlos Fonseca, in his 1969 analysis *Nicaragua Zero Hour*, concluded that "[o]ne factor which undoubtedly got us off course was that our armed struggle coincided with a decline in the anti-Somoza movement in Nicaragua," which he blamed on "an electoral farce in February of 1963,

putting in place [Somoza's] puppet, René Schick" (Fonseca Amador 1985, 87).[418] The passage of time, and an astute combination of conciliatory and repressive measures by the Somoza regime, reduced anti-regime grievances and mobilization.

In this period of low grievances, the FSLN's many recruitment efforts were sown on infertile ground. From 1964 to 1967, the FSLN adopted a strategy almost identical to 1970 to 1974's "the accumulation of strength in silence," but with little of the later strategy's success: it worked "through the now-disappeared group Mobilización Republicana, the student movement, and the campesino movement," but "the progress made was minimal." Bayardo Arce, in his own 1980 analysis, put the best gloss possible on the FSLN's "frustrated experiments" with mobilizing dissident networks, writing "[w]e made efforts to find revolutionary content in those organizations" (Arce 1980, 20). Later, throughout the 1970s, such "intermediary organizations" would provide a flood of new recruits, helping the FSLN grow but also fuelling leadership disputes. By contrast, a mere 11 commanders were recruited from 1964 to 1966, according to my dataset, almost all from *canteras* incorporated after the Cuban revolution such as the PSN, and most the younger siblings, neighbors, or childhood friends of previous recruits. This demonstrates the importance of *canteras* for recruitment: 14 recruits joined the FSLN in 1963 alone, when the FSLN was drawing on the PSN, the *Juventud Patriótica Nicaragüense*, and the Barrio San Antonio, while another 14 joined in 1969, almost exclusively from the student movement. However, in the mid-1960s the universities remained dominated by the *Juventud Universitaria Católica* (JUC), a social Christian organization with limited political aspirations,[419] and the

---

[418] English translation from Borge (1992, 173).

[419] Author interview on 10/13/2015 in Managua with historian of the student movement at UNAN-Managua; author interview on 10/27/2016 in Managua with female FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a director of feminist / minority rights NGO; and author interview on 12/13/2016 in Managua with male former student leader and FSLN collaborator, currently an economist and researcher.

FSLN's repeated attempts to establish a northern guerrilla *foco* foundered on the indifference of the Segovian campesinos.

Despite the legendary mobilization efforts in the northern Segovias of Rigoberto Cruz, "a worker who disguised himself as a folk doctor, learned to talk like a peasant and know his way through the difficult geography of Matagalpa" (Borge 1984, 31), the FSLN failed to incorporate more than a token number of *campesinos*, and those whom they recruited were notably poor militants. This indicates that the FSLN was forced to be less selective in its recruitment by a lack of willing recruits. For example, Tomás Borge (1992, 229) describes how campesino recruits deserted the FSLN's doomed 1967 guerrilla *foco* in Pancasán:

> When Carlos gathered the small guerrilla unit of just over thirty men to inform them that it was rumored that the National guard was organizing search sweeps in our zone, all the peasants except [Victor Guillen] "Eulalio" and Nicolás Sánchez… asked to be excused, accepting our promise that there would be no reprisals against anyone who withdrew.

Forging peasant linkages were always challenging for the urban, well-educated Sandinistas, who lacked preexisting social ties in rural areas, and despite years of attempts it was not until the mass insurrection that northern campesinos rose in great numbers for the Sandinista cause (Horton 1998; Sierakowski 2012). Yet after 1970, the FSLN was able to maintain a Segovian *foco* for a decade even under withering state repression because they gained widespread support from campesino networks motivated by liberation theology and organized by liberal parish priests (Foroohar 1989).[420] These conditions did not exist throughout the 1960s.

---

[420] Author interview on 12/12/2016 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.

In sum, during this early period of low civilian mobilization, the FSLN sought to expand but was unable to. The limiting factor was not the group's efforts, which were extensive, but rather the unwillingness of potential recruits to join. No significant new dissident group began its anti-regime activity in the mid-1960s, providing no ready *cantera* of easily identifiable, high-quality recruits. The FSLN's stagnation was thus consonant with lowered anti-regime mobilization throughout Nicaraguan civil society as a whole – exactly what the civilian constituency theory expects to observe under conditions of low grievances.

Carlos Fonseca maintains stable power base

As described above, due to low civilian grievances, the FSLN was unable to identify and incorporate new civilian networks. Thus, the relative centrality of the FSLN's constituent *canteras* remained stable for nearly a decade, from 1961 to 1969. Figure 6-3, below, reproduces Figure 5-4 from the previous chapter, with a narrower time scale:[421]

---

[421] Note that the initial instability in *cantera* centrality (specifically, the FTE's dramatic drop) is mostly a statistical artifact of the very small sample size in the FSLN's first two years rather than a qualitative swing in relative *cantera* centrality.
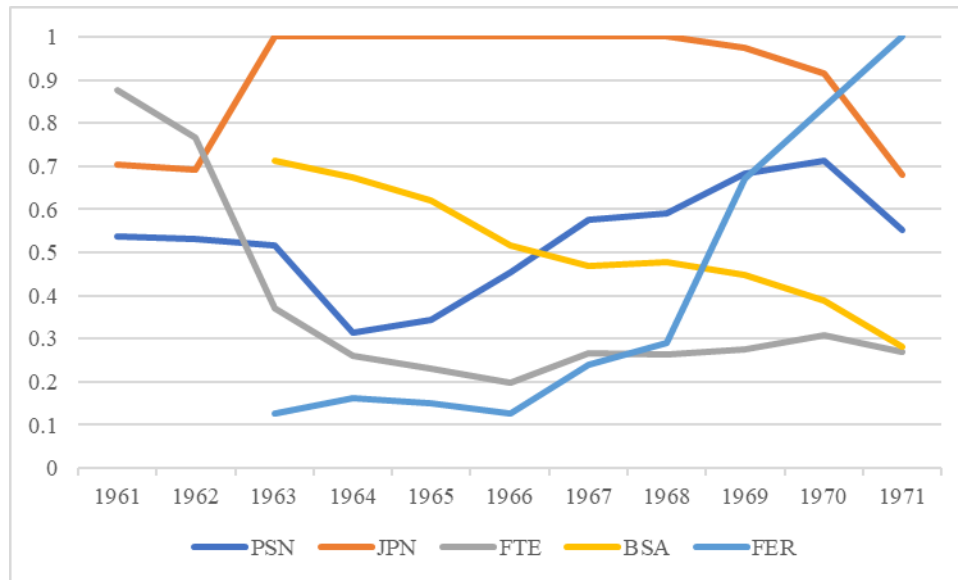
Figure 6-3 Change in cantera centrality from 1961 – 1971

This relative stability, caused by a *lack* of continuous dissident mobilization throughout society, favored the status quo. The status quo, in turn, was the leadership of Carlos Fonseca, the leader who is widely considered the intellectual author of the FSLN and first consequential leader. Without a viable challenger for leadership, there was little risk of the FSLN fragmenting into multiple groups loyal to different leaders.

Carlos Fonseca became the head (*Responsable General*, later Secretary General) of the FSLN in 1963, and was its unchallenged leader until at least 1971 (Zimmermann 2000). Interviewees – and historiographical material – invariably refer to his personal charisma and an unparalleled "mystique" as the basis for his authority (he was invariably spoken of as if he were "Jesus Christ").[422] His authority survived two stints in prison and military disasters in 1963 and

---

[422] Author interview on 12/12/2016 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer. So central is the mythologized figure of Carlos Fonseca to the FSLN's official history that this interviewee lowered his voice conspiratorially (while sitting in his own home) to say, "Did you know that Carlos Fonseca didn't found the

1967. As the leader of the FSLN during its earliest, smallest phase, he had been personally responsible for recruiting every first-wave *cantera*: he shepherded militants he had met in the PSN to the FSLN, took over and absorbed the JPN, and personally recruited the FTE and the BSA.[423] The FSLN's small size allowed Fonseca to develop close ties of interpersonal loyalty with the militants from each of these early *canteras*. This in turn created an unbalanced distribution of loyalty – and therefore power – in his favor, allowing him to lead the FSLN without challenge for nearly a decade.

Like most left radicals of his generation, Carlos Fonseca got his start in the PSN, first joining as a law student at UNAN-León in 1954 and later traveling to Moscow on a Socialist Youth fellowship in 1956, where he would compose an ingenuous paean to Soviet achievements, *Un Nicaragüense en Moscú* (Fonseca Amador 1981) and would reportedly be recruited as a KGB asset (codename: GIDROLOG).[424] He and three other UNAN-León law students, Noel Guerrero[425], Silvio Mayorga, and Tomás Borge (Zimmermann 2000, 30) created a PSN cell there – the first

---

FSLN?" That Noel Guerrero founded the FSLN and shortly thereafter left is a matter of public record, but nonetheless rarely alluded to.

[423] "Rolando and Adrian Roque characterized our group as very impulsive, and they hesitated to recruit us. Carlos Fonseca insisted in adding youths like us that fought spontaneously" (Ortega Saavedra 2004, 144).

[424] Or "Hydrologist." This was reported in KGB defector Vasili Mitrokhin's files (Andrew and Mitrokhin 2007, 41).

[425] Noel Guerrero Santiago – not Carlos Fonseca – was in fact the first leader of the revolutionary organization that would become the FSLN. He left under accusations of financial mismanagement, leaving the group to Carlos Fonseca in 1963 (Borge 1992, 138–39). I also take some liberties in setting 1961 as the FSLN's birthdate. In fact, the organization was not named the FSLN until 1963, when Carlos Fonseca gained total control. Previously, the organization was called *Movimiento Nuevo Nicaragua* (MNN) in 1961 and the *Frente de Liberación Nacional* (FLN) – without Sandinista – from 1962-1963. Historiographies with a somewhat teleological perspective set 1963 as the organization's birthdate, as they see "Sandinista" as comprising a fundamentally inalienable identity; thus, the MNN and FLN were different groups despite their direct organizational continuity with the FSLN. However, as I am concerned with the path dependent effects of the early social and organizational composition of the FSLN, I date the founding from its first organizational traces in 1961. See especially Blandón (2011) and Díaz Lacayo (2010) for this murky period of anti-regime mobilization.

organizational trace of what would be the FSLN. By 1962, Guerrero and Fonseca's group had decided to make a break with the PSN, recruiting several of its youngest, most radical members.[426]

In 1959, the *Juventud Patriótica Nicaragüense* (JPN), the first large, independent,[427] explicitly anti-Somoza political organization, formed at UNAN in León and rapidly spread to several cities throughout Nicaragua (Cómo nació Juventud Patriótica Nicaragüense 2009). Relying on Cuban financing, JPN's political activities were largely limited to distributing pamphlets, newsletters, and minor demonstrations.[428] In 1961, Carlos Fonseca drew on his connections to this ephemeral network in order to recruit for the FSLN (Borge 1992, 117). Fonseca gained access to the JPN through a close high school friend and fellow PSN member, Marcos Altamirano, who joined the JPN at Fonseca's behest and was shortly thereafter elected Secretary General (Blandón 2011; Zimmermann 2000). As the organization faced government suppression and faded into obscurity, Altamirano shepherded its most radical members into the FSLN. A large proportion became important early FSLN cadres.

Over the following two years, the FSLN integrated members of two additional *canteras*, both consisting of younger, teen-aged anti-regime agitators. Along with Jorge Navarro (a member of both the JPN and the *Juventud Socialista* [JSN]), Carlos Fonseca traveled to Estelí, where through Socialist Party connections the pair met with a nascent labor union – primarily composed

---

[426] Carlos Fonseca described the split in a 1969 missive, "From 1959 to 1962 some people among those who made up the FSLN held onto the illusion that it was possible to bring about a change in the pacifist line of the leadership of the Nicaraguan Socialist Party. In practical terms this illusion came to an end in 1962, with the formation of the Frente Sandinista as an independent organization, even though for a while the idea persisted that it was possible to achieve some kind of unity with the leadership of the Socialist Party—something which reality itself has proven to be impossible." Translation by Mathilde Zimmermann (2000, 65) of Carlos Fonseca's *Zero Hour,* in Fonseca Amador (1982).

[427] That is, not simply the youth wing of traditional Nicaraguan opposition parties, such as the Conservative Party.

[428] Author interview on 7/16/2016 in Managua with historian and brother of prominent Conservative Party activist.

of young cobblers – called the *Federación de Trabajadores de Estelí* (FTE).[429] The members of the FTE established the FSLN's first cadres in the mountainous north of Nicaragua. In 1963 through PSN and JPN connections Carlos Fonseca learned of another group of rebellious adolescents in the barrio San Antonio (BSA) (Ortega Saavedra 2004, 144–45).[430] San Antonio had become a center of collective action because the local Catholic church held annual memorials for five UNAN-León students killed by the National Guard in a 1959 march; these services were typically followed by raucous street protests (Arias 1988, 25). The teenaged youths comprising this *cantera* congregated in Daniel and Humberto Ortega's house, where Carlos Fonseca arrived and personally recruited them (Ortega Saavedra 2004, 144–45). Once recruited, Jacinto Suárez of the BSA *cantera* described how personal contact with Fonseca marked him (Arias 1988, 33):

> Of course, Carlos was here too… For me, he was like a mythic being, he was a mythic being! Besides, I remember how they said to us: Carlos already knows about you, he says such and such thing, he has a certain opinion about you. Because, logically, it was such a small group that he had extremely detailed information about each member. Then, he, who to us was a legendary being, wished us well, it was something that for us 17-year-olds elevated us and excited us!

This helps to explain why Carlos Fonseca never faced a serious internal challenge for leadership during the 1960s, although he would face challenges from multiple directions in the 1970s. The four *canteras* that were directly recruited by Fonseca, the PSN, JPN, FTE, and BSE, maintained network centrality until they were overwhelmed by the expanding FER *cantera* at the

---

[429] This encounter is detailed in two memoirs by FTE members (Loza and Rizo 2009; Rivera Quintero and Ramírez 1989).
[430] Daniel Ortega also participated in the JPN at the age of fourteen (Ortega Saavedra 2004).

turn of the decade. Fonseca's early vertical relationships with rank-and-file militants left little room for other leaders to build an independent power base. For example, memoires and interviews with leaders and rank-and-file members of the FTE *cantera*, who had been recruited during Fonseca's visits to Estelí through a mutual acquaintance in the PSN, Tomás Pravia, all demonstrate an astonishing personal loyalty to him (Loza and Rizo 2009; Rivera Quintero and Ramírez 1989).[431] Despite significant social distance between the uneducated, working class FTE recruits and Fonseca, the urbane student socialist, no FTE leader would challenge Fonseca for leadership.

This is not to suggest that the personal loyalty of first-generation recruits to Carlos Fonseca was total. Eventually, both Oscar Turcios (recruited from the JPN and PSN) and Humberto Ortega (recruited from the BSA) would clash with Fonseca. However, before they could do so, they required an *independent power base*, gained through their connections to second-generation *canteras*. As no independent power bases existed before 1969, Carlos Fonseca's position was secure during this period. Only when rising grievances mobilized the FER, then under Turcios' control, did Fonseca's leadership become precarious.

Again, the process described above is not causal in the sense traditionally meant by causal mechanism. Rather, I argue that in the absence of the independent variable (rising grievances), a causal mechanism that commonly leads to rebel fragmentation (commander constituency change) is unlikely to occur. This had two observable implications: failed civilian mobilization efforts by rebel groups during a period of low grievances, and a stable, dominant power base for the rebel groups' incumbent leaders. These dynamics impeded rebel movement fragmentation and facilitated the maintenance of unity. Both implications were observed during the anti-Somocista rebel movement's first period.

---

[431] Author interview on 7/16/2016 in Managua with historian and brother of prominent Conservative Party activist.

Unity within the rebel movement: failed independent mobilizations

Both low grievances and pre-existing stationary rebel groups, the two key independent variables in the civilian constituency theory, also inhibit the emergence of *independent groups*. Where first-moving rebels are stationary (H1) and civilian grievances are low (H2a), conditions that characterize the FSLN's initial period, the theory predicts that those first-moving group(s) will easily incorporate, and maintain the loyalty of, a small number of very low-threshold dissident groups. In such circumstances, a unified rebel movement should emerge precisely because its small size allows it to be dominated by a well-organized vanguard. These are, as Olson's (1965) classic work theorizes, precisely the conditions under which collective action is most feasible.

An analysis of the FSLN's early history bears out the civilian constituency theory's predictions, and shows how the FSLN's strong capacity for dissident mobilization embedded within a miniscule pool of potential dissidents led to a unified rebel movement. The burst of revolutionary mobilization from 1958 - 1962 caused by the Cuban revolution left behind a small and, to a stationary group like the FSLN, legible set of dissident networks. FSLN cadres were able to locate, infiltrate, and incorporate most of these dissident networks as *canteras* during the next few years. Their doing so left later independent groups, such as the FARN and MAP-ML, with few available dissident networks from which to recruit additional militants. Unable to expand, these groups withered or remained marginal.

The FSLN incorporates available dissident networks

The FSLN excelled at identifying dissident networks and incorporating them. So strongly was the FSLN identified with a strategy of building social ties to low-threshold actors that, when I asked my first question in my first long-form field interview ("How did the FSLN achieve unity?"), he answered:

The Frente Sandinista built, or organized, a national - and also international - network, creating different spaces for all of those citizens who wanted to join the fight against Somoza could participate. If you were a student, there was an opportunity to participate in the student movement; if you were a worker you could join one of several unions... if you were a campesino, there was a campesino organization; if you were an intellectual, there was a structure for you. All of these structures were linked, and all contributed to a single general strategy.[432]

From 1961 to 1963, the FSLN gained near-complete control of a number of dissident groups with remarkable swiftness. Within two years of their (and the FSLN's) founding, the guerrilla group had taken over the anti-Somocista JPN (a heterogenous group in which students from Conservative families figured prominently), and the FER. It also created networks to identify low-threshold high school students (the AES) and Nicaraguan university students in Europe and Russia. This infrastructure would help it monopolize the student movement, a process nearly completed by 1970. It absorbed activists from a handful of labor unions such as the FTE, but had less success with the CGTi, which was under Socialist Party (PSN) control. Its incorporation of the MCR in 1972 brought Christian students and the popular church under its fold. In all of these cases, the FSLN learned of new attempts at political organizing through its own networks, and sent cadres to forge ties with emerging dissident leaders. Even as grievances rose after 1967, new dissident networks were rapidly identified and incorporated from their initial organizational activities, meaning that almost no dissident networks were uncontacted by the FSLN, available for incorporation into a competing independent or splinter rebel group.

---

[432] Author interview on 8/12/2015 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, unknown occupation, husband of study abroad program director.

Despite intensive efforts, the FSLN only ever partially incorporated three sectors: the PSN (and the labor movement as a whole), Conservative Party activists, and *campesinos*. The FSLN emerged out of the Socialist Party (PSN), and though it had cut political ties by 1961 (Zimmermann 2000), it absorbed virtually all of the most militant young PSN members until 1966. However, interpersonal ties between the two groups atrophied over time, and the FSLN never had ties with the PSN leadership, which decided to form its own militant wing in 1967 (the FARN). The civilian constituency theory predicts that independent rebel groups would mobilize from these dissident networks, and this indeed occurred. Both the FARN and the MAP-ML, two tiny independently-mobilized rebel groups, had their roots in the PSN and the labor movement. I discuss both groups in more detail in the following section.

The Conservative Party, though technically on the right of Nicaragua's barely ideological political spectrum, was the traditional enemy of Somoza's Liberal Party, and its members grew up with a reflexive anti-Somocismo. In 1959, young Conservatives (including Pedro Joaquín Chamorro and future Sandinista and Contra commander, Edén Pastora) created a guerrilla foco, which promptly failed (Blandón 2011). Many youths from Conservative families found an outlet for their anti-Conservatism by joining the FSLN (typically through the JPN or FER), adopting Marxism.[433] Meanwhile, as early as 1967 the FSLN began recruiting more traditional Conservative Party activists such as Edén Pastora and Aristides Rojas angered by the Roosevelt Avenue massacre (Baltodano 2010b). Some of these Conservatives remained part of the FSLN coalition through the 1980s, while others formed the core of anti-Sandinista Contra groups - most notably

---

[433] One of the FSLN's most prominent commanders, Carlos Agüero, was the nephew of the Conservative Party's 1967 presidential candidate, Fernando Agüero.

Edén Pastora and the *Milicias Populares anti-Sandinistas* (MILPAS) led by disillusioned *finqueros* [ranchers] (Everingham 1996, 130; Horton 1998).

Where the FSLN completely failed to penetrate dissident networks, one or two dynamics were at play. First, as described at length in Section 6.2.2, sometimes low anti-regime grievances meant there simply were few dissident networks to incorporate. When this occurred, the FSLN's civilian mobilization efforts failed, but no independent rebel group or splinter group would be able to successfully mobilize in this environment either. Second, some dissidents strongly disagreed with the FSLN's use of political violence (thus calling into question their status as low-threshold): the *Juventud Universitaria Católica* (JUC), for example, and the Nicaraguan Communist Party (PCdN), which adhered to a Soviet revisionist line of non-militant party-building.[434]

Third, as with the case of indigenous groups, the FSLN sometimes faced severe cultural, linguistic, or geographic barriers. They had a scattered presence in some indigenous urban *barrios* (Subtiava in León was crawling with FER and FSLN cadres (Cabezas 1982)), while Monimbó in Masaya (the first community to revolt against the Somoza regime in 1978) was largely untouched by FSLN organization.[435] On the Atlantic coast, Miskitus and Creoles (and the much less numerous Sumos and Ramas), separated by great distances and inhospitable terrain from western Nicaragua, played little role in the anti-Somoza rebel movement. The Miskitus, who had already begun to organize pan-ethnically in the 1970s through their organization ALPROMISU, would later rebel against the FSLN when, as had happened with the northern *campesinos*, the new Sandinista government disrupted long-satisfactory political arrangements. Similarly, their status as low-threshold during the 1960s is dubious. As anthropologist Charles Hale (1996) found, Miskitus

---

[434] Author interview on 10/13/2015 in Managua with historian of the student movement at UNAN-Managua.
[435] Author interview on 10/27/2016 in Managua with female FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a director of feminist / minority rights NGO.

strongly identified with British and American culture, which he labeled "Anglo affinity"). Despite high levels of ethnic militancy (cf. politicized grievances) against the Pacific coast "Spaniards," the English-speaking, American-allied Somoza was relatively popular, while Miskitus experienced the FSLN's anti-imperialist, anti-American ideology as transgressive.

Several key patterns emerge from the above analysis. First, through most of the 1960s, dissident activity was low. Organized anti-regime activity spiked for a brief window after the Cuban revolution and then diminished until the late-60s. Consistent both with the low-grievance, low-mobilization social context, and owing to its stationary rebel type, the FSLN fully or partially incorporated almost every major low-threshold non-indigenous network in Nicaragua during this period.[436] In a context where the FSLN had been such an effective first-mover, any second-moving independent or splinter rebel groups seeking to expand its own social base would only encounter dissident networks already fully or partially incorporated into the FSLN. As Wickham-Crowley (Wickham-Crowley 1991, 251) rightly points out, late-comers face severe disadvantages in winning civilian loyalty away from a first-moving rebel group.[437] This mechanism is evident in Nicaragua, and I explore the fates of Nicaragua's second-moving rebel groups in the following section.

---

[436] Even as societal grievances rose throughout the 1970s, the FSLN continued to fully or partially incorporate dissident networks shortly after they became "visible," including those with profoundly different ideologies and those who would later fight against the FSLN. This is consistent with a very stationary rebel type.
[437] Surveying rebel attempts to mobilize peasants in Latin America, Wickham-Crowley (1991, 251) notes that "much depended on who 'got there firstest with the mostest': guerrillas secured peasant support only with difficulty where other, hostile political groups had arrived earlier and themselves forged peasant alliances."

The dogs that didn't bark

As the civilian constituency theory predicts, independent groups, and after the revolution, Contra groups, emerged largely out of partially incorporated or unincorporated dissident groups.[438] There were two independently-mobilized group: the FARN, which was mobilized by the unincorporated leadership of the PSN, and the anti-revisionist MAP-ML, launched in 1972 by an expelled FSLN member but primarily composed of labor and PSN figures. A closer look at these two miniscule rebel groups, now obscure, and why they failed to gain purchase within the broader Nicaraguan rebel movement, will help us understand how the FSLN was able to remain hegemonic and unified.

Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Nicaragüenses (FARN)

The *Partido Socialista Nicaragüense* was the oldest leftist organization in Nicaragua with nationwide reach; born in 1944, it was, depending on prevailing international currents, alternately encouraged, tolerated, or half-heartedly repressed by the Somoza government (Guevara López 2008, 80; Zimmermann 2000).[439] Until the mid-sixties, joining the PSN was a natural first step for left-leaning dissidents and radicals. Almost all major leftist organizations, armed or unarmed, broke off from a PSN root: the FSLN's founders and most important early cadres had begun as PSN members and only cut official ties in 1962, the FER was founded by, among others, Socialist Youth students in 1961 before falling under the FSLN's influence,[440] the FARN was founded as

---

[438] Contra groups, which have some conceptual and theoretical similarities to independent groups, mobilized shortly after the Sandinista victory from Somocista, Conservative, campesino, and indigenous networks.

[439] Somoza García, a Liberal who courted the nascent Nicaraguan labor movement most avidly during Franklin Roosevelt's presidency, responded to the PSN's founding by assuring its leaders he would "decidedly embrace the cause of labor" (Guevara López 2008, 82).

[440] See the interview with Omar Cabezas y Hugo Mejía Briceño in Baltodano (2010a).

the PSN's armed wing in 1967, the *Partido Comunista de Nicaragua* (PCdN) split off in 1970, and MAP-ML was also primarily formed by PSN members in 1972 (Envío 1984).

My dataset shows PSN members steadily joining the FSLN until 1967, when, as noted above, the PSN founded its own armed wing. It was, in fact, precisely the FSLN's success in attracting young dissidents away from the PSN that pressured the party to turn to armed struggle. The two organizations competed for the same set of recruits and membership, and the FSLN was more successful. As Onofre Guevara López, secretary general of the PSN in the late 1960s recollects in his memoire, the PSN's *Juventud Socialista* faced "one of its most serious problems" with the "desertion of its cadres into the ranks of the *Movimiento Nueva Nicaragua* [Carlos Fonseca's organization, the direct precursor to the FSLN], afterwards to the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* (FSLN)" (Guevara López 2002, 51). Faced with an organizational crisis, radicals within the PSN overwhelmed the Conservative faction and voted to form an armed wing, the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Nicaragüenses* (FARN).

The FARN had at least a skeletal existence from 1967 to 1972, "taking advantage of the [PSN's] organizational scaffolding to create an autonomous armed wing of the party. It proceeded to form cells in the departments with PSN presence, without reduction of parallel political-organizational work and the military training of cadres and militants" (Las FARN de Nicaragua 2009). As a violent actor, the FARN was only marginally active from May 1969 to April 1970, with its activities limited to kidnapping a pair of landowners for ransom, and several shoot-outs with National Guardsmen. The only death linked to the group was that of its military leader, Jacinto Baca Jerez, a former FSLN member, in November 1969. Following Baca Jerez's death, the group began to unravel; several members would pass on to the FSLN, while others would become key leaders of MAP-ML. In 1972, a PSN congress shuttered the already dormant FARN, having

decided to "delay the armed struggle for better circumstances" (La desaparición de las FARN 2010).

Why did the FARN fail so dramatically during a period when the FSLN was growing just as dramatically? Simply put, the FSLN had already successfully incorporated the *canteras* that the FARN would need to rely on in order to recruit its own militants. The PSN's social base in the early 1960s consisted of two sectors: labor unionists, who were primarily artisans such as cobblers, and radical university students. While several individual labor unionists joined armed groups, and in one case (the FTE), a large proportion of a union, by and large unionists limited their participation in anti-regime mobilization to non-violent actions such as strikes and demonstrations. As Guevara López explains, "the student movement was synonymous with armed struggle in those days. Given that the labor movement has always consisted of adult workers, with family responsibilities – including towards those same students who could also be their children – the enthusiasm that the triumph of the [Cuban] revolution provoked in them found a different expression than among the youth" (Guevara López 2008, 116). The labor unionists were, as Petersen (2001) argues of members of economic associations, relatively high threshold activists.

The FARN could not rely on student dissidents for recruitment either, as by 1967, the FSLN and its intermediary organizations were approaching a hegemonic position within the radical student movement. As noted earlier, the FSLN had long attracted the most militant members of the *Juventud Socialista Nicaragüense* (JSN), the PSN's youth organization; meanwhile, the JPN's influence in the universities sagged far below that of the *Juventud*

Socialcristiano (JSC), the youth affiliate of the *Partido Socialcristiano* (PSC).[441] By 1967, the FER had already displaced the JSN among student dissidents, and by 1970, it had displaced the JSC as the dominant student group in Nicaragua. Largely excluded from even the PSN's own 1950s-era *canteras*, the FARN was unable to grow and vulnerable to the least exogenous shock.

Movimiento Acción Popular-Marxista-Leninista (MAP-ML)

The *Movimiento Acción Popular-Marxista-Leninista* (MAP-ML, 1979) has left behind even scarcer documentation than the FARN, despite surviving until, and fighting in, the insurrection against Somoza. The MAP-ML was formed by "revolutionary students who were involved in the FSLN and the Socialist Party and communists" in August 1972 (Solórzano 1993, 190).[442] It is probably that the bulk of its membership came from outside the FSLN and thus would be better characterized as an independently mobilized group rather than an FSLN splinter. I am only able to confirm one MAP-ML leader, Alejandro Gutiérrez Mayorga, as a former FSLN member; Mónica Baltodano's interviewees hazily recall him as a FER organizer and a short-time member of the FSLN in 1970 (Baltodano 2010b). Aristides Roja told Baltodano that Gutiérrez fell prisoner for a period and then "[a]fterwards went to those ultra-leftist pro-Chinese groups, I think the MAP-ML," while Enrique Yico Sánchez told her "I don't know if he went [to the mountain] or what happened to him."[443] I am unable to identify MAP-ML's other leaders as former FSLN members. Indeed, some are former FARN members (Isidro Téllez and Pablo Martínez), and others

---

[441] Author interview on 10/13/2015 in Managua with historian of the student movement at UNAN-Managua, author interview on 10/27/2016 in Managua with female FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a director of feminist / minority rights NGO, and author interview on 12/13/2016 in Managua with male former student leader and FSLN collaborator, currently an economist and researcher.

[442] Quoting a Barricada International article.

[443] Based on my case knowledge, I feel pretty confident that what happened was this: Gutiérrez was captured by Somoza's security and spent a suspiciously short time imprisoned before being released. The FSLN, certain that he had gained his release by becoming an informant, expelled him from the organization.

were trade unionists (Juan Alberto Henríquez). Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, in her memoir, describes its membership as coming from the FSLN, CGT (Nicaragua's major labor union), and the PSN (Barrios de Chamorro 1996, 51), while Revista Envío, the UCA's social sciences journal, describes it as breaking off from the PSN (Envío 1984). This testifies to the empirical difficulty of distinguishing independently-mobilized and splinter groups, despite assumptions that they are conceptually distinct.

What is clearer is that the MAP-ML, adhering to a far-left, anti-revisionist, Maoist ideology, originally organized as a fringe political party with an adjunct labor union, the *Frente Obrero*, rather than a new rebel group (Ameringer 1992, 463; Gould 1990). Its *Frente Obrero* labor union organized during the late-1970s in the same industrial and agricultural workforces as the FSLN-TP's labor unions, like the Ingenio San Antonio (Gould 1990, 281–83). While the FSLN-TP was more successful, "[a]ll the militants of the Frente Obrero were real good compás [sic]," one former Sandinista told Gould, "Some people belonged to both the Frente Sandinista and the Frente Obrero. We were fighting for the same proletarian revolution" (Gould 1990, 283). The MAP-ML's attempts to make inroads in the student movement were more unsuccessful, due to, according to one informant, "the narrowness of their vision."[444]

Only in April 1979, just before the FSLN's victory, did the MAP-ML form its *Milicias Populares Antisomocistas* (MILPAs, not to be confused with the later, unrelated Contra groups), which had 150 militants compared to perhaps 6,000 FSLN combatants at that time (Bitácora Marxista-Leninista 2015). According to Revista Envío (1984), "[i]n its propaganda, the MAP-ML habitually recalls that its Milicias Populares Antisomocistas (the MILPAS, as everybody called them) were 'the only armed force that fought alongside the people and the Sandinistas.'"

---

[444] Author interview on 10/13/2015 in Managua with historian of the student movement at UNAN-Managua.

Nonetheless, shortly after the revolution, the FSLN waged a campaign against ultra-leftists, responding to 1980 *Frente Obrero* strikes at Ingenio San Antonio by imprisoning the MAP-ML leadership and shuttering its newspaper, *El Pueblo* (Alexander 2008, 110–11). This highlights the MAP-ML's marginal status compared to the FSLN, despite being the only other armed group in 1979.

When do second-moving groups remain marginal?

This brief discussion of two second-moving rebel groups in Nicaragua illustrates an important dynamic, hypothesized by the civilian constituency theory: rebel groups within the same rebel movement typically compete for a limited pool of dissidents.[445] Meanwhile, as Weinstein (2007) points out, rebellion has high start-up costs, particularly with regards to recruiting enough insurgents to survive in a violent contest. When a rebel group (particularly a first-moving rebel group) is particularly successful at incorporating dissident networks, as was the FSLN, they are likely to crowd out potential competitors who are unable to meet those high start-up costs given the diminished resources at their disposal. In the absence of a significant pool of unmobilized but potentially mobilizable dissidents, most attempts at clandestine organization will end like Sergio Ramírez's abortive 1972 attempt: conspiring in Costa Rica with Edén Pastora (recently expelled from the FSLN) and four other relative moderates, professionals, and intellectuals, "we hatched our plans squeezed inside my car while I drove around La Sabana park, and the enthusiastic

---

[445] It should be noted here that rebel organizations cannot always simply make a tactical decision to expand, as Staniland (2014) would have it in his discussion of rebel fragmentation as a result of "mismanaged expansion." Most (all?) rebel groups have a preference for expansion; their capacity to do so is constrained by the pool of potential recruits (that is, dissidents) at their disposal. The size of this pool is determined by many complexly interrelated factors, including organizational structures, the legacies of past violent episodes, the extent of government repression, and the resources available for social mobilization. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, above and beyond these factors, a straightforward relationship holds between grievances and dissident mobilization: the greater the breadth and depth of politicized grievances throughout society, the larger the pool of dissidents.

decision was to open a guerrilla front that would declare itself democratic…I sold the car to finance the first expenses and the other conspirators made contributions to the extent of their ability, but the plans came to almost nothing, until the following year when I took the decision to accept a writing fellowship and left for Berlin" (Ramírez 2015, 86). In sum, if competing rebel groups like the FARN or MAP-ML were marginal, it is because the FSLN left them only the margins.

Competing hypotheses

Other explanations given in the literature on rebel fragmentation and cohesion fail to explain why the FSLN remained unified for over a decade. Table 6-1, below, shows the results of my scoring of competing hypotheses. None make the correct prediction: during the first case, the anti-Somocista rebel movement suffered severe battlefield setbacks and leadership decapitations, benefitted from fungible and balanced (spread around) external support, and its leading cadres engaged in intense ideological and strategic debates – all factors that are held to cause organizational splits and independent mobilizations. Nonetheless, the rebel movement remained unified, with only the FSLN and, for a brief time, the hapless FARN under arms.

Table 6-1 FSLN first period case study outcomes

	Hypotheses	Correct prediction?	Evidence for mechanism?
H1	Rebel type	Yes	Yes
H1	Civilian grievances	Yes	Yes
H3	State repression	No	N/a
H4	External support	No	N/a
H5	Ideological convergence	No	N/a

H3 holds that battlefield defeats and selective state violence should increase rebel fragmentation by causing subgroups to worry about their survival (Christia 2012), or by

eliminating key leaders and thereby weakening horizontal ties that hold rebel elites together (Staniland 2014). This hypothesis fails a hoop test during the first period, providing strong evidence against this explanation: while the National Guard managed to assess several major blows against FSLN leadership during the first period, rebel fragmentation was not observed. In 1963 an FSLN *foco* was annihilated at Raití-Bocay, and again in 1967, the FSLN launched guerrilla *focos* which were crushed by the National Guard, resulting in the deaths of "important leadership cadres of the FSLN: in addition to founder [Silvio] Mayorga, the organization lost Carlos Reyna, the Managua worker who represented the FSLN at the 1966 Tricontinental Conference in Havana, and Rigoberto Cruz, almost single-handedly responsible for developing contacts in the mountains after 1963" (Zimmermann 2000, 98). Carlos Fonseca himself was alternately jailed or in exile for much of the 1960s: imprisoned in mid-1964, deported in 1965, he returned, secretly, to Nicaragua in mid-1966, left for Costa Rica in 1969, was arrested there in August 1969, and released in November 1970 to Cuba, where he would spend the next five years (Instituto de Estudio del Sandinismo 1985). These depredations provoked a severe leadership deficit within the FSLN by 1969, and internal struggles broke out between Fonseca's top lieutenants.[446] Yet neither these devastating battlefield defeats, the loss of key elites, or the imprisonments and exiles of its principal leader led to challenges to Carlos Fonseca's authority or organizational divisions. Thus, state repression, or rather, a lack thereof, cannot explain the FSLN's unity in this case.

H4 (external support) holds that when external support from foreign sponsors is fungible (funding or arms) or spread among different actors within a rebel group or movement, it lowers start up costs for independently mobilizing rebel groups (Weinstein 2007) and engenders intra-

---

[446] The thinned ranks of the leadership left an unpopular commander in charge of the internal apparatus. Oscar Turcios, Joose Benito Escobar team up to impugn and expel Efrain Sanchez Sancho, an exceedingly hazy incident.

rebel leadership disputes (Tamm 2016). Thus, rebel movements should be more fragmented when external support is *fungible* or *balanced*. In the first case, H4 fails a simple congruence test: the FSLN – and other leftist Nicaraguan organizations – received substantial external support up until at least 1967, when Che Guevara's death in Bolivia seemingly closed the guerrilla road, yet did not succumb to organizational splinters (Blandón 2011, 699). A variety of evidence suggests that this support was both balanced (given to a wide variety of actors both within and outside the FSLN, and from several external actors) and while some of it was military training, much of it was fungible (funds ostensibly for purchasing weapons). Cuban support in particular went to several early FSLN leaders – and none of them were Carlos Fonseca, disaffirming that external support helped him consolidate his leadership and unify the FSLN. For example, several members of the FLN (the FSLN's organizational precursor) went to Cuba for military training in 1961, including Carlos Fonseca, Silvio Mayorga, Tomás Borge, and Rodolfo Romero (Zimmermann 2000, 79– 80). According to Zimmermann, the Cubans placed Silvio Mayorga in command of the Nicaraguan trainees. Meanwhile, FLN leaders Noel Guerrero and Rodolfo Romero had close personal friendships with Che Guevara (Brown 2000, 23; Zimmermann 2000, 79), who was in charge of distributing funds to Latin American guerrilla groups, while one informant told me that Carlos Fonseca never even met the Cuban leadership.[447] Meanwhile, at this time the Cubans were giving funds to other leftist actors in Nicaragua, such as the *Juventud Patriótica Nicaragüense* and the *Partido Socialista Nicaragüense* (Blandón 2011, 699),[448] evidence of their willingness to support any actor capable of challenging the dictatorship.

---

[447] Author interview on 6/24/2016 in Managua with male FSLN commander, TP faction, founder of opposition party Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS).
[448] Author interview on 7/16/2016 in Managua with historian and brother of prominent Conservative Party activist.

In an interview with Hoover Institute scholar Timothy Brown, José Obidio "Pepe" Puente León, one of the FSLN's major financiers through nearly two decades of struggle, walked through several different sources of funding in the early years: first, Cuban support, and when the Cubans temporarily soured on the FLN in 1962, Russian support, complemented by wealthy members of the radical Nicaraguan diaspora in Mexico (Brown 2000, 29–32). Argentinian journalist Federico Volpini writes that in 1963 much of this support was collected directly by FLN leader Noel Guerrero from the Russian and Cuban embassies in Mexico, and when Guerrero learned that the FLN guerrilla *foco* had been crushed by the National Guard, he absconded with the remaining funds (Volpini 1987, 56). The organization, now renamed the FSLN under Carlos Fonseca, sought out a new source of financing, and by 1966 "[t]he Chinese decided to provide us with support and did so quickly, giving us lots of money to buy arms and inviting us to China for training" (Brown 2000, 40).

The above discussion indicates that, from 1961 to 1967, the anti-Somocista rebel movement's formative years there were at least four potential sources of fungible external support (Cuba, Russia, China, and the Nicaraguan diaspora), that at a minimum the Cubans were willing to support multiple actors, and that there is little evidence to suggest that Carlos Fonseca's grip on leadership was due to a disproportionate share of external support (indeed, the financier Puente León says that even as early as 1961 while other leaders received greater external support, "Carlos Fonseca Amador had begun to emerge as our natural leader, not the least because he was both well informed and charismatic" (Brown 2000, 28–29)). Both leaders intent on challenging Fonseca and would-be rebel groups intent on mobilizing independently may well have found their own source of external support given ample opportunities. However, they did not, and thus H4 (external support) fails to explain the anti-Somocista rebel movement's unity from at least 1961 to 1967.

Finally, H5 (ideological convergence) also fails a hoop test, as just as much ideological contestation accompanied the FSLN's unified first period as its fragmented second period. As early as 1964, Fonseca called for the creation of a Sandinista Party to organize politically (an idea that is markedly similar to the TP platform a decade later, which Fonseca criticized as ultra-rightist), but this proposal met strong resistance from other elite cadres and was dropped (Zimmermann 2000, 86). Tomás Borge (1984, 51) recalls Carlos Fonseca writing in an internal memo around this period that

> [i]t is not negative but very positive that a whole variety of opinions should arise about possible solutions to the problems. This is not new and has happened in other victorious revolutionary struggles, as well as in historical processes dating from antiquity. Even in the text of the Iliad we see the discrepancies arising within one group of fighters, although of course the story tells the part veteran combatants can play to bring about harmony within the group.[449] One aspect not sufficiently well known about the insurrection process in Cuba is the very sharp discussion, which continued right up to July 1958, regarding the role of armed action in the mountain.[450]

The defeat at Pancasán in 1967 also provoked intense strategic disagreements; Jacinto Suárez reported that, "In the midst of all this, a discussion began at the very center of the Frente Sandinista. What are we? A party? An armed group? A foco? What? We began to question the famous theory of foquismo and to try to define ourselves. OK, what is the Frente Sandinista

---

[449] I referenced this dispute, of Thersites against Agamemnon and Odysseus, in the previous chapter, and am happy to observe that I evidently have the same reading habits as Carlos Fonseca (or Tomás Borge, as he wrote these recollections in prison and didn't have access to Fonseca's exact words at that time). However, I must insist that Fonseca's / Borge's interpretation of this dispute is completely at odds with Homer's intentions.

[450] This dispute between the *llano* and the *sierra* is the subject of Julia Sweig's (2004) excellent *Inside the Cuban Revolution*.

anyway? Who are we? Where are we headed? What do we really want?" (Arias 1988, 46). The strategic debates within the FSLN in 1967 presaged the future positions of the different factions that would splinter in 1975 and 1976, rather remarkable as most of the protagonists of the later splits had not yet joined the group: "Henry Ruiz, who joined the FSLN during this period, has said that members interpreted the lessons of Pancasán in sharply divergent ways. Some wanted to maintain the focus on rural guerrilla warfare, and others favored abandoning the armed struggle to concentrate on political work in the student movement and urban barrios" (Zimmermann 2000, 100).

However, the open discussion between cadres with differing ideological preferences took place through Carlos Fonseca's mediation; in encouraging the debate and taking a first-among-equals approach to collective leadership, his central role was never challenged. "Fonseca's role in these discussions," writes Zimmerman (2000, 100), "was to try to find a course between the two extremes and counter the despair and even panic with which some militants responded to the movement's difficult situation." During his exile in Cuba in the early 1970s, Fonseca would continue this role, encouraging intensive study and debate among the cadres who passed through Havana for training.[451] At this point, given the new flow of recruits entering through the student movement, debates in Cuba centered on how best to press the FSLN's advantage. In sum, whether the FSLN had suffered defeat or was growing stronger, sharp ideological and strategic debates on how to respond to the present situation – often in recurring terms – were a constant, and therefore cannot explain the 1975-6 factional dispute.

---

[451] Author interview on 12/12/2016 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.

Explaining unity II: mobilization of broad civilian networks

I now turn to FSLN's third period, to explore the processes leading to the 1979 creation of the Joint National Directorate. Of the hypotheses derived from CCT (H1 and H2), H2c posits that profound societal grievances can help – or impel – rebels to overcome collective action problems when they spur broad civilian networks to mobilize in favor of the rebel movement. Where rebel groups are small, they may be subsumed into a much larger uprising, whose center of organizational gravity shifts to the civilian networks. Where rebel groups are stronger, they still encounter a mix of incentives and resources to join forces when broad civilian networks mobilize.

Put more expansively, broad civilian constituencies help erode factional boundaries in ongoing fragmented rebellions. Leaders of splinter factions must consider the loyalties of their potential followers, which is private information possessed by each member. Where rebel groups are not embedded in broad civilian social networks, individual elites are directly connected to and can thus count on the personal loyalty of their followers. In such movements (Figure 6-4a, below), the leader of a splinter faction can rely on the loyalty of her subordinates. By contrast, in movements with a broad civilian constituency organized into a network, the rebel rank-and-file is connected to various rebel elites through mass organizations, multiple pathways and multivalent social ties (Figure 6-4b, below). Rank-and-file members of rebel factions, particularly when drawn from broad, "high-threshold"[452] social groups, may have little commitment to the ideological and organizational divisions among a rebel movements elites. In such circumstances elites in splinter factions cannot be confident that a sizable portion of the rank-and-file will remain loyal to their splinter group (Seymour 2014, 97). Rebel elites are thus more likely to accept an unsatisfactory

---

[452] See Petersen (2001).

distribution of costs and benefits within an umbrella group, rather than to risk the worst-case outcome of the defection of their rank-and-file and marginalization within the rebel movement.
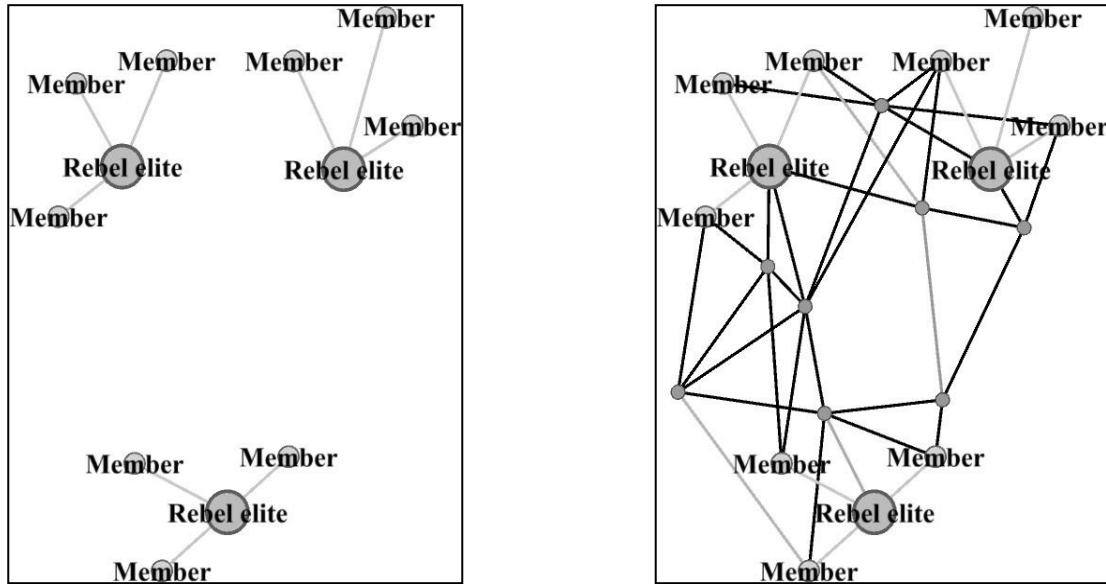
a. Elite-centric rebel group structure   b. Civilian constituency-centric rebel group structure
Figure 6-4 Constituencies and splinter groups

Information and division

As discussed in detail in the previous chapter, the division of the FSLN into three separate factions was elite-driven: individual rebel elites, competing for control of the organization, cultivated the loyalty of rank-and-file members, organized into *canteras*, as their power base. By the conclusion of these leadership disputes, FSLN elites had settled for leading splinter groups, taking the members of their loyal *canteras* with them into their new organizations.

This model of rebel splintering implies an important choice for movement adherents that needs to be understood, and that has implications: why would non-elite rebel fighters be more loyal to their cantera's elites than to the overall rebel organization? Or alternately, why would "idealistic" rebels in "stationary" rebel groups follow a rebel elite who attempts to splinter for self-

interested motives?[453] Interviewees unanimously told me they were opposed to the division of the FSLN, expressing the disgust and disillusionment they felt when they learned of the factionalization. "I felt disappointed and deeply troubled," said one commander;[454] Leticia Herrera later said, "I didn't agree with this division, and if I kept working it was because I had to keep working, I had to do something" (Herrera et al. 2013, 203); Francisco Rivera Quintero described learning of the tendency dispute from another militant (Rivera Quintero and Ramírez 1989, 141–42):

> He gave me details of the division… and he tried to convince me that it was time to take a side, the side of the GPP tendency. Through the structures of the GPP, under the orders of Pedro Aráuz, we should continue our work in the mountain. And finally I heard him say that the comrades from the other tendencies, from the Tercerista tendency and the Proletaria tendency, were to be considered as traitors. I responded that in continuing my work in the mountain, I had no problem; if he commanded me to die, off to die I'd go. But in reference to picking sides, I didn't want to hear him talk about division, because I was a militant of the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional*. I knew Humberto Ortega very well, and I could never accept that he was a traitor; I knew *El Viejo* Tirado López, I knew Jaime Wheelock, and I couldn't consider them traitors to the Sandinista cause either.[455]

---

[453] In "roving" rebel groups that exploit resource endowments over social endowments for expansion, this problem doesn't arise: individual rebel fighters are likely to be loyal to elites that can provide selective incentives (Weinstein 2007).

[454] Author interview on 12/12/2016 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.

[455] This rousing defense of the Tercerista and Proletaria tendencies, though credible given *El Zorro*'s subsequent action, must also be taken with a grain of salt because his memoir was recorded during Daniel Ortega's government, and many former commanders were seeking government positions.

Yet FSLN members sorted themselves into the three factions nonetheless. Why? A partial answer, as discussed in the previous chapter, is that *canteras* are composed of more than just a vertical relationship between rebel elites and followers; they also embed *cantera* recruits within a latticework of overlapping, trust-bearing horizontal ties that buttress and reinforce one another. Thus, each individual fighter need not be overwhelmingly loyal to a specific splintering rebel elite; put differently, a rebel elite may, by and large, count on a *cantera* to be loyal without assuming the loyalty of each member. But while this *cantera* loyalty mechanism can help us understand elites' relative power and sorting – who ended up in which faction – it is less capable of explaining the puzzle above: how were self-interested leaders able to divide the FSLN against the preferences of most FSLN members? The simple answer is information scarcity.

Cantera-based horizontal ties do not only convey trust and loyalty. They also convey *information*, a key mechanism for understanding both splintering and unification. A splintering event produces an extremely low-information environment as formal chains of communication rupture, particularly in a cellular organization such as the FSLN where information was tightly compartmentalized. Leticia Herrera, describing her bewilderment and uncertainty during the division, is typical: "Look, Macho," she asked another commander, "What's going on? I feel people are tense, walking like belly-up cats, ready to scratch… and I don't know what's going on" (Herrera et al. 2013, 189). Even Pedro Aráuz, the principal protagonist of the split, was uncertain of the loyalty of his subordinates and the maneuvering of other factional leaders. He approached Herrera and "put forward questions that had to do with organizational work, but also to really sound out what my position was. At that stage! […] and I didn't know about anything." (Herrera et al. 2013, 200).

Meanwhile, splintering elites rushed to capture formal networks of communication before another faction could lay claim to them, creating both an organizational and geographic division of the FSLN. At the outset of the factional dispute, each of the three factions had wrested control over whichever regional structures they had at hand; the GPP closed its networks of collaborators in León and Estelí, the TP seized control of Managua and Granada, while the TI was largely locked out of structures inside of Nicaragua, forcing them to rebuild from scratch.[456] One TP commander, a close friend of Jaime Wheelock's, described to me how at the moment of division, Pedro Aráuz, leader of the incipient GPP faction, recalled him from his work organizing in the mountains and asked him to turn over all of the structures he had built there. Unaware that Wheelock had been expelled from the FSLN, the commander complied. Upon receiving a letter from Wheelock, the commander joined the TP, but found his old structures resolutely under the control of the GPP.[457] With small, geographically-concentrated networks, factional leaders could exclude commanders from other factions simply by changing the passwords.[458]

Because of this information scarcity, most FSLN members had little ability to coordinate across incipient factions. They lacked trust-bearing ties with members of other factions, or, possessing these, lacked the means to contact their friends. Indeed, some members were unaware of the division entirely; one fairly high-ranking commander told me she didn't learn of the division

---

[456] Incidentally, this was a major reason why the Tercerista ideological platform emphasized international sponsors and staging areas, broad alliances, and the mobilization of new, more conservative sectors into the anti-Somoza struggle. This was a strategy of the possible given their resources.
[457] Author interview on 12/12/2016 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.
[458] Author interview on 12/12/2016 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer. As my informant explained to me, FSLN civilian supporters were given passwords that could be used to identify FSLN members. They were trained only to give information or resources to individuals with the proper password, denying this even to individuals they know and trust if they were lacking the password. Of course, these security measures were unevenly applied.

until mid-1977, over a year after it had taken place.[459] Most coordination between FSLN subgroups had always occurred at the level of elites. In a low information environment, elites are largely able to close their factional structures simply by ceasing that coordination.

Conversely, and crucially for the FSLN's reunification, a high information environment makes it impossible to maintain closed factional structures. In high information environments low- to mid- level commanders from different factions are easily able to coordinate their efforts without the permission of rebel elites. The mobilization of broad civilian networks in Nicaragua, and the participation of a substantial percentage of the civilian population in the insurrection against the Somoza regime that finally occurred in 1979 created a high information environment. FSLN commanders from all three factions, seeking to organize the same uprising, found themselves linked by proliferating network ties of everyday high-threshold civilians now mobilizing en masse. Able to coordinate through these ties, cooperation between factions began on the ground well before factional leaders formally agreed to an umbrella leadership.

Reacting to the uprising: mobilization grafted onto social networks

In January 1978, unknown agents assassinated Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, the editor of the newspaper *La Prensa*, a pro-democracy politician with roots in the Conservative Party, the scion of Nicaragua's most prominent family – and the most widely-respected civil society opponent of the authoritarian Somoza regime (La crónica del asesinato de Pedro Joaquín Chamorro 2017). The assassination served as a key focal point, sparking massive unrest that evolved into months-long running street battles: an insurrection (Alegría and Flakoll 1982; Black 1985; Duque Estrada

---

[459] Author interview on 1/18/2107 in Managua with female FSLN commander, TI faction, currently a historian, MRS politician, and gay rights activist.

Sacasa 2014, 55; Ortega Saavedra 2004; Suñol 1992). The insurrection entailed a vast increase in the number of anti-regime combatants, almost all of whom nominally self-affiliated with the FSLN. One commander told me that at the onset of the insurrection, the three FSLN factions had a combined "500 to 800 men under arms," though due to a severe shortage of weapons they were under arms only in the loosest sense.[460] Between Pedro Joaquín Chamorro's assassination and the capture of Managua in July 1979, at least 6,000 men and women took to barricading streets with improvised weapons such as Molotov cocktails, in combat against the National Guard.[461]

Two broad civilian networks with a high degree of connection to the FSLN helped stoke mobilization: the popular church, and the *Asociación de Estudiantes de Secundaria* (AES, translated as the High School Students Association). Neither network owed allegiance to any particular FSLN faction; both mobilized civilian support for the FSLN as a whole. The popular church comprised a substantial number of radical priests inspired by liberation theology, linked by networks of cooperation built over the previous five years that particularly concentrated in poorer urban neighborhoods (Foroohar 1989). The high level of anti-regime grievances pushed the popular church networks into active support for the uprisings, as well as attitudes ranging from tolerance to tacit support from moderate elements within the Catholic hierarchy. The exclusionary and larcenous nature of Somoza's regime alienated many of Nicaragua's clergy, most notably Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo. After the 1972 earthquake, Obando refused to serve as vice-

---

[460] Author interview on 12/12/2016 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer. He told me that in his training school of 25 men and women, they had 12 weapons, mostly pistols, hunting rifles and shotguns, some of which could not actually fire a shot.
[461] According to data from an program by Instituto Nicaragüense de Bienestar Social (INSBBI), now sadly lost (Vilas 1985, 143). This number is a minimum estimate, as it counts individuals who demonstrated their participation via testimonials

chairman of the National Emergency Committee, as he correctly surmised that Somoza intended to pilfer international aid money.[462]

After the January 10, 1978 assassination of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, the bishopric supported the January 28th general strike, issuing a remarkable document, "We Cannot Be Silent" (CEN 1978):

Even at the risk of being misunderstood, we cannot be silent when:

When a majority of our population suffers inhumane conditions of existence, as a result of a clearly unjust distribution of wealth.

When civil guarantees are defended with words, but stand out for their absence in the terrain of facts.

When the deaths and disappearances of many citizens (in cities and the countryside) remain mysteries.

When a worthy portion of our people – part of its youth, in classrooms and in campos – only glimpse patriotic solutions through armed uprising.

When public functionaries, supported by power, enrich themselves abusively, forgetting their mission to serve the people, who they claim to represent.

When the civil right to select our authorities is falsified in a game of parties…

---

[462] Kinzer (1991, 33, 41). The Catholic primate also directly aided the Sandinistas in one of their most iconic moment when Obando smuggled out photographs of Edén Pastora's commando raid on the National Palace in 1978, which were subsequently published in La Prensa.

As this document makes clear, Chamorro's assassination pushed the Nicaraguan Church towards active opposition to the Somoza regime, even to the radical step of implying that armed uprising could be "patriotic' in point d.

Critically for the civilian constituency theory, although the Church hierarchy never publicly declared support for the Sandinista rebels, they tacitly allowed rebellious collective action to piggyback onto Church networks — an invaluable resource during periods of state repression. The church networks served two critical roles. First, many parish priests and other prelates did openly support the FSLN, and these radical priests helped to mobilize their parishioners.[463] Second, after the Somoza government declared martial law and commenced aggressively censoring all forms of press, the churches allowed journalists to file sympathetic reports on the uprisings from the pulpit - the celebrated Journalism of the Catacombs:[464]

> In the wake of the assassination of Chamorro, churches held masses and... emerged as centers for mobilization and collective action. For example, when the state imposed tight censorship on the print and broadcast media during the general strike of January 1978, Catholic churches throughout Managua became loci for journalists to read out loud the news they could not publish or announce on the air. (Parsa 2000, 152)

In sum, the Roman Catholic Church represented Nicaragua's broadest cross-cutting social network. Its defection from the Somoza regime devastated the legitimacy of the incumbent, and

---

[463] Author interview on 12/12/2016 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.
[464] Interview with Manuel Espinoza Enríquez y Carlos García in Baltodano (2010a). For an insightful discussion of how 'the news' plays a critical role in mass mobilization in civil war by linking macro-level cleavages with micro-level action, see Shesterinina (2016).

access to the Church network created a way for the FSLN to coordinate with other political and social groups under conditions of state repression.

Second, high school networks played one of the most critical roles in producing and sustaining mass mobilization.[465] The marginal urban barrios that lent the uprising its greatest number of combatants lacked other broad networks, being marked by "the non-existence of communal or school boards, or the complete lack of familiarity with them by the people of the barrios. Nor do youth clubs or similar organizations appear to have existed" (Vilas 129). As discussed in the previous chapter, Nicaragua's university population was vanishingly small; however, its high school population was relatively large. The FSLN intensively organized high schools through the *Movimiento de Estudiantes de Secundaria* (MES).[466] One rather embittered former combatant, who as a high schooler participated in political activity prior to the uprising as well during the uprising itself, described the FSLN's methods of mobilization to me:

> From time to time students at the high schools would invite each other during class to someone's house. It was like an Open House: invite all your friends! These meet-ups weren't parties, they were wholesome. You'd drink Coca-Cola, not liquor. But the FSLN sent infiltrators to these groups. They were friends of friends of friends. They would come from a different high school. And suddenly, the conversation would touch on the theme of social problems: "What do you think of this? Yeah, man, how terrible, all this poverty." Revolutionary thought is like drugs. How do you get started with drugs? An older person comes by and shows you how to use them… Then they'd say

---

[465] Sergio Ramírez (2015) writes that "boys armed with pistols and hunting rifles, the majority of them leaving their high school classrooms, raised barricades in the city of Matagalpa, and their spontaneous insurrection provoked the mobilization of powerful contingents of the National Guard."
[466] Alternately, *Asociación de Estudiantes de Secundaria* (AES), an overlapping organization.

there won't be classes and then came raids on the high schools. **Eric**: *How did they coordinate those?* **Informant:** In the 5th year I was president of my class. The MES (*Movimiento Estudiantil de Secundaria*) saw that I was a leader and they approached me – a beastly strategy. They said to me, "We're forming a group that is interested in helping the neediest groups." They knew that through me they had access to other people. They built an inter-high-school group, so that the organization wouldn't just be in one high school or another. This led to the raids… Later, members of the FER contacted me and gave me flyers and propaganda to disseminate in the high school, because I was the point of contact between the university and the high school.[467]

The existence of the FSLN-linked MES was critical for permitting high schools to act as hubs in a truly broad social network: with a handful of the lowest-threshold students already tied to the FSLN through the MES, a homologous process of diffusion of mobilization took place in each high school. Where the MES did not exist, high school youths spontaneously adopted the symbols of the FSLN. One participant whom I interviewed described his recruitment early in the uprising, making no reference to the MES:

We students formed a Sandinista cell. A friend of mine came up to me after classes, and he had a grenade in his hand. He showed me the grenade secretly and told me he was a Sandinista. He asked if I wanted to join... From that point on we would meet at night in the recreation area of the high school campus.[468]

---

[467] Author interview on 11/7/2015 in León with a male former FSLN collaborator, now owner of a bar.
[468] Author interview on 7/29/2015 in Managua with male former FSLN militant, currently a taxi driver.

Participation during the uprising spread rapidly through both formal and informal high school networks such as these, as well as friendship networks that persisted after high school, during the uprising. Carlos Vilas (1985), who had access to a since-lost sample of biographical data on 6,000 FSLN combatants collected as part of a pension program, found that 29% of the participants were students and a full 72.4% were under 24 years of age.

These combatants were relatively low-threshold in that they were typically young men. However, they were much higher-threshold than previous combatants. In the previous chapter I depicted a progression of the FSLN's membership over time, from a hard core of zero-threshold activists who had fought in previous guerrilla focos or launched their own borderline militant organizations (JPN, FTE), to a low-threshold generation that joined through militant "intermediary organizations" (FER), to a low-to-medium threshold generation that joined through non-militant "intermediary organizations" (MCR). Most of the parishioners mobilized by the popular church and high school students recruited by their brashest friends were a far cry from the second-generation recruit who told me, "I wanted to be a terrorist since I was little."[469]

Mobilization of new constituencies facilitates umbrella structures

This transformation of the FSLN factions' constituencies promoted their eventual formation of an umbrella group via three mechanisms. First, this dramatic expansion of the FSLN's constituencies diluted the extent to which FSLN leaders could count on the personal loyalty of a large proportion of combatants. Second, it provided the necessary infrastructure for mid-level commanders to pass information and coordinate across factional lines. Third, this constituency

---

[469] Author interview on 12/12/2016 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer. To be fair, he said that primarily to, in his own words, "scandalize foreigners."

transformation promoted unity by creating new reputational costs - due to an expanded audience -

for public displays of factionalism. I address each of these in turn.

Diluting loyalty to leaders

As discussed earlier, a rebel leader's most relevant power base boils down to the

proportion of a rebel group she can expect to remain loyal in the case of a split.[470] Both the number

and nature of the new FSLN combatants, drawn from broad social networks, weakened the power

bases of all individual leaders. The sheer quantity of new combatants in the insurrection swamped

the FSLN's carefully recruited membership by a factor of ten. The new recruits, on average far

less educated and less ideologically committed than pre-insurrectionary recruits, had not spent

time in *canteras* prior to joining the FSLN, had little if any FSLN political education, and were

unlikely to have met FSLN factional leaders in person. Many were unaware of the factional

divisions. One recruit, for example, told me how he and a group of old high school friends simply

walked onto a rapidly growing guerrilla column as it marched near his town. Given his leadership

and martial skills, he was given a field command in short order. Yet he had no idea which faction

of the FSLN he belonged to until after the revolution.[471] In the insurrectional phase, high-threshold

combatants such as these comprised nine out of every ten FSLN combatants. Crucially, they lacked

both overlapping, iterative ties with members of the same FSLN faction or personal loyalty to an

FSLN factional leader that would give them a reliable factional identity:

One of the proofs of this is that when Daniel and Humberto's brother arrived in

Monimbó, when Camilo Ortega tried to direct the insurrection, the Indians of

---

[470] I operationalized this in the previous chapter as the eigenvector centrality of *canteras* in which the rebel leader commands loyalty.

[471] Interview on 9/29/2015 in Jinotega with male former FSLN militant, currently a FSLN regional organizer and leader in organization of former combatants.

Monimbó grabbed him and imprisoned him, because they didn't know who he was. He said, "But I'm from the Frente Sandinista," but the people didn't know him, and they took him prisoner... Why? Because the people in the barrios didn't know anything about the division, they didn't give a damn about the division, they were disposed to throw out Somoza, because Somoza had slaughtered almost everybody in the barrios.[472]

High threshold combatants could be driven to rebel by extreme grievances. Yet (constructing a counterfactual) compared to other combatants, they would be more likely to demobilize or switch sides to an opposing rebel faction in the event of overt factional competition. This would leave factional elites seeking to pursue an explicitly factional agenda likely to be marginalized within the rebel movement as a whole.

Facilitating mid-level cooperation

Most mid-level FSLN commanders stood to gain little from factional conflict and therefore valued cooperation between factions. In a recording from late 1977, Camilo Ortéga, posthumously called the "Apostle of Unity" for his efforts to bridge the factional dispute, put forward a theory of rapprochement in which mid-level commanders would knit together the organization from the bottom up:

We have reached a unanimous consensus that unification is going to come out of action, out of practice. We should coordinate among the intermediate cadres, among the [social] bases, [reaching] a reconciliation through the masses, with the intermediate

---

[472] Author interview on 10/27/2016 in Managua with female FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a director of feminist / minority rights NGO..

cadres coordinating our labors on the march, with the purpose of fitting together the

conceptual aspects until we achieve an organic formal accord. The important thing is

to break that ice with the daily reconciliation of the work, because we see that these

frictions and these rifts, these resentments that have emerged among the leading

cadres, don't exist among the intermediate cadres and among the bases. And we are

showing this – so therefore, we maintain that the unity of our organization comes from

the bases, comes from the intermediate cadres.[473]

Mid-level commanders made little progress putting Ortega's vision into practice prior to

the mass uprisings beginning in early 1978, because the strict control of information created by

clandestine security measures rendered cooperation between non-elites difficult.[474] The vast

expansion of networks of FSLN collaborators during the insurrection closed the information gaps

between commanders. Not only did each faction's civilian constituency now overlap, but they

were unable to exclude other factions from organizing their network. One commander told me

that, "many of the *Frente*'s collaborators helped everybody. Whoever arrived. It didn't make any

difference... They knew about the [factional] differences, but they didn't care. They kept their

security measures against others, but not Sandinistas."[475] Mid-level commanders who wished to

plan joint operations with members of other factions were able to easily locate their counterparts

during the insurrection.

---

[473] Quoted in Barbosa Miranda (2010, 309). My deep thanks to Kai Thaler for spotting this quote and sending it along to me.
[474] This should be read as a scope condition for this mechanism; low information environments help maintain factional divisions as long as the rebel groups in question are in fact clandestine. This applies to most cases of guerrilla warfare.
[475] Author interview on 1/19/2017 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.

Narratives by former combatants provide numerous examples of this occuring. Glauco Robelo, a GPP commander, told Mónica Baltodano (2010b) that some collaborators, Bismarck Centeno and his family, "were that type of collaborator that told you, I don't give a damn what tendency you're from, you're all my boys [*muchachos*]. They took us all in." Through Centeno, he made contact with commanders from the FSLN-TP and FSLN-TI "before the communication about the Joint Directorate went out, but then and there we agreed to advise each other of any operation and we took Bismarck Centeno as our link." The commanders also began to exchange weapons. When Robelo moved on to Masaya, he encountered even deeper cooperation between factions, using collaborators as go-betweens:

> In Masaya the structure of collaborators was practically shared, so, the people said to
> you, "Look, don't talk me about Proletarios here, nor about Terceristas nor the GPP,
> here you're all FSLN." So, for example, in Isabel Peña's grandma's house here in
> Monimbó,[476] we all converged there. Many times that lady was feeding forty or fifty
> *guerrilleros*. Afterwards we did an operation together.

Similarly, Tirsa María Sáenz, a GPP commander, reached out to her Prole counterpart through a collaborator (Baltodano 2010b):

> The most important thing of all that we managed to do there, was a rich conversation
> with Carmen: "Look, let's stop clowning around, niether you nor I have a safehouse,
> they're all being watched, we don't have anyplace to stay, we don't have any clothes;
> forget that you're GPP and I'm Prole here. Let's share, mamita. And we started to live

---

[476] Almost any Nicaraguan would be able to quickly find this location with just this information, even if Isabel Peña's grandma had passed away fifty years earlier.

in the same safehouses and share the same clothes and look how to survive in a city

practically controlled by the Guard.

Francisco Rivera's (1989) account of the uprising provides extensive evidence of this

mechanism. Arriving in Estelí to begin building structures for the FSLN-TI, he had little trouble

recruiting the GPP's collaborators:

I went to others that collaborated with the GPP and they didn't have any problem in

working with me either, because they didn't see any difference between one tendency

and another, they saw the Frente Sandinista. For them, the divisions were up above,

they didn't even know about those problems. Or they knew, but they didn't pay them

any mind. (166)

Through these contacts Rivera was easily able to locate and interview with several GPP

commanders, requesting that the two factions coordinate. Though initially rebuffed, the mid-level

TI and GPP commanders maintained constant communication as the mass rebellion strengthened.

At that point, with both factions simply organizing whoever they found fighting in the streets,

Rivera again requests coordination:

I invited him and the GPP to join the insurrection; he accepted and promised to

participate in the attack on the barracks… There wasn't time to firm up coordination.

Nevertheless, the truth is that at the hour of combat in the street, they were there. On

their own terms, at the start, under their own command, but they were there. (179)

Factional identities among low-threshold rebels did not entirely disappear during the conflict, but cooperation between them took hold on the ground well before the formal accord between the factions was signed.

Reputational costs

As noted above, with the "massification" of the FSLN factions' civilian constituency, rank-and-file FSLN combatants and collaborators were unlikely to have direct relationships with elite FSLN commanders. Therefore, competition between different factions took place less in terms of loyalty than in terms of *reputation*. While the three factions outbid each other in terms of planned attacks, actual competition was limited as a) most constituents had little awareness of factional differences, and b) those who were aware favored unification. In this environment, displays of overt factionalism ran the risk of discouraging and demobilizing high-threshold combatants, or worse, marginalizing the offending faction.

Most of my interviewees perceived a direct link between a generalized demand for FSLN leadership from "the people" and the decision by factional elites to create an umbrella group. One told me that the FSLN unified due to "pressure from the bases. The people felt we were the same. The people saw that it made no sense to fight separately."[477] Another linked unity to the FSLN's public legitimacy, explaining that

> in the course of guerrilla combat, the popular sectors appropriated the fight and from
> then on you found that the people in the barrios put on a red and black kerchief[478] and
> they assaulted the BECATs, they threw themselves into the trenches. A popular

---

[477] Author interview on 1/19/2017 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.
[478] Red and black were the symbolic colors of the FSLN.

insurrection had erupted and while the *Frente* hadn't sought to unite, in any case there would have been insurrection. So they [the FSLN factional leaders) knew they had to lead that thing, they made something called Joint National Directorate that the three tendencies joined and they put themselves in front of the fight.[479]

In striking evidence that the three FSLN factions were strongly concerned with the reputational costs of division, the rebel elite sought to provide the *image* of unity, even when it was far from the reality. "The FSLN never achieved a full 'unity,'" one TI commander told me, "we never combined our structures. Unity was only achieved at the level of the National Directorate."[480] In her account of the final stages of revolution and its aftermath, journalist Shirley Christian (1986) depicts a "unified" FSLN in which the different factions, and even elites within the same faction, sought to outflank their internal rivals in the march to Managua. Meanwhile, Rivera (1989, 211) lamented the difficulty of securing GPP cooperation in joint attacks even in the weeks prior to the FSLN's victory: "The unity was signed, but the issue of the tendencies and the different conceptions of struggle remained alive." Factional infighting famously continued within the Sandinista government of the 1980s.

Yet the importance of reputation was so great that the FSLN continued to impose a myth of unity in its official literature after the conclusion of the conflict, to the point of historical revisionism. The FSLN-distributed biography of Roberto Huembes (1980), for example, reports that Huembes "left for Costa Rica in 1975" - in reality Huembes had been expelled from Nicaragua at gunpoint by a rival FSLN faction - "and spent a year there dedicated to ideological work... He

---

[479] Author interview on 10/27/2016 in Managua with female FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a director of feminist / minority rights NGO.
[480] Author interview on 1/18/2107 in Managua with female FSLN commander, TI faction, currently a historian, MRS politician, and gay rights activist.

also met several times with Eduardo Contreras and Huberto Ortega, meetings which produced links that strengthened and consolidated the FSLN's unity." In all official FSLN documents from the 1980s, commanders from all three factions are invariably described as "working towards unity" between 1975 to 1979, never as "divided."

Competing hypotheses

In the preceding section, I traced mechanisms by which the existence and participation of broad civilian social networks in rebellion incentivized the three FSLN factions to favor a strategy of unification that cut against the preferences of most of their bickering elites. However, an analysis of alternative hypotheses reveals a complicated picture. Table 6-2, below, presents my chart of case study outcomes first, in order to illustrate the analytic challenge:

Table 6-2 Testing competing hypotheses

	Hypotheses	Correct prediction?	Evidence for mechanism?
H1	Rebel type	Yes	Yes
H2	Civilian grievances	Yes	Yes
H3	State repression	Yes	Yes
H4	External support	Yes	Yes
H5	Ideological convergence	Yes	Yes

As Table 6-2 demonstrates, *all* tested hypotheses make correct predictions in the third period, and process-tracing uncovers evidence for the presence of all postulated mechanisms. Indeed, at one point or another, an interviewee pointed to each of the alternative hypotheses as a primary explanation for why the FSLN factional elites formed an umbrella group. At a minimum, this suggests that the FSLN's reunification was not unicausal, and may have been overdetermined. Accordingly, the goal of this section is to determine the relative weights of the different causal factors. I argue, paying careful attention to the *sequencing* of each factor, that the participation of

broad civilian networks in the rebellion was both temporally and causally prior to all other contributing factors.
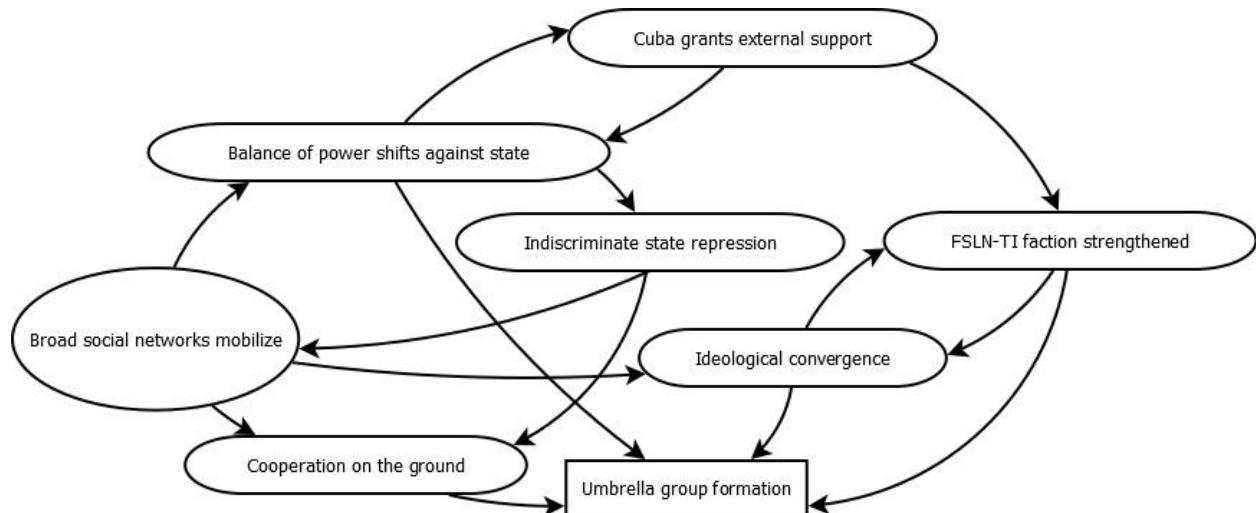

Figure 6-5 Causal processes leading to the reunification of the FSLN

Figure 6-5, above schematizes the complex and in many cases endogenous relationships between the causal processes uncovered through process-tracing. The onset of insurrection was a "long cause / short outcome" event, in Paul Pierson's (2003) terminology, in which the steady growth of anti-regime grievances over the course of decades reached a certain threshold above which mass, risky collective action became possible. The insurrection thus exhibited a "threshold effect"; in this case the assassination of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro served as an exogenous shock that caused pent-up grievances to be converted into mobilization: it unleashed the consequences of, in sudden, cataclysmic terms, a "big, slow-moving, and invisible" cause (Pierson 2003).[481] For the purpose of process-tracing, the exogenous nature of Chamorro's assassination is useful, as it

---

[481] As Pierson points out, revolutions are often analyzed as examples of threshold effects; see especially Kuran's (1989) classic work.

gives a clear starting point to the causal chain that follows, a treatment separating two states of the world.[482]

The uprisings were an immediate, unmediated response to Chamorro's assassination; the month-long Monimbó uprising following a memorial service for Chamorro caught the FSLN's factions as flat-footed as the regime. The uprisings, in turn, had three immediate consequences. First, it created the necessary resources and incentives for mid-level commanders to cooperate on the ground, as detailed in the previous section. Second, the uprising led, even if marginally, to an ideological convergence (H5) in favor of the TI (or Insurrectional) faction, which had, after all, preached in favor of sparking mass insurrections (though it had failed in previous attempts), and thus "the Tercerista [TI] thesis and strategy won out."[483] Third, by dramatically increasing the FSLN's manpower, the uprising drastically shifted the relative balance of power away from the state and in favor of the rebel movement.

This third process, though not treated as a hypothesis earlier, merits the most attention here. Some scholars have proposed that as a rebel movement approaches parity with the state, individual rebel groups will be incentivized to join forces, as the possibility of hunting a stag (overthrowing the government) becomes an ever more present possibility (Lounsbery 2016).[484] Alternately, conceptualized as an anarchic system rather than a collective action problem, weak rebel groups must balance their fear of being purged from a winning coalition with their fear of

---

[482] While few events short of an asteroid strike (or an earthquake) can be considered completely exogenous, Chamorro's assassination was likely carried out by damaged business partners of the Somoza government rather than by regime agents themselves, as discussed in chapter IV, and caught Somoza utterly by surprise. It was, of course, interpreted as an endogenous event to actors within and outside of Nicaragua.

[483] Author interview on 1/18/2107 in Managua with female FSLN commander, TI faction, currently a historian, MRS politician, and gay rights activist.

[484] See also Driscoll (2015).

being left out of the victory entirely (Christia 2012).[485] Thus, as a rebel movement looks likely to take power, weaker rebel groups may bandwagon with stronger ones.[486] These mechanisms were indeed observed in the FSLN's case, where "[t]he FSLN's new awareness of its potential for victory had promoted progress toward reunification" (Booth 1985, 167). Ortega Saavedra (2004, 385) makes clear to what extent the factions were motivated by their potentially brief window of opportunity, noting that "we gave special importance in that negotiation to the need to reintegrate *sandinismo*, before the predominance that Ronald Reagan's radical position could reach in the near future, which would never accept *sandinismo*'s triumph."

Meanwhile, the shifting balance of power forced the Somoza regime to rely on ever more indiscriminate violence, as often happens when states are faced with an intractable insurgency (Valentino, Huth, and Balch-Lindsay 2004). Staniland (2014) provides with a mechanism connecting this type of state repression (H3) with rebel unity: cooperation under fire, which "occurs when counterinsurgents push factional commanders together through indiscriminate and ineffective violence. Mass violence becomes a spur for greater cooperation among factions and the creation of new bonds of trust and monitoring because there is no way to shirk organizational tasks: noncooperation will push a faction into the crosshairs of the state regardless of what it does."

---

[485] In fact, the TI, and especially the Ortega brothers, maintained a firm control over the new government, and were able to purge many of the commanders from other factions after the triumph. About the reunified National Directorate, with three commanders from each faction, Humberto Ortega (2004, 385) writes: "The GPP and *Proletarios* had an interest in balancing the correlation of forces within the Sandinistas. In practice it turns out that the mathematics of exact results is different from the results one obtains in the art of political implementation. It's true that 3 by 3 formally is 9, the number of members of the DNC [*Dirección Nacional Conjunta*], but really the *Terceristas* [TI] held the heart of power in the Directorate and the new government."

[486] I am convinced that one of Christia's (2012) main findings – that rebel coalitions fall apart as they reach parity with the government – will not generalize beyond her scope conditions of "all-out war," which are not met in most insurgencies, and therefore I do not test this as a hypothesis. In Christia's model the government is just another faction, albeit a temporarily powerful one through its capture of the capital city.

While Staniland's mechanism is again vaguely defined, something like this did appear to occur as the Somoza regime's ability to deploy violence discriminately broke down. The Somocista system of informants (*orejas*) and justices of the peace (*jueces de mesta)* proved inadequate for identifying participants in mass street unrest, even as the regime's circumstances grew more precarious, requiring a stronger military response. Sergio Ramírez (2015) chronicled how the regime's measures of selectiveness devolved over the course of the conflict. At first, he writes "[i]n each reconquered city, the infantry troops went street by street, house by house, and if they found some boy [*muchacho*] that had powder marks in his hands, they executed him right there." But by the Sandinista's so-called "final offensive" in June 1979 this crude form of discrimination had proved inadequate to quell the uprisings, and the regime began "killing boys just for the fact of existing [*matando muchachos sólo por el hecho de serlo*]... For the youth, taking up arms now had to do with survival" (248). Eventually, the government was reduced to aerial bombardment of entire barrios, leading to mass civilian casualties. These brute methods had the effect of strengthening, rather than ameliorating the uprising, as they produced visceral anger and eliminated the "free-rider problem" of non-participation in civil war (Kalyvas and Kocher 2007): being a non-combatant no longer gave protection from state violence, such that fighting may have been less risky than hiding. As a result, youth participation in the fighting cascaded. This in turn further enabled cooperation on the ground, as mid-level rebel commanders had ever-increasing access to one another and shared an increasing threat of localized state violence.

It was also the balance of power shifting against the Somoza regime that convinced external actors, most importantly Fidel Castro of Cuba, Omar Torrijos of Panama, and Carlos Andrés Pérez of Venezuela, to provide extensive financial and material support to the Sandinista rebels (H4). Somoza's neighbors risked a diplomatic crisis should the government manage to

suppress the rebellion, and so were only willing to become involved when the venture showed excellent prospects for success (Christian 1986; Ramírez 2015). Their support, naturally, had the effect of further shifting the balance of power towards the rebels. It also strengthened the relative power of the TI vis-a-vis the other factions, as they had actively forged international alliances with neighboring countries and reaped the bulk of the reward; receiving 1,200 Venezuelan rifles by means of Cuba two months prior to the unity accords, Humberto Ortega assigned 900 to the TI, 200 to the GPP, and 100 to the TP (Ortega Saavedra 2004, 392). Other factions were forced to reconcile with TI in order to take advantage of the flow of resources from outside and avoid being completely marginalized within the rebel movement, while TI was able to grow much quicker by placing high-quality rifles in the hands of new recruits.[487] Meanwhile, Castro gave his good auspices to negotiations over unification, and conditioned material support on the TI's acceptance of formal equality for each faction within the new National Directorate. While one interview told me that unification only happened because "Castro put [the factional leaders] all in a room together and knocked their heads around,"[488] a great deal of movement towards unity had already taken place well before this occurred. In insisting on unity, Castro was pushing factional leaders to do what was already in their best interests given the shifting balance of power ("Castro told them 'Unite!' because Castro is a strategist."[489]), and helping them overcome commitment problems by virtue of third-party mediation.

---

[487] Author interview on 1/18/2107 in Managua with female FSLN commander, TI faction, currently a historian, MRS politician, and gay rights activist.
[488] Author interview on 1/18/2107 in Managua with female FSLN commander, TI faction, currently a historian, MRS politician, and gay rights activist.
[489] Author interview on 10/27/2016 in Managua with female FSLN commander, GPP faction, currently a director of feminist / minority rights NGO.

In sum, the mass insurrection led to a cascade of mutually reinforcing causal processes, which produced incentives – local operational successes, the opportunity for overall victory - and resources - shared civilian constituencies, commitment-enforcing third parties - as well as imposed potential penalties - marginalization within the rebel movement, loss of material resources - all tilting actors' decision-making towards unification. It is difficult to weight the importance of each hypothesis compared to the others; however, what is clear is that, in the Nicaraguan case, each of these was causally dependent, in the first instance, on the mobilization of broad civilian networks. Before the uprising, there was little movement toward unification. Without an uprising, the FSLN's unification would have been unlikely, at least in the near term.

Nonetheless, I do not make the strong claim that the mobilization of broad civilian networks was a necessary or sufficient condition for rebel unity. A plausible counterfactual scenario could be constructed, for example, in which a rebel movement nears military parity with the state even without the participation of broad civilian networks, reproducing much of the causal chain in Figure 6-5. Meanwhile, several of the causal process observations in Figure 6-5 point to outcomes that were dependent on individual actors' agency: National Guard generals collaborated to produce indiscriminate violence, rather than splitting with the regime as occurred in many similar cases; the dominant rebel group (the TI) chose to unify, rather than excluding their weakening competitors; external actors had the strategic perspicuity to direct aid to one faction, rather than opening the tap to all factions, and to make aid provision conditional on rebel unity. The circumstances created by the mass insurrection gave these actors incentives to behave as they did, but did not necessitate their choices. Nonetheless, broad civilian networks *were* likely to set off several of these other mechanisms, which were in turn mutually reinforcing, significantly increasing the likelihood of rebel unity.

Conclusion

This chapter has made some preliminary contributions to our body of knowledge about two types of rebel institutions, vanguard groups and umbrella groups, both of which help unify rebel movements. Previous writings on vanguard rebel groups have defined them by their internal characteristics: they are small and effective, as compared to the "spontaneous" masses (Lenin 1970); and they posess strong "horizontal ties" among leaders but not "vertical ties" to the populace (Staniland 2014). I suggest, in this chapter, a different way of understanding rebel vanguards: if they are smaller and more effective than mass action, it is because anti-regime grievances have not sufficiently pushed broad civilian networks to participate in rebellion.[490] And if vanguard groups lack ties to the populace, it is because the populace is unreceptive, not because the group is built on a pre-existing "social base." Thus I modify Staniland's theory by showing how social bases themselves are sculpted by civilian grievances and rebel groups.

My treatment of rebel umbrella groups in this chapter is more hesitant but perhaps more valuable. Though common throughout the world's rebel movements, past and present, umbrella groups have been studied by very few conflict scholars.[491] Christia's (2012) rightly influential work explains rebel alliances but these are certainly a distinct category from umbrellas, and we should note that Christia carefully restricts the scope of her inquiry to "all-out civil wars," a chaotic environment where neorealist-style balance of power alliance systems may flourish. And I would note that even in the chaotic 2011-present Syrian civil war, where balancing alliances are indeed commonplace, they exist side-by-side with durable and well-institutionalized umbrella

---

[490] Consider, for example, what little role Lenin's vanguard Bolsheviks played in the collapse of Russia's Tsarist regime, compared to mass anti-regime mobilization spurred by WWI grievances and coordinated by interconnected soviets (Fitzpatrick 1984). Both the Bolsheviks and the FSLN have in common that they did far more to navigate and emerge victorious from the revolutionary crisis than they did in causing it.

[491] I am aware only of Lounsbury (2016) and Allison and Álvarez (2012).

organizations. If Christia's rebel alliances are a neorealist parallel, then I submit that rebel umbrella groups might be conceptualized in terms of constructivist "security communities" (Adler and Barnett 2002), at least as a starting point.

To the scant literature on the causes of umbrella group formation, I have added a hypothesis: that distinct rebel organizations are more likely to form umbrella groups (and to merge) when they share an underlying civilian constituency. When broad social networks mobilize, an umbrella groups may unify the rebel movement itself. Yet this chapter also suggests that shared civilian constituencies may not be a necessary or sufficient condition for umbrella group formation, but rather one in a complex sequence of interlocking causes.

In the next chapter, I strengthen the argument that broad civilian networks are a key causal mechanism leading to rebel unity during periods of extreme civilian grievances through a structured case comparison of two Syrian uprisings. Comparing the 1976 - 1981 Islamist uprising with the 2011 Arab Spring uprising, I demonstrate that at least some of the causal processes mapped out in Figure 6-5 are generalizable across regions and types of insurrections. I argue that the key difference between the unified Islamist uprising and the fragmented Arab Spring uprising was the lack of participation by broad civilian networks in the 2011 case. In 1980, the mobilization of a broad civilian network, the Muslim Brotherhood, led to the formation of an umbrella group. After 2011, by contrast, though several attempts were made to unify rebel factions through elite negotiations, these efforts failed from the bottom up – the mirror image of the FSLN's unification, which succeeded from the bottom up.

7. SYRIA: MUSLIM BROTHERS OR OTHERS IN ARMS?

Introduction

This chapter seeks to explain levels of rebel movement fragmentation in two matched Syrian cases: the unified 1976-1982 Islamic rebellion and the fragmented 2011 Arab Spring rebellion. My focus on the Arab Spring rebellion in this dissertation is not surpring: with hundreds of operationally distinct rebel groups organized into multiple, shifting blocs, Syria represents an outlier among cases of rebel fragmentation studied by conflict scholars. That fragmentation is doubtlessly in no small part responsible for the civil war's high levels of violence, its protracted nature, and the small prospects of peace in the near future. Waves of Syrian refugees, dislodged not only by the Assad regime's brutality but also by internecine fighting between rebel factions, present the contemporary world with its most serious humanitarian crisis, and refugees' hopes of seeking asylum in Europe have impacted the political systems of western nations. As such, it is critical that our explanations of rebel fragmentation adequately explain this critical case.

Given the salience of this case, it is unsurprising that a great deal has been written about it, both within and outside of academia. Yet more than six years after the 2011 uprising, no consensus explanation for its fragmentation has emerged. Meanwhile, few extant studies have explicitly compared the 2011 rebellion to its 1976-1982 forerunner.[492] This is unfortunate for two reasons. First, their structure and dynamics are similar, which should not surprise us as both

---

[492] I am aware of only Lund (2011) and Celso (2017).

conflicts pit the same protagonists against each other: the Assad family's dynastic regime and a rebel movement based in the Sunni majority, largely committed to the Islamicization of the state. Comparing such similar cases provides a unique opportunity to explain why some outcomes varied. Second, the lack of attention to the 1976-1982 rebellion is unfortunate because its defeat had consequences that profoundly affected the course of the present civil war. Scholars cannot explain the current rebel movement's fragmentation without understanding how the Assad regime sought to disarticulate the earlier rebellion's civilian constituency.

Drawing on my civilian constituency theory, I argue that rebel movements built on broad, mass-mobilizing social networks are likely to remain unified (H2c), while those built on small, disconnected dissident networks are likely to fragment (H2b). As predicted, the rebel movement in 1976-1982 Syria drew on the Muslim Brotherhood, a moderate broad social network, in order to construct an umbrella group encompassing almost all rebel actors. After the Assad regime crushed the movement at Homs in 1982, it sought to demobilize its Sunni opponents by dismantling the Muslim Brotherhood, infiltrating and splintering opposition groups, and sponsoring small Salafi networks. In short, Syrian state policy atomized civil society in the decades prior to 2011. When Sunnis rose in rebellion for a second time in 2011, they did so from scattered dissident networks, not one single cross-cutting social network. This, in turn, has led to an intensely fragmented civil war.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I present my research design, a most-similar systems case comparison, along with an overview of the evidence used in the case studies. Then I analyze my first case: the 1976-1982 Islamist rebellion. I score my two main independent variables, rebel type and civilian grievances, and trace their impact on rebel fragmentation over

the course of the conflict.[493] In short, a stationary rebel group, the Fighting Vanguard, initiated the conflict, and as civilian mobilization rose, it "tipped" the Muslim Brotherhood into participation. All rebel actors subsequently negotiated an umbrella group lead by the Muslim Brotherhood. After assessing competing hypotheses, I analyze the interlude between the two cases, in which the Assad regime dismantled the Muslim Brotherhood and similar networks. The second case study, of the 2011 Arab Spring rebellion follows this. Here I show that a roving rebel group, the Free Syrian Army, initiated the conflict and failed to mobilize its potential civilian constituency. Meanwhile, Islamist activists, lacking a broad social network (such as the Muslim Brotherhood) through which to coordinate their activity, built dozens of rebel groups on top of small dissident networks. Both rebel type and grievances thus help explain the Arab Spring rebellion's fragmented rebel movement.

Research Design

This chapter follows a most-similar systems design (Gerring 2006, 131–39), comparing the 1976 – 1982 Islamist rebellion with the 2011 Arab spring rebellion in Syria. Because the two cases were both mass Sunni uprisings in the same country and against the same dynastic regime, the cases possess strong structural similarities. However, they vary on the civilian constituency theory's key explanatory factors. First, the rebel groups in 1976-1982 were stationary (H1), while the first-moving groups in 2011 were roving.[494] Second, while both cases exhibited high levels of

---

[493] For the first case, I do this in its own section (7.3.3), while in the second, I do so in my discussion of each of the major categories of rebel groups, as the fragmented nature of the rebel movement does not lend itself to a single unified narrative.

[494] This variable did not vary during across my Nicaraguan cases; thus, this chapter presents my only qualitative consideration of rebel type.

sectarian grievances (H2c), a broad social network only existed during the 1976-1982 case.[495]

Other explanatory variables (H3 – H5), which underlie the alternative explanations examined here,

do not exhibit significant variation. Further, many omitted variables are controlled for by

comparing two cases in the same country.

Data for this chapter were collected from primary and secondary sources, journalistic

accounts, and situation reports by military and government practitioners. My study of the 1976-

1982 Islamist rebellion relies heavily on Raphael Lefèvre's (2013) and Alison Pargeter's (2013)

scholarship, as they had access to interviews with principals and documents that were otherwise

unavailable.[496] I also draw on a unique narrative account and analysis by Abu Musaab al-Souri

(n.d.), a participant in the rebellion and later al-Qaeda's chief military theorist, that was captured

by US forces in Afghanistan in 2002. However, because of the uprising's total defeat and the

absence of contemporary press coverage, much about the uprising remains unknown or uncertain.

Even al-Souri writes that he can make few "[o]bservations on the jihad experiences of the field

commanders and Army officers on the inside: We do not have sufficient data on the experiences

of these brethren since few of them survived" (al-Souri n.d., 15).

By contrast, a surfeit of journalistic accounts, scholarly analysis, and even survey

evidence exists for the 2011 uprising, and I make liberal use of these. Less certain are data on pre-

---

[495] Though I do not make such a strong claim here, this case study design resembles a "quasi-experimental dynamic comparison" (Gerring 2006, 152–60), in which a treatment (here the dismantling of broad social networks) is applied to one of "two communities that are similar in all respects."

[496] For example, Lefevre was given a copy of the diary of Ayman al-Shorbaji, the leader of the Fighting Vanguard in Damascus in the 1980s – an invaluable document as it would be written concurrent to the events and perhaps not for posterity. He was thus able to reconstruct an insider account of much of the build-up to the Hama massacre, when even other eminent Syrianists such as Itzchak Weismann (2010) accepted the Ba'ath regime's contention that the moderate Muslim Brotherhood was responsible for terrorist attacks, seemingly unaware of the existence of the revolutionary Fighting Vanguard group.

existing jihadi networks within Syria. My discussion of the 2011 case is limited to the first two years of the civil war, up to the emergence of ISIS in April-May of 2013, by which point the rebel movement had reached its highest level of observed fragmentation.[497]

1976-1982 Islamist rebellion

This section considers the first case, the 1976-1982 Islamist rebellion in Syria, motivated by intense sectarian *grievances*. Given high grievances, the civilian constituency theory predicts the mobilization of broad social networks, which in turn may help unify the rebel movement (*hypothesis* 2c). The theory successfully explains this case. The Islamist rebellion remained relatively unified throughout: at first only a small but *stationary* group (H1), the Fighting Vanguard, fought the Assad regime, but as other aggrieved actors joined the rebellion, they were able to negotiate an umbrella group based on the broad social network in which they were all embedded, the Muslim Brotherhood.

Scoring the dependent variable: rebel unity

I score the Islamist rebel movement as unified, or comprised of one effective rebel group, during almost the entire period of active conflict between 1976 and 1982. From 1976 until October 1979, the movement consisted of only one small group, the Fighting Vanguard. In the previous chapter I described this score on the dependent variable as *vanguard unity*. In October 1979, the Muslim Brotherhood joined the rebel movement, and for a little over a year the rebel movement consisted of two groups (Lefèvre 2013, 115–19). However, in December 1980 the factions

---

[497] Fragmentation has not substantially decreased since.

hastened to form an umbrella group with a shared command. Thus, from December 1980 until the collapse of the rebel movement in 1982, I score the dependent variable as *umbrella unity*.[498]

Scoring independent variables: rebel type and grievances

In this section I score the two independent variables for this case: rebel type (H1) and civilian grievances (H2). I score both rebel groups within the Islamist rebel movement as *stationary*. The Fighting Vanguard possessed strong communal ties, a popular ideology, and a disciplined structure. The Muslim Brotherhood, a broad social network that was converted into an *ad hoc* rebel group, did not simply possess communal ties; it was the community itself. I score grievances as *high*: after a 1963 coup, Syria's large, traditionally powerful Sunni majority was governed by a small and previously despised Alawi minority, a state of affairs constantly linked by conflict scholar to intense grievances (Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug 2013; Petersen 2002). Note that in this chapter I score grievances prior to rebel type as a narrative choice.

Minority rule and high anti-regime grievances

I score anti-regime grievances from 1976 to 1982 as *high*, due to Sunni opposition to its Alawi minority government. However, as in Nicaragua, anti-regime civilian mobilization increased in a stepwise manner from low mobilization from 1963 to 1974, to moderate mobilization from 1975 to 1979, and high mobilization thereafter. I justify my scoring for grievances here, and trace the stepwise increase in civilian mobilization in the following section.

The Islamist movement, along with many sectors of Syrian civil sociery, grew and radicalized against a backdrop of deep, broad structural grievances throughout the 1960s and

---

[498] This is not to suggest that there was not significant internal differentiations within the Muslim Brotherhood umbrella group – the very definition of umbrella group means that there were! However, just as in Chapter 6, I score this time period as unified because all factions wee subjected to a unified command.

1970s. These grievances were cultural, political, sectarian, and economic in nature, each dimension tending to reinforce the others along a pre-existing cleavage point: that between the Sunni majority and religious minorities, and in particular, the Alawite minority controlling the Syrian Ba'ath Party. The Ba'ath Party, which took power in a 1963 coup, promoted a secular, socialist, pro-rural platform that alienated conservative Sunnis and middle class urban merchants (Lawson 1982). More transgressive by far, the Ba'ath Party promoted Alawis, prior to the coup a politically and economically marginalized community, over traditional elites. Alawites comprised 10% of the Syrian population compared to the Sunnis' 72.7%,[499] and, typically serving as peasant farmers under Sunni landlords, they were oppressed even in their home province of Latakia despite comprising a majority there (Faksh 1984). The Alawite seizure of government turned Syria's sectarian status hierarchy on its head, an "ethnic status reversal" promoting powerful resentments among the Sunni populace (Horowitz 1985; Petersen 2001).[500]

The new regime's Islamist opponents were not slow to politicize this objective sectarian inequality: a new slogan, "a minority cannot forever rule a majority," was written on Islamist literature and chanted at increasingly violent street protests beginning in 1964.[501] Lefevre (2013) also describes how "Syrian Islamic publications such as Al-Nadhir referred to the Ba'athist regime as embodying the 'Alawi enemy', or these 'infidel Nusayris who are outside Islam.' Meanwhile, the resolutely secular (in this era) Ba'ath Party gave religious Sunnis plenty of reason to believe this. One major episode of popular street unrest occurred in 1967, in response to an article in a

---

[499] According to the 1943 census (Batatu 1999, 164). 2011 estimates are similar: 10 to 12% Alawi, 65% Sunni (Hokayem 2013, 17).
[500] There is debate among Syrianists over whether the Al-Assad regime should be interpreted as an Alawite regime or a one-man regime whose strongman happened to be Alawite. Either way, it is clear that many of Syria's Sunnis understood the regime as the former.
[501] "The Manifesto of the Islamic Revolution in Syria" quoted in Umar F. Abd-Allah, op. cit., p. 211. quoted in Lefevre (2013).

Ba'athist army publication declared that "God [...] and all other values that had controlled society in the past are no more than mummies in the Museum of History" (Zisser 2005, 45).

The Fighting Vanguard: a *stationary* rebel group

In the mid-to-late 1960s, in an atmosphere of rising tensions and popular Sunni mobilization, a charismatic street protest leader and Muslim Brother, Marwan Hadid, founded the *al-Taliyah al-Muqatila*, or Fighting Vanguard (Lia 2016, 545). The Fighting Vanguard was an Islamic revolutionary group, intending to overthrow the Ba'ath regime and replace it with an Islamic one. The Fighting Vanguard was "situated on the fringes of the Ikhwan [Muslim Brotherhood]." Although some Brotherhood branches expelled known Fighting Vanguard members, their membership mostly overlapped or were connected by kinship and "personal friendships" (Lefèvre 2013, 82, 123–24). These personal friendships apparently extended to the leaders of their respective organizations, Hadid and his former high school teacher (and Muslim Brotherhood leader after 1975), Adnan Saadeddine (Pargeter 2013). For his part, Saadeddine insisted that Hadid "stayed in the Ikhwan and he didn't leave it. We never kicked him out. But he had a wing that behaved the way it saw fit – it had nothing to do with the leadership" (Pargeter 2013).[502] Hadid's organization also may have benefited from Brotherhood funding. The Fighting Vanguard's goal was not to compete with the Muslim Brotherhood, but rather, as indicated by its name, to serve as the Muslim Brotherhood's revolutionary vanguard.[503] With a programmatic

---

[502] Unfortunately, I did not have access to the print version of Pargeter's book *The Muslim Brotherhood: From Opposition to Power* while preparing this dissertation (I have the e-book version). As a result, I am unable to provide page numbers for quotes or specific details cited from Pargeter (2013).
[503] One former member told Lefevre (2013, 102), "Sheikh Marwan was an enthusiastic member of the Ikhwan but he was not very respectful of the organization's rules; he wanted the Brotherhood to think less and act more," he added. "In other words, he ambitioned to revolutionize our organization."

ideology designed to appeal to the Sunni majority, well-organized urban underground cells, and a network of ties through the Muslim Brotherhood and with the conservative members of the Syrian *ulama* (or community of Islamic scholars), the Fighting Vanguard strongly resembled the FSLN.[504] The Fighting Vanguard's social composition also parallels the FSLN's; its fighters were "recruited just out of the mosques, universities and even high schools" (Lefèvre 2013, 106). Moreover, like the FSLN Marwan Hadid and his followers trained in Palestinian fedayeen camps in the late 1960s.[505]

In sum, the Fighting Vanguard was a small but *stationary* rebel group. It could draw on many network ties, promoted a revolutionary sectarian ideology, and rigorously incorporated and trained new members. On the other hand, its leadership structure was personalistic rather than collective, and as indicated by the internal struggle recounted above, this – alongside rising levels of recruitment – likely made the Fighting Vanguard vulnerable to leadership struggles. Excepting a few days in February 1982 when the Islamist movement took over Hama, it never controlled any territory necessitating the construction of institutions for public goods provision. However, its close ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, whose primary social role was public goods provision, offset this lack to some extent.

The Muslim Brotherhood: a broad social network converted to rebel organization

As the Fighting Vanguard began its attacks against the regime, the *Jam'iyat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin*, or the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, had not yet mobilized as part of the rebel

---

[504] al-Souri's study of the Syrian uprisings conducted for Al-Qaeda confirms this portrait of a highly disciplined, relatively "stationary" rebel group, although he criticizes its personalistic leadership style: "'Attalieaa' revolved around the persona of Adnan Akla which led to its fragmentation and demise. Those were the negative results of the one man rule (We should admit though that he was forced into doing it)" (al-Souri n.d., 36).

[505] Although there is no evidence to support it, this author prefers to imagine that Hadid met FSLN guerrillas who were also training there in 1969, including Pedro Aráuz and Eduardo Contreras.

movement. Rather, it was a broad social network, and a relatively moderate one. Yet the organization would be transformed, first by rising anti-regime mobilization and then by indiscriminate regime violence, into a rebel group. As it continued to be, simultaneously, a broad social network and a rebel group, I score its rebel type as *stationary*.

Itzchak Weismann writes that, "[t]he Muslim Brothers Society is indisputably the foremost socioreligious association in the Arab world" (Weismann 2010, 1). The Syrian chapter, founded in 1946 and modeled after its Egyptian forebear, merged several geographically diffuse *jam'iyat* (or Islamic societies) into a national organization. The *jam'iyat* had been "composed mostly of intellectuals and students and focused their activities primarily on cultural, social and sporting events" (Pargeter 2013) and the Muslim Brotherhood expanded upon this core constituency while branching out into political activism and public goods provision. The Brotherhood promoted a greater emphasis on Islam in Syria, yet its political stance was moderate for most of its existence, and its leaders' rhetoric (particularly that of leader Issam al-Attar) embraced democracy, constitutionalism, and respect for religious minorities. The Syrian chapter's membership was not nearly as large as the mass-mobilizing Egyptian chapter, which could claim millions of members, but it still sat squarely at the center of Islamic life. "[A] young ideologue of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, Said Hawwa… set up a nationwide network of *ulama* dedicated to enhancing coordination amongst all Islamic actors," and Brotherhood president al-Attam, as the mosque preacher at the University of Damascus's Faculty of Islamic Law, delivered "Friday sermons [that] were listened to by tens of thousands of pious Syrians" (Lefèvre 2013, 48, 92). While the Brotherhood was an occasional political actor during periods of relatively open party competition, its main roles were in social and economic public goods provision:

The Syrian Brotherhood set up its own Workmen's Committees tasked with creating co-operative companies in which all workers participate and share profits. In addition, the Ikhwan was involved in offering loans to help small craftsmen open shops. It also assisted poor working men by providing them with medical care and offering illiterate people a free education. In the Damascus trade unions, the Muslim Brotherhood's influence was growing... By the early 1950s, the social and economic activities of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood covered so much of Syrian life that, according to one analyst, the organization had become "a state within a state." (Lefèvre 2013, 94)

In short, the Muslim Brotherhood was a broad social network that could draw on a vast array of ties linking distinct social classes and groups within Syria's Sunni majority: "what made the scale of the Hama revolt possible was the strong local alliance struck between Akram al-Hawrani's powerful peasant movement, the urban merchants, the Ikhwan and the rural notables" (Lefèvre 2013, 59).

As a rebel group, to which role the organization would be repurposed in October 1979, these attributes identify the Muslim Brotherhood as posessing a *stationary* rebel type. The Muslim Brotherhood could draw on a high level of perceived legitimacy and a broadly popular ideological stance, a "simple message, which held that Islam was a comprehensive ideology that permeated every aspect of life, and [...] its members were viewed as the guardians of tradition in a changing world" (Pargeter 2013). It also subjected its decision-making in all things to a strongly-institutionalized system of collective leadership. Whether this last point was to its military advantage is debatable; Abu Musaab al-Souri (a proponent of decentralization in insurgent organizations) criticized it for utilizing "the same civilian organizational structure and hierarchy it had inside Syria to run the war from the outside. It created a huge organizational structure saturated

with committees and sub committees; engaged in open ended useless meetings. The new structure was closer to a board of directors for a financial institution than a leadership council for gang [guerrilla] warfare" (al-Souri n.d., 12). While this system was not successful in minimizing factional disputes within the Muslim Brotherhood, these disputes largely played out within the accepted "rules of the game," vouchsafing the organization's structural integrity.[506]

Tracing the transition from vanguard to umbrella unity

This section traces rebel movement fragmentation from the onset of conflict between the Assad regime and the Islamist rebel movement to its final defeat at Hama in 1982. To sum up, much like the Nicaraguan anti-Somocista rebel movement, the Syrian Islamist rebel movement can be broken up into three phases: a) a long period of slowly rising civilian mobilization in which the rebel movement was composed of a single small stationary group (the Fighting Vanguard); b) a period of sharply accelerating mobilization in which Muslim Brotherhood mobilized and the Fighting Vanguard experienced leadership disputes, and c) a period in which all groups were subsumed into an umbrella group, built on top of a broad social network (the Muslim Brotherhood). The unity achieved in the third period is consistent with civilian constituency theory's hypotheses 1 (rebel type) and 2c (high grievances): the Fighting Vanguard, and intense anti-regime grievances combined to "tip" the broad social network in which it was embedded, the Muslim Brotherhood, into violent opposition to the regime. While the insurgents themselves were heterogeneous and fractious, they were united under the Muslim Brotherhood's banner, which

---

[506] Assessing the Muslim Brotherhood's internal disputes, Lefevre arrives at a conclusion consonant with my own study of the FSLN: "ideology, geographic factionalism and religious bias all seem to have been, to varying degrees, factors merely used in retrospect to legitimize the leadership crisis... [I]ts root causes [...] as in every political formation composed of ambitious people who compete against each other for power, lies in a clash of personalities" (Lefèvre 2013, 92).

became an umbrella group combining the leadship of all Islamist factions. The umbrella organization was militarily unprepared and its internal cohesion dubious, but it managed to maintain its structural integrity while orchestrating a mass uprising.

Rising mobilization

Anti-regime civilian mobilization began shortly after the Ba'athist coup in 1963, periodically taking the form of sectarian communal street riots that left both Sunnis and Alawis dead. In the mid-1970s, anti-regime mobilization increased markedly, both within and outside the Islamist movement. In 1975, a radical Hama-based faction of the Muslim Brotherhood, led by Adnan Saadeddine, gained control of the organization and membership surged – "its membership in Aleppo did not exceed 800 in 1975 but had by 1978 swollen to an estimated maximum of 5,000 to 7,000" (Batatu 1999, 273) – and by some estimates its national membership reached as many as 30,000 (Lund 2011, 10). Meanwhile, the Fighting Vanguard also saw a surge of new recruits during this period of sharply mounting anti-regime mobilization (Lefèvre 2013, 106). Supporting this dissertation's contention of a relationship between rising civilian grievances, civilian mobilization and the anti-regime "tipping" of "moderate" broad social networks, Alison Pargeter (2013) reports that "the mood of the country was one of revolt with strikes and protests breaking out across the country. Therefore, the Syrian Ikhwan's [Muslim Brotherhood] increasingly forthright bid to confront the regime was in line with the growing radicalisation of the wider political scene."

Both rising grievances and civilian mobilization extended beyond the Islamist movement. The regime's pro-rural bias and internal migration from rural areas provoked urban resentments, embodied by slogans such as "Aleppo for the Aleppans" (Pargeter 2013). In the late 1970s, "Syrian cities and towns, especially Aleppo and the northern cities, were inundated by a wave of mass

protests and strikes in which nearly all opposition factions, including members of the professional syndicates and labour unions, participated" (Lia 2016, 548). The protests often culminated in sectarian lynchings and regime crackdowns. Aron Lund (2011, 9–11) details how

> [m]any influential civil society leaders – intellectuals, union activists, religious clerics, journalists and many others – began drifting into open dissent by the late 1970s... In late 1979, five illegal opposition parties came together to form the National Democratic Gathering (NDG), under the leadership of Jamal el-Atassi... In 1980, things came to a head. In March, government forces shelled the rebellious town of Jisr el-Shughour in northern Syria, killing many tens of people. In protest, the opposition called a general strike, to which the regime responded with a nation-wide crackdown. Hundreds of civil society leaders and NDG activists were arrested, and the professional unions were dissolved by decree, later to be reformed under close Baath Party supervision. This more or less destroyed the secular and civil opposition, although NDG activists continued to operate clandestinely.

Rising civilian mobilization also impacted the Fighting Vanguard's civilian constituency, in the theoretically expected manner. The civilian constituency theory predicts that rebel groups are more likely to experience leadership disputes and organizational splits as anti-regime grievances and mobilization rise (see Chapter 5). While the Fighting Vanguard did not succumb to organizational splits like the FSLN, there is evidence that an influx of recruits did lead to internal leadership disputes during the late 1970s. According to one member, the loss of older cadres and the simultaneous recruitment of ever more numerous students meant that, according to a Syrian Muslim Brother, "within al-Tali'a a new generation of jihadists started to emerge who had not gone through the proper educational process" (Lefèvre 2013, 106). As a result, differences of

opinion between militarily aggressive Hama- and Aleppo-based fighters led by Adnan Uqlah and cautious Damascus-based fighters caused "rising divergences" and "increasing tensions" (Lefèvre 2013, 94, 104). No data are available to definitively determine whether these internal factions grouped around distinct dissident networks (as with the FSLN), making it more difficult to assess the operation of a "commander constituency change mechanism." However, their geographical alignment suggests this is the case. The internal dispute was resolved in June 1979 with a spectacular operation in which Fighting Vanguard militants of Adnan Uqlah's faction gained access to the regime's Aleppo Artillery School and massacred 83 Alawi cadets. The mission's success allowed Uqlah to seize control of the Fighting Vanguard shortly thereafter in an internal coup.[507] This sequence of events demonstrates that, although the rebel movement did not fragment further as grievances rose, an influx of new recruits did spur leadership disputes, as predicted by the commander constituency change mechanism in Chapter 5.

Tipping a broad social network

Even as it cycled through different leaders, during the 1970s the Fighting Vanguard carried out an assassination campaign against prominent representatives of the Ba'ath regime, hoping "to trigger government retaliation that would ultimately convince the Brotherhood's leadership of the inevitability of armed struggle" (Lefèvre 2013, 102). The campaign reached its violent climax in June 1979 with the stunning assault on the Syrian Army's Artillery School in Aleppo. The Ba'ath regime's response was swift and uncompromising. Lumping the Muslim

---

[507] C.f. Eduardo Contreras' Comando Juan José Quezada. As discussed in Chapter V, Contreras also sought to parlay his operation's spectacular success into an internal coup over Carlos Fonseca, but was less successful than Uqlah, perhaps because Contreras, unlike Uqlah, could not combine his operational success with control over a major recruitment pipeline (in the Nicaraguan context, a *cantera*).

Brotherhood together with its radical offshoot, the regime unleashed a withering wave of repression.[508] Just as the Fighting Vanguard had intended, the Muslim Brotherhood was pushed into fighting; in October the Muslim Brotherhood leaders decided to declare a "jihad" and form a military wing (Lefèvre 2013, 115–19). In April 1980, the regime had to subdue Aleppo by force "when for several weeks nearly two-thirds of the city broke loose from the regime's control" (Batatu 1999, 269), and in June militants (likely with the Fighting Vanguard) made an attempt on Hafez al-Assad's life (Lund 2011, 10). The cycle of escalatory retaliation continued with the government's promulgation of 1980's Law 49, declaring membership in the Muslim Brotherhood a crime punishable by death, forcing the Muslim Brotherhood's and the Fighting Vanguard's leadership into a Jordanian exile.

Negotiating rebel unity

For a little over a year, the Islamist rebel movement effectively had two rebel groups, the Fighting Vanguard and the Muslim Brotherhood, though cooperation on the ground between the factions began immediately. In December 1980, in response to indiscriminate regime violence, the Islamist movement "cooperated under fire" by forming a Joint Command representing the Fighting Vanguard and two factions of the Muslim Brotherhood.[509] In another remarkable parallel to the FSLN's Joint National Directorate, the Islamist Joint Command contained four members from each group, for a total of twelve (Lefèvre 2013, 118).[510]

---

[508] "The Syrian government saw this as an opportunity to demolish the Muslim Brotherhood, and forever," concluded an anonymous al-Qaeda document captured in Osama Bin Ladin's home, quoted in Lefevre (2013, 111).

[509] The more moderate Damascus branch had distanced itself from the radical "northern alliance" branches of the Brotherhood in the internal struggles alluded to earlier.

[510] For comparison, the FSLN's Joint National Directorate contained three members from each faction, for a total of nine.

Apparently, other dissident networks joined the rebellion at this point (although the available sources do not reveal much about their identity): Abu Musaab al-Souri complained that the Islamist "arena was saturated with organizations with intermingled principles, loyalties and affiliations" (al-Souri n.d., 5). However, these organizations fought under the Joint Command. Even the critical al-Souri allows that "the majority of the Moslem and mujahideen youth converged on the 'Moslem Brotherhood organization'" and that disparate rebel actors including "the field commanders of Hamah, Damascus and the army officers of the failed coup"[511] gave the Joint Command their "pledge of allegiance" (al-Souri n.d., 12, 31). Given the intensifying confrontation,

> the Syrian Ikhwani united even further. After years of acrimony, the various factions
> of the movement came together in a show of unity not seen since the 1960s... As
> Obeida Nahas explained, 'At that time all the Ikhwani were in the same shoes and they
> joined forces with the Fighting Vanguard.' He also asserted that at the height of the
> violence, 'It came to a point where one couldn't draw a line between the two factions.'
> (Pargeter 2013)

The Islamist organizations seized control of Hama, long a bastion of conservative Islamist sentiment in February 1982. Militarily, they were no match for the regime's strength, particularly given the Ba'ath Party's strategy of urban destruction.[512] Entire sections of Hama were shelled into rubble, with an estimated loss of life between 10,000 to 40,000, many if not most civilians (Pargeter 2013). The partnership between the Islamist groups, fraught from the start, fell apart after

---

[511] I discuss this military opposition in the next section.
[512] See Staniland (2010) for the consequences of such a policy.

Hama's recapture and the rebel movement's failure, leaving behind mutual recriminations (Lefèvre 2013).[513]

Explaining the 1976-1982 Islamist rebellion

The civilian constituency theory's two hypotheses, rebel type and civilian grievances, combine to successfully explain the variation in rebel movement fragmentation over the course of the Islamist rebellion. At the onset of hostilities, the first-moving rebel group (the Fighting Vanguard) was stationary, and anti-regime mobilization was low. My theory expects this group to monopolize the available civilian constituency and therefore the rebel movement as a whole. The discussion above highlighted the Fighting Vanguard's extensive ties to the Muslim Brotherhood networks and its ability to recruit fighters directly from "mosques, universities and even high schools" (Lefèvre 2013, 106) – that is, the main social institutions of its Sunni constituency. While there are not enough data to show competing rebel groups failing to mobilize (as I did in Chapter 6 with the FARN), the available data are at least consistent with the civilian constituency theory's prediction that the Fighting Vanguard would "corner the market" on radical recruits prior to 1975.

With a "stationary" rebel movement and moderate mobilization, the civilian constituency theory predicts limited fragmentation. And indeed, as civilian mobilization began rising in 1975, the rebel movement began showing signs of potential fragmentation: the Fighting Vanguard underwent leadership struggles, exactly as the FSLN had during the analogous period. As mobilization rose toward high levels in 1979-1980, the town of Jisr el-Shughour rebelled,[514] and

---

[513] This ill will is reflected in al-Souri's vituperative account of the Muslim Brotherhood's weak military contribution.
[514] Available sources do not indicate whether these rebels were under the command of the Fighting Vanguard, Muslim Brotherhood, secular groups, or were spontaneously mobilized.

the Muslim Brotherhood was forced into rebellion as well. The rebellion now had multiple centers and at least two rebel groups, the Fighting Vanguard and the Muslim Brotherhood.

Under high civilian mobilization, the civilian constituency theory predicts that rebelling broad social networks will incentivize or impose rebel movement unity. The Muslim Brotherhood's dual role as both a rebel group and a broad social network helped it achieve this. Given the Muslim Brotherhood's involvement in all aspects of Sunni life from education to trade unions (Lefèvre 2013, 94), it is not surprising that a wide array of such organizations gave it their "pledge of allegiance" (al-Souri n.d., 12). As did the Fighting Vanguard, whose radical constituency was a subset of the Muslim Brotherhood's vast Sunni constituency. The successful rebel group seeks to set up a "counter-state" (Wickham-Crowley 1991, 35); the Muslim Brotherhood was already a "state within a state" (Lefèvre 2013, 94).

Alternate explanations

Other explanations do not adequately explain levels of rebel movement fragmentation over the course of the Islamist insurgency and uprising. State repression (H3) is most successful. The rebel movement did not fragment when it suffered leadership decapitations (Staniland 2014), though they may have played a role in stoking leadership disputes. The Fighting Vanguard did not split following the capture of founder Marwan Hadid in June 1975,[515] but Adnan Uqlah did take power in an internal coup following Hadid's successor Abd-us-Sattar az-Za'im's death in mid-1979. The data are not granular enough to know whether battlefield losses were unevenly distributed, but Hanna Batutu reports that the state employed indiscriminate repression throughout the conflict, including "the sealing off of entire neighborhoods, house-to-house searches, mass

---

[515] Hadid died in prison under disputed circumstances one year later (Batatu 1999, 265).

arrests, fighting from building to building in narrow alleys, killing prisoners in their cells, shooting noncombatants dragged into the streets from their homes, and at Hamah in 1982 indiscriminate bombardments by artillery and helicopter gunships and the leveling-to the ground of whole sections of the northern and eastern parts of the city" (Batatu 1999, 273). Such repression did, in turn, incentivize "cooperation under fire" (Staniland 2014). Thus, differing patterns of state repression may help explain the Fighting Vanguard's leadership disputes and the rebel movement's eventual unification, but as we shall see, it will have no such effect on the 2011 rebel movement.

External support (H4) more clearly fails to explain levels of rebel fragmentation. The rebel movement was awash in fungible resources – they had at least 15,000 machine guns and "hundreds of millions of dollars at their disposal, they had access to regional and international media outlets, many Moslem and non Moslem countries provided political and military aid" (al-Souri n.d., 12)[516] – gleaned from a spectrum of neighboring states – Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan – harboring regimes committed to wildly divergent ideologies and interests within Syria (Lefèvre 2013, 129). This predicts a highly-fragmented movement; nonetheless, the Islamist rebels worked towards unity during this influx of external resources. An alternative perspective might argue that the rebels unified as the Muslim Brotherhood's longstanding international networks allowed it to capture the bulk of the external resource and thereby dominate the rebel movement (Tamm 2016), yet in fact, during this period the Muslim Brotherhood's fighting strength vis-a-vis the Fighting

---

[516] "Hundreds of millions of dollars" must be an exaggeration either on al-Souri's part or his translator's.

Vanguard slipped so much during this period that the Fighting Vanguard came to be called the "Internal Muslim Brotherhood" (Lefèvre 2013, 119).[517]

Finally, it is difficult to assess the role of ideological and strategic disagreements (H5) in causing rebel factionalism without more detailed data. However, it's clear that there were substantial ideological differences between the jihadist Fighting Vanguard and the moderate Muslim Brotherhood. Nonetheless, they jointly formed an umbrella group, including even the especially moderate Damascus wing of the Muslim Brotherhood: "once it looked as though revolution was possible, even they were quick to take part" (Pargeter 2013).

Interlude: dismantling broad social networks

The 1976-1982 Islamist rebellion and the 2011-present rebellion exhibit substantial similarities in many of the factors hypothesized to cause rebel fragmentation and unity. Nonetheless, they express nearly opposite scores on the dependent variable: the earlier movement was largely unified, and the latter movement profoundly fragmented. I explain much of this variation using the civilian constituency theory. Crucially, prior to the 2011 rebel movement, the Assad regime dismantled the Muslim Brotherhood and other broad social networks in Syrian civil society. Thus, as grievances rose (H2b), large numbers of dissident networks mobilized as rebel groups. However, with broad social networks suppressed, they were unavailable to play the role they did in Nicaragua (1979) and Syria (1980) in unifying the rebel movement (H2c).

---

[517] As the principal leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood were already in exile in Amman. The Fighting Vanguard's growing strength was also reflected in recruitment: "A cable from the US Defense Intelligence Agency, which at the time closely monitored the unfolding of the protests in Syria, stated that while it was estimated that the Fighting Vanguard counted, in the late 1970s, only a few hundred members, by the early 1980s it had reached over 1,000 jihadist militants" (Lefèvre 2013, 119).

To understand how the regime dismantled broad social networks, we must analyze how the Hama uprising shocked the regime and led to dramatic shifts in its strategies for social control during the thirty-year interlude between the two conflicts. I emphasize four political and social regime policies during the interlude, and their consequences: First, due to sustained regime repression, the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood went "from being the most important Ikhwani branch after the Egyptians to little more than the shell of a leadership in exile." (Pargeter 2013). Second, the regime jealously prevented Islamists from establishing a successor broad social network via a mix of repression and co-option of prominent Sunni clerics. Third, the regime simultaneously cultivated and isolated small jihadist networks dedicated to transiting foreign fighters through Syria to battlefields in Iraq. Finally, unable to completely eliminate its domestic opposition the regime pursued a strategy of infiltrating, isolating, and fragmenting its potential opponents in civil society. The sum of these four strategies was not to eliminate opposition but to atomize it. In terms of the civilian constituency theory, the post-Hama Ba'athist strategy for governing Syria hinged on the suppression of broad social networks (understood by the regime as the source of effective collective action) and sponsoring a proliferation of small potentially dissident networks.

After the revolt was definitively crushed at Hama, the regime imposed victor's justice on the defeated Muslim Brotherhood, dismantling the organization root and branch. Most significantly, regime repression cost the Muslim Brotherhood the means to maintain organic links to its many former constituencies inside Syria. As Emile Hokayem (2013, 94) summarizes, "Its leadership operated in exile and membership in the organisation was punishable by death. It could not run for elections, did not have representatives in professional bodies, could not be involved in charity work or overtly control mosques." Within a few years, an organization that had commanded the allegiance or at least sympathies of tens of thousands of Syrians all but ceased to

exist inside Syria. Within a decade, the Assad regime was assured enough to begin releasing some of its thousands of former Muslim Brotherhood prisoners, in waves, always under the watchful eyes of the *mukhabarat* secret police, and typically under the condition that, as with former MB leader Abu Guddha, "[they] busy [themselves] with matters of education and religion and avoid all political activity" (Zisser 2005, 52). By the early 2000s, the movement had been rendered "irrelevant," and when its leaders in exile "published the draft of the 'Covenant of National Honor for Political Activity' (Mithaq Sharaf Wa†ani Lil-"Amal al-Siyasi)," it mainly served "probably to remind everyone of its [the Muslim Brotherhood's] existence" (Zisser 2005, 56).

The Assad regime worked deliberately to prevent a successor organization to consolidate in the MB's place, primarily by coopting Sunni networks and promoting an official regime Sunnism. The regime acquired and fostered "relationships with Sunni leaders who would be willing to assume positions of public religious authority but simultaneously to be distinctly non-political and acquiescent to government expectations regarding the private practice of moderate Sunni Islam" (Lister 2016b, 27; see also Landis and Pace 2007, 51; Zisser 2005). In the 1990s the regime allowed and sponsored the proliferation of Islamic schools run by compliant scholars, "some of them even named after the president, (*Madaris al-Asad li-T'alim al-Qur'an*)" (Zisser 2005, 49). It also promoted loyalists into the same positions once occupied by Muslim Brotherhood leaders. The most prominent example was Sheikh Muhammad Sa'id Ramadan al-Buti, who "made his first gestures of support for the regime during the 1979-82 insurgency: whereas most of his senior colleagues were either silent or supportive of the opposition, he vocally condemned the attacks carried out by Islamic militants... In exchange for helping the regime to defeat its Islamic

opponents, al-Buti was endowed with informal leadership over Syrian Islam" (Pierret 2013).[518]

Al-Buti enjoyed regime sponsorship, including a popular program on Syrian television, and in 2008, he became the preacher at the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, the same position held by former Muslim Brotherhood leader Issam al-Attar in the 1960s. After the 2011 uprising, "his support for the regime gradually became unconditional and, above all, unlimited. A few days before his assassination [by unknown agents in 2013]... al-Buti was still encouraging the faithful to wage jihad in the ranks of the 'heroic' Syrian Arab Army, which he once compared to the Companions of the Prophet, in order to defeat the 'global conspiracy' against Syria" (Pierret 2013).[519] This strategy of co-opting the mainstream Syrian *ulama* could not, perhaps, mobilize Islamic sentiment in favor of the regime; its goal was rather to demobilize organized opposition from Islamic sectors. In sum, the regime "open[ed] up to Islamists in the hope of drawing them in and under [its] control" (Lister 2016b, 31), to shift the ideological composition of Syrian Islamism towards quietism, to control influential nodes within mainstream Islamic networks (and in the process implicate them in the regime's repression), and to isolate pockets of anti-regime sentiment from one another.

Despite the regime's best efforts, it proved impossible to eliminate all zero- and low-threshold activists: "[t]he absence of the MB created an opening for loosely organised but better

---

[518] At this point, al-Buti was the dean of the faculty of Sharia at the University of Damascus, the same position held by former Muslim Brotherhood leader Issam al-Attar two decades earlier.

[519] The example of al-Buti is not to suggest that there were not regime loyalists among the Sunni *ulama* during the 1960s and 1970s; there were, including al-Buti himself and the Mufti of Syria, Ahmad Kaftari. The difference is that the Assad regime has sought to promote a *monopoly* of loyalists - or failing that, depoliticized figures - in publicly visible Islamic roles. An additional note: both al-Buti and Kaftari, though Sunni, are Kurds - an ethnic minority that may have as much to fear from Arab domination as Alawis have from Sunni domination. Their Kurdish ethnicity may have helped shape their pro-regime orientation.

funded Salafi groups" (Hokayem 2013, 94).[520] The broad Islamic revival chronicled by Zisser (2005) and Alhaj (2010) was accompanied by "[j]ihadist militancy... growing roots in the southern city of Deraa and in the northern cities of Idlib and Aleppo" (Lister 2016b, 32). In response, the regime paralleled its strategy of simultaneously co-opting and fragmenting moderate Sunni networks with an analogous strategy for Syrian jihadi elements. Specifically, they sought to buy off domestic extremists by re-directing and sponsoring Islamic extremism abroad. Syrian intelligence sponsored, funded, and trained networks dedicated to exporting Islamist fighters to combat American soldiers in Iraq (and later to Lebanon):

> The explosive start to the conflict in Iraq had therefore led to a rapid establishment of foreign-fighter recruitment and facilitation networks in Syria... [t]he dominant actor in maintaining the durability of these foreign fighter networks—Syria's military intelligence, led by Assad's brother-in-law Assef Shawkat—had an express interest in ensuring that these hundreds and thousands of jihadists, many of whom definitively sought martyrdom, did not remain on Syrian territory for long. (Lister 2016b, 35–36)

This approach served a number of policy goals, both foreign and domestic. First, it allowed the Syrian government to indirectly strike at American invaders and thereby claim the mantle of defender of Arab and Muslim lands - a pillar of Ba'athism's international and domestic legitimization. Second, by supporting Islamist extremists focused externally, the regime created incentives for the extremists to avoid waging jihad in Syria, lest they lose a valuable state sponsor. Third, it provided an escape valve of sorts for homegrown Syrian jihadists, who could be channeled

---

[520] The MB had encompassed both militant Salafi and more moderate Sufi wings. As indicated above, the newly forming Salafi groups were necessarily more loosely organized than the MB as regime strategy focused on preventing the coalescence of large-scale Salafi networks.

outside of Syria. Finally, it allowed the regime to infiltrate the very jihadi networks they were supporting, allowing them to gather information on them, to keep them small and isolated from one another, and allowing intelligence to dismantle any network that grew strong enough to pose a threat to regime stability. As General Intelligence director Ali Mamlouk claimed during this period, "In principle, we don't attack or kill [jihadists] immediately. Instead, we embed ourselves in them and only at the opportune moment do we move" (quoted in Lister [2016b, 33]).

However, this was a dangerous policy with clear risks. During the early 2000s, the regime could manage "the spread of isolated militant cells" that "command[ed] very little popular support in a Syrian street still wary of the violent clashes between Islamists and the regime in the early 1980s" (Landis and Pace 2007, 52). However, by tolerating the proliferation of low-threshold networks organized around the production of political violence and with strong links to international pools of foreign fighters, regime policy itself created a large number of what would become dissident networks in the context of rising anti-regime grievances. In doing so, the regime may well have sowed the seeds of the fragmented, foreign fighter-dominated Islamist component of the 2011-present Syrian insurgency. Domestic terrorist attacks related to these networks date back to 2004, when an "unprecedented," "almost unheard-of" terrorist attack shattered Syria's "tightly-policed calm" (BBC NEWS 2004; Penketh 2004); the attack was carried out by militants returning from fighting in Iraq who attacked a United Nations building (Zisser 2005). As a result of incidents such as these and the al-Assad regime's desire to normalize its relations with Western powers,

> most of the Levantine jihadi networks crisscrossing Syria were shut down after around 2008. As part of an under-the-table understanding with the USA, Iraq, and other governments, jihadi activists were run out of the country, jailed, or killed, and border

controls were tightened. These years also saw a hardening of the regime's attitude to Islamism in general, and increased pressure on the indigenous Syrian salafi groups. Many former Iraq fighters were rounded up and jailed in the Seidnaia prison outside Damascus. (Lund 2013, 8)

While these networks may have been shut down, they could not be fully extinguished, and they played a critical role in mobilizing both domestic and foreign Islamist groups as the 2011 uprising deepened into civil war.

Finally, the Assad regime took a sledgehammer approach to civil society and the secular opposition, employing fragmentation as a technology of control. The regime demobilized opposition by enforcing "a politics of public dissimulation in which citizens act *as if* they revere their leader," which, *inter alia*, "occasions the enforcement of obedience; it induces complicity by creating practices in which citizens are themselves 'accomplices,' upholding the norms constitutive of Asad's domination; *it isolates Syrians from one another* [emphasis mine]; and it clutters public space with monotonous slogans and empty gestures" (Wedeen 1999, 6). By enforcing a widespread, if incomplete, compliance with claims that were *prima facie* literally unbelievable ("Asad is the country's 'premier pharmacist,'" [Wedeen 1999, 1]), the public cult rendered organized anti-regime collective action more difficult to achieve and sustain.

However, the Assad regime did not rely solely on semiotic domination. Another favored technique was to infiltrate opposition groups with the specific intention of fomenting fragmentation. As Landis and Pace (2007, 49–50) describe it,

Civil society in Syria is a wasteland. Even at the height of Bashar's reformist fervor, the regime refused to license dissident groups, choosing instead to tolerate their illegal operation until political convenience dictated otherwise... Contrary to the popular

presumption, Syria does not suffer from a shortage of oppositional political parties. In fact, the problem is that there is a glut of these parties, despite the fact that all of them are technically illegal. Strawman parties, consisting of two or three political entrepreneurs, are being formed with such frequency that people have stopped keeping track. The combination of security pressures and lack of internal democracy have rendered the parties brittle and prone to splintering. *State agents easily infiltrate parties, foment internal discord, and form breakaway parties with disaffected members* [emphasis mine].[521]

This description invites comparison to Nicaraguan civil society and the political system under the Somoza regime. All three Somoza dynasts employed *pactismo* to co-opt and neuter political opponents and individual Church leaders, and they incorporated the labor movement and political parties across a spectrum from the *Partido Socialista* to the *Zancudos* (or "mosquitos," a derogatory nickname for the Somocista Conservatives). But the Somozas' balancing act maintained a coalition that was always only just large enough to maintain power, whereas after Hama the Assad dynasty sought a monopoly, rather than a balance, of political forces. The Syrian regime relied on a far more expansive violent apparatus, particularly its *mukhabarat* secret police, which were incommensurably more numerous, brutal, and professional than the Somozas' National Guard or network of *orejas* (ears). Accordingly, rebel groups in Nicaragua could make deep inroads within a robust civil society and party system, as well as an independent and

---

[521] Aron Lund (Lund 2012, 22) agrees with this assessment, writing that "the opposition landscape is so fragmented and disconnected, that there is little clarity even among activists themselves about what groups and coalitions are truly effective or enjoy popular support. All organized groups are small, and a prominent individual dissident's word will often carry greater weight than that of a political party with hundreds of members." Lund also wrote a (pre-uprising) 2010 book on the Syrian opposition, an so is unlikely to be projecting backwards.

combative Catholic Church. No such conditions obtained for rebel groups seeking to unite the 2011 Syrian uprising, as a direct result of the Assad regime's policies between 1982 and 2011.

The four components of the Assad regime's policy discussed above are clearly iterations of a unified underlying strategy: lacking the strength to eliminate opposition through wholesale domination of civil society, the Syrian regime settled on a divide-and-rule strategy, aimed at breaking opposition actors down to the smallest possible unit, that is, atomizing and isolating the opposition. It is also worth reemphasizing here that the regime adopted these policies as a direct response to the Hama uprising, in order to render the collective action achieved by the Fighting Vanguard and the Muslim Brotherhood impossible to reproduce in the future. To that end it succeeded only partially.

2011 Arab Spring rebellion

The 2011 Arab Spring bears strong structural similarities to the 1976-1982 Islamist rebellion. Both rebellions occurred under high grievances (with much the same content) and civilian mobilization (H2c), both rebellions suffered mass, indiscriminate state repression (H3), received significant, fungible external support (H4), and were fought by rebels with diverse ideologies ranging from democratic to salafist (H5). At a more basic level, both rebellions were in the same country, had largely the same communal composition (Sunni Arabs), and fought the same regime (the Assad dynasty). Nonetheless, they exhibit nearly opposite scores on the dependent variable: the various actors in the 1976-1982 rebellion managed to unify under the umbrella of the Muslim Brotherhood, while those of 2011 remain profoundly fragmented. To understand why, I emphasize variation on the two variables central to the civilian constituency theory. The 2011 rebel movement was initiated by a *roving* rebel group, the Free Syrian Army, rather than the *stationary* Fighting Vanguard (H1). Unlike its predecessor, the FSA was unable to expand from its initial

constituency as civilian mobilization rose. Second, thirty years of regime policy had dismantled

broad social networks like the Muslim Brotherhood, meaning that high grievances (H2c) could not

help rebels build umbrella groups.

Scoring the dependent variable: rebel fragmentation

I score the Syrian Arab Spring rebellion as *highly fragmented* nearly from the beginning.

Its Laakso-Taagepera index in 2013, calculated with conservative assumptions about umbrella

groups and based on limited data coverage, was 4.42 effective rebel groups – more fragmented

than any conflict-year in my large-*n* sample (see Chapter 3).[522] In order to arrive at this score, I

only included seven groups and umbrellas:[523] the FSA, the Jabhat al-Nusra, the Syrian Islamic

Liberation Front, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, the Syrian Islamic Front, the Ahfad al-

Rasoul Brigades, and the Asala wa al-Tanmiya Front. Meanwhile, my data coverage does not

approach that of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which counts over a

thousand operationally distinct rebel groups in Syria. Both the conservative assumptions and my

limited data coverage bias the score downwards, and likely by a great deal Nonetheless, 4.42

effective rebel groups remains the largest in the sample by a significant margin, evidence that the

Syrian rebel movement may well be the most fragmented in history.[524]

---

[522] 2013 was outside the time scope of the sample analyzed in Chapter 3. My main conservative assumption was that large blocs, such as the FSA, the SIF, and the SILF were in fact coherent umbrella groups rather than alliances of independent groups. This is a fuzzy but critical difference: rebel alliances of the sort studied by Christia (2012) are potentially transitory, in which member groups cooperate towards situationally shared goals, comparable to the Alliance powers during World War II. By contrast, while umbrella groups may not necessarily merge their constituent groups' hierarchies, they do institutionalize a substantial and durable joint decision-making body *at the top of the hierarchy*, such as that of NATO (properly speaking, a security community rather than an alliance). However, there is considerable evidence that most rebel blocs in Syria are properly considered alliances rather than umbrella groups.

[523] These groups and umbrellas were identified as the largest by BBC News (Guide to the Syrian rebels 2013), and cross-checked with other sources used in this chapter.

[524] Afghanistan in 1984 is the next highest, with 3.84 effective rebel groups. The subsequent drop off is steep.

Scoring the independent variables

In this section I score the two main independent variables for the Arab Spring case: rebel type (H1) and civilian grievances (H2). I identify the first-moving rebel group, the Free Syrian Army (FSA), as a *roving* rebel group, whose central command lacked control over local units and which, favoring military deserters, failed to incorporate civilian dissident networks. In contrast, second-moving Islamist rebel groups were by and large *stationary*, as they recruited through civilian dissident networks, propounded popular ideologies, and constructed capable central commands. Meanwhile, *high* civilian grievances stemmed from the same sectarian roots as in the 1976-1982 rebellion, and anti-regime civilian mobilization reached a high level within months in a revolutionary cascade. Given these scores on the independent variables, the civilian constituency theory would expect broad social networks (H2c) to mobilize, lending a measure of unity to the rebel movement. However, as discussed previously, any network fitting this description had been dismantled. Thus, the FSA, a roving rebel group, proved unable to monopolize its potential civilian constituency, while a large number of stationary Islamist groups formed in disconnected dissident networks. As a result, the rebel movement quickly fragmented and remained so over time.

Anti-regime grievances

The most salient objective inequality in 2011, as in 1976, remained minority control of the government, justifying the same *high* score for civilian grievances. As before, economic inequalities played a role as well, though their impact was differently distributed. Meanwhile, from March 2011 to January 2012, civilian mobilization leapt from insignificant to high as participation cascaded through civilian networks.

The ongoing civil war in Syria began with large-scale protests molded on similar protests events in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and other Arab nations. The Syrian regime faced little organized

activity in the first three months after protests swept Tunisia and Egypt, but the security forces'

ham-handed and disproportionate response to anti-regime graffiti in Deraa – imprisoning and

torturing the responsible schoolboys – proved the spark that set off a revolutionary cascade

(Hokayem 2013, 15). Mass protests broke out in most major cities across Syria. The protests,

loosely organized by even looser networks of online activists, were essentially acephalous. The

local councils and committees that began to spring up "rarely had organizational ties to the old

political groups" and "generally do not initiate demonstrations themselves" (Lund 2012, 38).

However, the online networks would prove far more vulnerable to regime repression than time-

honored clan, kinship, and religious networks, and "[f]rom early 2012, the militarisation of the

revolution further divided and marginalised activists, whose means and organisation paled in

comparison to those of the rebels" (Hokayem 2013, 70).. As with the 1976-1982 uprisings, deep

structural economic, political, and sectarian grievances were readily apparent to many observers

after the event:

> Steady economic growth, limited economic reforms and the appearance of growing
>
> wealth in major cities, complemented by statements of commitment and good
>
> intentions by government modernisers, created the sense that Syria was progressing.
>
> As with Egypt and Tunisia, little attention was devoted to deepening inequalities,
>
> growing corruption, the unmanaged consequences of the flawed liberalisation of the
>
> economy and the neglect of rural areas" (Hokayem 2013, 14)

There is evidence linking economic and political grievances to within-case patterns of

mobilization. The regime's old pro-rural policy bias had given way to policies more palatable to

the urban centers, and this change corresponds to a differences in geographical centers of

mobilization: "during the Islamic Rebellion," according to Eyal Zisser (2005, 60), "there was

almost complete tranquility in the rural areas, including among the Sunnis," while during the Arab Spring uprising, "[r]ural and peripheral areas were the first to join the revolution, while the two largest cities, Aleppo and Damascus, were hit last" (Hokayem 2013, 19). In both uprisings, the sectarian divide quickly became the central cleavage around which communities mobilized, in spite of the best efforts of civilian activists in 2011.

The Free Syrian Army: a roving rebel group

The Free Syrian Army (FSA), a loose-knit rebel group principally composed of Syrian Army deserters willingly or unwillingly re-mobilized as hometown militias, was the first armed rebel organization to emerge publicly during the Assad regime's crackdown on protest in the summer of 2011 (Lister 2016a, 7–9).[525] For the first six months or more, it was the only well-organized rebel group engaged in combat with the government (most visibly during the battle for Homs in January and February of 2012). Its large size, nationwide reach, and rapid consolidation of international legitimacy led some contemporaneous observers to conclude that the FSA represented both a unified Syrian rebel movement and an existential threat to the Assad regime.[526] However, as the conflict dragged on, it became clear that the FSA had failed to consolidate its hegemony over the rebel movement; "[t]he ICRC's index of armed groups recorded as many as 1,000 operating in Syria by late 2012, of which only around half proclaimed their adherence to the FSA" (Hokayem 2013, 84). Moreover, many of the FSA's constituent battalions appeared to have little more than a nominal, transactional relationship with the group's alleged hierarchy, often

---

[525] It was preceded by an initially non-violent organization of defecting Syrian Army officers called the Free Officer Movement (FOM). The FOM merged into the FSA in short order.
[526] See, for example, analyst Jeffrey White's (2011) description.

shifting in and out from underneath the FSA umbrella in a manner reminiscent of factional realignments in the Somalian civil war (Seymour 2014).

The FSA's inability to impose unity on the Syrian rebel movement by monopolizing it despite its head start, rapid growth, and large size, I will argue, was due in part to the fact that it was a *roving* rebel group that failed to expand beyond its initial constituency of defecting Syrian Army conscripts. I argue that there are two main reasons for this failure. First, a "horizontal" pattern of defections from the Syrian Army meant that few officers, or even recruits highly committed to combating the regime, joined the fledgling FSA (Albrecht and Ohl 2016, 47–48). The resulting leadership deficit crippled cooperation among the independently-formed FSA battalions, and discipline within them. Second, FSA units deliberately eschewed mobilizing civilian dissidents, although such dissidents were plentiful and eventually joined or formed competing rebel groups. In sum, the FSA lacked the ability to forge ties with unconnected dissident networks and was neglectful of the necessity of doing so.

Horizontal patterns of defection

The still small literature on military defection has taken a great interest in both Syrian cases presented in this chapter. McLauchlin (2010) argued that the Assad regime's reliance on co-ethnics during the 1976-1982 Islamist rebellion helped insure the loyalty of Alawi soldiers, while leaving the soldiers from the Sunni out-group vulnerable to "desertion cascades." This pattern would reoccur after the 2011 Arab Spring uprising, with the nearly 300,000 strong Syrian Army reduced in size and ever more reliant on a 60,000 men Alawi core (Makara 2013). The dynamics of desertion in 2011 and 2012 may have differed in one crucial respect: after the Islamist rebellion, the Assad regime became even more dependent on Alawi officers as a means of "coup-proofing;" by the time of Hafez al-Assad's death in 2000, approximately 90% of all officers were Alawi

(McLauchlin 2010, 341). As Hokayem (2013, 61) points out, no whole large unit defected in its entirety and almost no high-ranking officers or elite troops were among the deserters. Rather, an individual-level decision to defect was repeated tens of thousands of times. Thus, the Syrian Army dissolved from the feet up (its Sunni conscripts deserted in a constant, debilitating trickle) while the head stayed put (its Alawite officer core stayed loyal to their co-ethnic regime). This pattern of division between conscripts and officers, which Albrecht and Ohl (2016) label "horizontal" desertions, contrasts with traditional, "vertical" military splits, in which whole brigades under different commanders pledge loyalty to opposite sides of a conflict.

Albrecht and Ohl (2016, 40) correctly associate horizontal desertions with the "emergence of militias," although they do not specify the mechanism linking the two phenomena in detail. The following section seeks to fill in that gap. A key point is that most Syrian Army deserters returned to their hometowns prior to mobilizing (or being forced to mobilize by regime violence) as homegrown brigades of the Free Syrian Army (Littell 2015, 140). This pattern accords with another excellent study by McLauchlin (2014), which found that soldiers in the Spanish Civil War were more likely to desert if their hometown lay in mountainous terrain - that is, terrain more difficult for the regime to control and police. Similarly, desertions from the Syrian Army only began to pick up steam as the regime began to lose control of rural territory where most Sunni conscripts originated (Albrecht and Ohl 2016, 48). Thus, the FSA units forming in villages and urban neighborhoods across Syria were not equivalent to any pre-existing Syrian Army unit, as these had not been organized geographically. Employing a geological metaphor, most of the Syrian Army faded away, as if by erosion, and a vast number of new FSA units formed out of the particulate, as if by accretion. This individuated process (and the lack of high-ranking deserting officers) meant that the deserters could make use of little preexisting hierarchy, structure, or

organizational principles. In Staniland's (2014) terminology, the FSA was a "parochial organization," in which units were embedded locally but lacked links between unit leaders or an authoritative central command. The loyalty of individual leaders (usually low-ranking officers who returned to their hometowns after defecting) to the self-proclaimed Military Command varied greatly. The lack of mechanism for incorporating and imposing central leadership on local new units meant a lack of uniform socialization of soldiers, which inhibited a cohesive ideological identity from emerging either among the leadership or the FSA rank-and-file.

Stagnation by policy

Above and beyond their lack of internal cohesion or hierarchy, the *ad hoc* leaders of most FSA units conformed to a catastrophic error: worried with being tagged by potential Western sponsors as Islamist or terrorists, they eschewed mobilization of civilian dissidents for fear that radical Islamists would infiltrate and delegitimize their organization. Journalist Jonathan Littell reports that this was a major preoccupation among the best organized FSA units in Homs in early 2012, writing that"[t]he FSA is afraid of showing that there are civilians who joined their ranks. For them that would be giving credit to the regime's claims of 'terrorism.' Strong paranoia on that level" (Littell 2015, 127).[527] Thus, for about a year the FSA was composed primarily of army defectors. For example, the Military Council of one of the FSA's most capable units, the al-Farouk Brigade, contained only three civilians out of twenty-four members (Littell 2015, 90). Interviews

---

[527] It also seems likely to me, though this is speculation on my part, that the civilian/military distinction was strongly inculcated into soldiers in the Syrian Army, and this helps explain why despite a lack of coordination, most FSA brigades converged on purely military organizations. The soldiers were untrained in and unprepared for guerrilla insurgency by a "politico-military organization," to borrow Carlos Fonseca's phrase, designed to win civilian support and in which non-combatants occupy a gradation of types and degrees of participation; rather, the "220,000-strong [Syrian] army was trained for conventional warfare against Israel and its 50,000-strong elite units to put down internal challenges brutally" (Hokayem 2013, 58).

conceded to Littell or to other journalists at the time (for example, Vice's Robert King [2012]) make clear that the civilian to defector ratio held for much of the FSA.

The collective emphasis on recruiting Syrian Army deserters created significant problems for sustained expansion. The FSA's main recruitment pool was also its battlefield opponent, leading to difficulties gauging recruits' commitment to fight for the rebels. In one example, after a firefight with the FSA, "two soldiers fled; wounded, they were captured, and it's only at that point that they said: 'We're with you.' But the FSA considers them prisoners [and not deserters]." [Littell 2015, 105]. Another example illustrates the dangers of attempting to recruit among enemies: "Abu Saadu, who had gone to speak with the mukhabarat soldiers at a post to convince them to join the FSA. One mukhabarat put down his gun and told him: 'OK, I'll join you.' Abu Saadu approached and the mukhabarat took out a hidden pistol and killed him with a bullet to the eye" (Littell 2015, 134). Perhaps most importantly, Syrian Army deserters who joined the FSA uniformly insisted that they had not taken part in violent repression ("I did not participate in the killing," "I did not kill anyone" (King 2012)]) yet with the passage of time these protestations of innocence become less believable ("Claims he never shot at the crowd, that he hid. That doesn't seem very credible, given he was in operations for four months" [Littell 2015, 145]). Thus, what had been a permeable division between sides at the beginning of the conflict hardened as time passed, because new rebel recruits faced steadily increasing doubts regarding their loyalties.

At the extreme end, the FSA employed coercive and ineffective recruiting tactics. One rebel fighter told Littell that Bedouin FSA units "catch Army soldiers on leave and give them the choice: join the FSA or die" (Littell 2015, 209). Littell witnessed another example:

[T]hey have surrounded a building full of Army soldiers. There must be forty men in it, it's in the tower under construction next to the blue tower. The FSA is going to bring

a loudspeaker to try to convince them to change sides… 'Alaa explains their plans for
the soldiers surrounded in the building: they're going to mine the supporting pillars,
then give them a choice between coming over to their side, or being blown up. (Littell
2015, 214)

Needless to say, recruiting tactics such as these were unlikely to promote enduring
loyalties and internal discipline that results from recruitment based on "social endowments"
(Weinstein 2007). Rather, they bear more in common with coerced soldiering and kidnapping
employed by roving rebel groups such as the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda. While surely a
small minority of FSA fighters were actually recruited at gunpoint as in the above examples, a
substantial proportion were likely forced to join the FSA after desertion to avoid regime retaliation.
Thus, as the conflict stretched on and the al-Assad regime survived the initial uprising, many
Syrian Army deserters discovered they had little ability to "free-ride" by sitting out the uprising
(Kalyvas and Kocher 2007). Such FSA recruits were unlikely to have as deep a commitment to
the rebel cause as those who joined rebel groups voluntarily. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the
FSA struggled with discipline and predatory behaviors from many of their brigades, who have
been accused of "looting private property and businesses, engaging in vigilante justice, crimes and
abuses, and alienating the local population by expecting preferential treatment" (Hokayem 2013,
92).

Though most FSA units conceived of their original role as protecting the Syrian civilian
activists whose protests had brought about the political crisis, they largely refrained from recruiting
these activists. Analyzed through the prism of the civilian constituency theory, that meant that the
FSA left all possible civilian dissident networks outside their organization - some Islamist, but
most not. Dissidents harboring grave anti-regime grievance – and there were a great many – had

little choice but to join or start a non-FSA faction in order to fight the regime. Many such civilian recruits joined Islamist factions not out of commitment to Islamist principles, but rather the growing perception that Islamist groups were more disciplined, more devoted to civilian mobilization and public goods provision, and more militarily effective than FSA groups. As an FSA commander told Brookings Institute analyst Charles Lister (2016a, 9), "al-Nusra really took advantage of the Free Army's failure to control territory effectively, and to help the people justly." By mid-2012, the FSA had begun recruiting more civilians, but by then, hundreds of other groups had mobilized, the FSA had developed an unimpressive battlefield reputation, and the United States' failure to intervene after the Assad regime's 2013 sarin gas attacks further shook Syrians' belief in the FSA's potential for victory (Lister 2016a).

Islamist rebel groups: stationary rebels built on atomized networks

Islamist rebel groups began to form quietly in mid-2011 alongside the FSA, but their marginal size (and lack of battlefield presence) for the first year of the civil war meant that their presence was little noted in western media at the time. While diverse, most Islamist groups share two important commonalities. First, most are *stationary* groups which draw on social links and an appealing ideology to recruit. Second, due to the Assad regime's efforts in dismantling broad Islamist network, the Islamist rebels instead mobilized from small initial networks which lacked strong horizontal links even to other similar networks.[528] This first attribute suggests that Islamist groups should have quickly expanded and consolidated, helping to reduce the rebel movement's overall fragmentation. The second attribute explains why most were unable to do so.

---

[528] They are also, it is important to note, ideal types: most Islamist rebel groups on the ground are complex admixtures of nationalist Salafi, foreign Salafist-jihadi, and homegrown groups.

Surveying the scholarly, journalistic, and military accounts of Syrian Islamic rebel factions, I identify three types of Islamist rebel groups, which I label nationalist salafi,[529] foreign salafist-jihadi, and homegrown. First, most nationalist salafi rebel groups appear to have mobilized from within the pre-existing, though regionally confined, salafist networks that the Syrian state had alternately tolerated, infiltrated, and dismantled, as discussed above. This supposition is based on limited evidence, as few data exist on the origins of nationalist salafi groups and even fewer on the composition of pre-war Syrian salafist networks. However, there is one strong causal process observation supporting the link: the continual reappearance in rebel leadership positions of former salafi inmates at the Seidnaia prison. Seidnaia was the prison for political prisoners discussed above, in which the al-Assad regime deposited Islamists and Syrian fighters returning from Iraq after breaking up semi-state-sponsored transnational jihadi networks in 2008.

In early 2011, the regime released thousands of Islamist political prisoners in a mass amnesty, perhaps as a sop intended to satisfy Sunni Islamist activists, or perhaps as a dirty trick intended to sow Islamist extremists among the as-yet non-violent protest movement, to delegitimize the movement in international eyes and justify a violent crackdown (Lister 2016b, 53).[530] Whatever the regime's motivation, the released prisoners reportedly founded many if not most of the most significant domestic Islamic salafi groups. For example, Arond Lund (Lund 2013), surveying the nationalist salafi groups that merged under the powerful Syrian Islamist Front (SIF) umbrella, identifies former Islamist prisoners of Seidnaia prison in the leadership of the

---

[529] Following Aron Lund (2013, 14).

[530] It remains somewhat of a mystery to me why former Seidnaia inmates were not able to better coordinate their efforts during their overlapping terms at Seidnaia; without interview evidence with Syrian Islamist rebel leaders, little can be known this link in the causal chain, but it must be admitted that it could tell against this chapter's causal narrative.

groups Ahrar al-Sham (Syria's largest domestic Islamist group), Liwa al-Haqq, Harakat al-Fajr, Katibat Hamza bin Abdelmuttaleb.[531]. Many nationalist salafi groups, including Ahrar al-Sham and the SIF more broadly, eventually achieved a broad geographic reach and a national political orientation, recruiting widely among conservative rural Sunnis.

Foreign salafist-jihadi rebel groups originated somewhat later within the international jihadi movement in various arenas of combat outside Syria's borders. The networks within which these rebel groups mobilized had one foot firmly planted in geographically dispersed hotbeds of jihadi migration – Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Chechnya, and others – while the other foot, was likely planted in the same disparate, semi-dismantled Syrian jihadi networks already discussed. These networks were, after all, constructed in order to ferry foreign fighters from these locations through Syria.[532] As such there is a great deal of overlap and isomorphism among nationalist salafi and foreign salafist-jihadi groups: they promote similar ideologies, often recruit from the same domestic civilian constituencies, and both typically seek strong ties with local communities based on public goods provision.[533]

---

[531] These four groups, particularly after the consolidation of smaller factions into the Katibat Hamza, represent far more than half the SIF's manpower, and biographical information about other SIF rebel groups' leaders remain mostly unknown. Aside from an unspecified number of former Seidnaia prisoners, Lund also identifies a homegrown commander, a businessman, two army deserters, and a "young religious scholar from a military family" as occupying leadership roles in these and other SIF rebel groups.

[532] This is based on supposition rather than strong data because, as already noted, few detailed data are publicly available about pre-war Syrian jihadi networks. In February 2012, Lieutenant Colonel Joel Rayburn, a former aide to General Petraeus, did explicitly link the foreign salafist-jihadi groups to the state-sponsored cross-border Syrian networks, noting that "[t]here is surely not in modern history a more perfect example of blowback than what is happening now in Syria, where Al Qaeda in Iraq's operatives have turned to bite the hands that once fed them" (Lister 2016b, 47).

[533] Groups cannot be organized cleanly into each type, as foreign fighters often join nationalist salafi groups and Syrian fighters routinely join foreign salafist-jihadi groups (particularly the most powerful such group, formerly called the Jabhat al-Nusra). Rather, they occupy a spectrum from, on the one hand, Syrian-dominated groups such as Ansar al-Sham, and on the other, a group such as Jaish al-Muhajireen wal Ansar, a nearly wholly foreign brigade (al-Shishani 2013).

Both nationalist salafi and foreign salafist-jihadi groups in general possess stationary rebel types, especially compared to FSA brigades. Salafi ideology has proven a compelling mobilizer of young men in sectarian conflicts across the Muslim world; as Aron Lund (2013, 10) points out, "fighters are drawn to salafism not by fine points of doctrine, but because it helps them manifest a Sunni identity in the most radical way possible." Relatively strict recruitment procedures and rigorous political education and socialization have allowed Islamist groups to avoid discipline problems associated with "most non-Islamist factions, some of which have gained an unsavory reputation for corruption and theft" (Lund 2013, 23). By absorbing Islamic charity networks, the groups have become adept at public goods provision:

> Among its accomplishments, the SIF lists the distribution of 400 tons of flour in the liberated areas of Idleb, Aleppo, Homs, Deir al-Zor and rural Latakia Governorates. It claims to have provided thousands of refugees with water, food baskets, baby milk, and blankets, and more than a thousand tents. Over 6000 refugees had allegedly been clothed already, and by January 2013, SIF activists were in the process of helping some 18,000 more, housed in refugee camps close to the Turkish border. (Lund 2013, 25)

Contrary to their reputation in the west, foreign salafist-jihadi groups have been no less successful; the Jabhat al-Nusra in particular "enforced discipline on its fighters and distributed food and other essential goods, gaining support particularly in Aleppo and northern parts of Syria" (Hokayem 2013, 92).[534]

---

[534] As Charles Lister points out, Jabhat al-Nusra has been deeply influenced by the writings of Abu Musaab al-Souri, who counseled that "'the priority is to establish deep ties with local communities, even if that requires flexibility in some [Islamic] principles'... Within Jabhat al-Nusra's context, that meant placing the focus on fighting the Assad

Finally, many smaller Islamist groups first emerged in rural towns or urban neighborhoods as a homegrown collection of youths and regional notables oriented towards local defense. These homegrown battalions may be thought of as the civilian mirror image of the FSA battalions composed of military deserters. Small battalions formed initially for the purposes of communal or neighborhood defense. As Ghaith Abdul-Ahad (2013) reports, "[m]any of the battalions dotted across the Syrian countryside consist only of a man with a connection to a financier, along with a few of his cousins and clansmen," and while many such battalions remain locally rooted, others went on to "become itinerant fighting groups, moving from one battle to another, desperate for more funds and a fight and all the spoils that follow." These groups often assumed the FSA label, at least initially, but critically they lacked any ties to the tenuous FSA infrastructure that allowed a modicum of coordination between deserter-based FSA units. As the FSA's battlefield effectiveness waned and its infrastructure began unraveling over time, the homegrown battalions often adopted Salafist identities instead. This occurred for three reasons. First, as a 2010 survey by Abdulrahman Alhaj (2010) demonstrates, salafist sentiment and activity became popular in the conservative Sunni rural areas throughout the 2000s as state economic policy shifted towards an urban bias. Second, salafist rebel groups, bolstered by experienced Syrian and foreign guerrilla fighters, demonstrated greater battlefield success and better relations with the local population than FSA deserter units. This drew small, ideologically malleable local groups into the salafi fold. Third, as FSA funding went primarily to heavily-vetted deserter units, local groups often had to go shopping for sponsorship within the broader Islamist rebel movement

---

regime (and not rival or non-Islamic factions), maintaining a pragmatic interpretation and implementation of the sharia (avoiding extremism), and acting as a social movement rather than solely a military force (being of service to society)" (Lister 2016b, 67). This accentuates the degree to which both al-Souri and his followers are sophisticated consumers and producers of guerrilla warfare theory.

and its foreign financiers. Many small homegrown battalions were eventually absorbed by expanding Islamist rebel groups.

To sum up, while most Islamist rebel groups were stationary and thus invested far more heavily in civilian mobilization than the FSA, they each mobilized independently from within small, disconnected jihadist networks. This stands in stark contrast tohow the Islamist rebel movement was structured during the 1976-1982 rebellion. In the earlier rebellion, Syrian Islamists were embedded within a single broad social network, the Muslim Brotherhood. When this network mobilized, it was able to command the loyalty of what otherwise might have been disparate anti-regime actors. This helps explain why the 2011 Islamists were significantly more fragmented than their forebears.

Explaining the 2011 Uprising

The civilian constituency theory introduced in Chapter 3 argues that rebel movements may unify behind a stationary rebel group (H1), or through broad social networks (H2c) activated by extreme anti-regime civilian grievances. By contrast, they fragment when dominated by roving rebel groups with little ability to incorporate dissidents and civilians, or when middling grievances push dissidents to mobilize but not broad social networks (H2b). This framework helps to explain Syria's dramatic rebel fragmentation. The FSA was a roving group in the most important way possible: it was incapable or unwilling to systematically expand beyond its initial recruitment pool of Syrian Army deserters. Meanwhile, extreme grievances mobilized dissident networks of all stripes, and I contend here that had there existed suitable broad social networks, they would have mobilized as well. Yet Syria had a unique recent history of state-society interactions; and regime policy for three decades had multiplied dissident networks while suppressing broad social networks. Thus, the broad social network mechanism could not occur.

Hypothesis 1: rebel type

My strategy for testing these hypotheses is based on cross-case comparison between the 1976-1982 Islamist rebellion and the 2011-present uprising. The 1976-1982 rebellion was initiated by a stationary rebel group (H1), the Fighting Vanguard, whose recruitment efforts expanded in tandem with rising civilian mobilization. Specifically, like the FSLN, it was adept at identifying and incorporating civilian dissidents, which prevented competing groups from mobilizing. By contrast, the Free Syrian Army was, despite its significant first-mover advantages (quick growth, impressive manpower, and geographic reach), a roving rather than stationary rebel group. This was due to its weak central command, its nebulous ideological identity, and above all else, its policy-based failure to incorporate civilian dissident networks. Because the Free Syrian Army was unable to durably recruit most civilian dissidents, they joined or formed competing groups, leading to a far more fragmented rebel movement.

Had the FSA been stationary, the civilian constituency theory predicts that it would have monopolized much of the rebel movement, with nationalist salafi and foreign salafist-jihadi groups occupying a mere extremist fringe. There is ample evidence that civilian dissidents, while harboring grievances against the regime and a decidedly Sunni identity, were not motivated by uncompromising salafi principles and thus were potential FSA recruits. First, although many jihadist networks sprang up across Syria throughout the early 2000s, the vast majority of jihadist recruits transited by the networks were not, in fact, Syrian: only 8% of the fighters that passed through one border crossing were of Syrian origin, for example (Lister 2016b, 39). One may surmise from this that in spite of the Islamic resurgence in Syria, Islamic militancy remained on the whole unpopular in Syria as compared to neighboring states. Second, as already noted, several analysts affirm that Islamist rebel groups gained popularity among recruits not so much due to their ideological stance but rather their public goods provision, their "self-presented independence

and internal cohesion," and their "superior military capabilities" (Lister 2016b, 85). Third, as noted above, many Islamist groups adopted an Islamist stance primarily to gain access to financiers in the Gulf. Finally, a valuable 2014 study of Syrian rebels by Mironova, Loubna, and Whitt (2014), based on survey data of 300 current FSA and 50 Islamist fighters (primarily from Ahrar al-Sham and Jabhat al-Nusra), concludes that FSA and Islamist recruits do not systematically differ:

> Syrian fighters are joining Islamist groups primarily for instrumental purposes. Islamic groups are perceived as better equipped, led, and organized... Religious ideation is secondary or even a tertiary motivation for joining. Many Islamists and moderate FSA fighters are risking their lives for similar reasons: to take revenge against al-Assad forces (79% FSA vs. 79% Islamists), to defeat the al-Assad regime (69% FSA vs. 90% Islamists), and to defend their communities (71% FSA vs. 84% Islamists)... In interviews with fighters who first joined FSA and then switched to Islamist brigades, almost all mentioned non-religious reasons: "My friends left my old group and I left with them," "I didn't like people in my old group," "My friend got injured and they didn't support him," "I was with my old group [FSA] until I fought with Ahrar al-Sham. I liked their way of treating fighters and I joined."[535]

In sum, civilian dissidents were not predestined to join Islamist rebel groups. They did so because the FSA failed to recruit them, not because they were unwilling to joine the FSA.

---

[535] Mironova, Loubna, and Whitt do argue that recruits are radicalized by political education and group socialization once they've joined an Islamist group, implying a path dependence to the FSA's initial failure to mobilize civilian dissidents.

These civilian dissident networks that could have, but were not, incorporated by the FSA eventually joined or even founded competing Islamist rebel groups. This is a core element of the civilian constituency theory, and I here call it the *incorporation failure* mechanism. There is strong evidence of this mechanism occurring in Syria, and the evidence is especially compelling as it comes from a least-likely case (Gerring 2006, 115).[536] Littell makes clear from his experiences during the Baba Amr uprising in Homs that the Free Syrian Army fighters had strong interpersonal relations with one type of civilian dissident: the student and online activists driving the large-scale non-violent protests against the regime. Littell depicts FSA fighters escorting the activists, forming protective cordons around them, and maintaining safe houses from which the activists could communicate online. If any civilian dissident network were likely to be incorporated into the FSA, it was this one. Yet in Aron Lund's (2013, 32) discussion of Katibat al-Ansar, a moderate faction within the nationalist salafi umbrella, the Syrian Islamic Front, he reports that this is not the case:

> According to Abu Ezzeddin, Katibat al-Ansar also stands out among the rebel factions in homs for its high percentage of university students and professionals with a middle class background, *many of whom had been activists and leaders in the early non-violent protest movement in Homs* [emphasis mine]... After the Baba Amr offensive in February 2012, many were forced to flee their neighborhoods to the old city of Homs, *where they joined up with local activists*. It was at this point that Katibat al-Ansar was created."

This least-likely case example of the incorporation-failure mechanism suggests that it may have occurred numerous times throughout Syria, wherever the FSA refused to or failed to

---

[536] Or rather, a least-likely within-case observation.

recruit civilian dissidents. These dissidents joined or formed other rebel groups, most of them Islamist to some extent, leaving Syria's rebel movement profoundly fragmented.

Hypothesis 2c: high grievances mobilize a broad social network

Hypothesis 2c proposes that when grievances are high, they may "tip" broad social networks into supporting the rebellion. A broad social network, in turn, is capable of subsuming both disparate dissident networks and rebel organizations under an umbrella. As already investigated in detail in this chapter's first case study, the Muslim Brotherhood served precisely this function during the 1976-1982 Islamist rebellion. The three constituent factions of the Joint Command ranged from the Damascus branch's democratic Islamism to the Fighting Vanguard's radical jihadism. However, as discussed above, the Assad regime dismantled the Muslim Brotherhood and other broad social networks in that rebellion's aftermath. Thus, disparate dissident networks remained disparate.

This explanation would be undermined if broad social networks could be identified in the 2011 rebellion, yet were not associated with umbrella groups. It would be strengthened if (semi-) broad social networks underlay at least some of the umbrella groups that have formed in Syria. There is evidence for the latter: even in the 2011 Arab Spring rebellion, the remnants of the Muslim Brotherhood still continued to perform according to the civilian constituencies expectation for broad social networks. Despite thirty years of regime attempts to stamp out the Muslim Brotherhood, its once-constituent networks continued to demonstrate their mobilizing power in the 2011 uprising: Ahrar al-Sham, the largest nationalist salafi rebel group with over 10,000 militants (and hegemon of the SIF umbrella, the largest nationalist salafi grouping, with 30,000 militants, nearly a third of the total rebel movement) in 2013, likely owed its growth to its "early success in absorbing former Brotherhood families in the Idleb and Hama regions" (Lund 2013,

30). This suggests that, absent the Syrian regime's suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood, it might have been able to gather a much greater proportion of the total opposition under its umbrella.

There is also comparative evidence that the Muslim Brotherhood has continued to play a major role in uniting opposition movements in other countries during the Arab Spring. Both Libya and Syria, two countries that had violently suppressed the Muslim Brotherhood over decades, face highly fragmented civil wars in the wake of Arab Spring protests. Meanwhile, though protracted political violence and unrest in Egypt does not qualify as a civil war, there can be no doubt that the Islamist forces there are largely loyal to the Muslim Brotherhood, with other jihadist militant groups playing a relatively minor role.[537] If the Muslim Brotherhood had remained the dominant broad social network within Syria's Sunni community, as it had been prior to 1982, it is likely to have monopolized the rebel side of Syria's master cleavage by drawing relatively disparate domestic actors into an umbrella. While foreign jihadist groups would still have penetrated Syria, they would be unlikely to recruit many Syrians, and thus would struggle to grow as large as the Jabhat al-Nusra or (later) ISIL. However, in the absence of a broad social network, foreign jihadist groups did penetrate Syria, and domestic dissident networks spawned a variety of independent groups, leading to a fragmented rebel movement.

Alternate explanations

Other hypotheses exhibit less explanatory power. H4 (external support) correctly predicts a fragmented rebel movement, and is also supported by causal process observations. However, only H1 (rebel type) and H2c (broad social network) correctly predict both the Islamist rebellion

---

[537] Most significantly, domestic and foreign jihadist groups predominate in a small regional insurgency in the Sinai Peninsula. Meanwhile, the fact that Egypt has not descended into civil war like its neighbors may be attributable to the quietism of the MB's older, conservative leadership (al-Anani 2007).

and the Arab Spring rebellion. There is less support for state repression (H3) and ideological differences (H5).

H4 (external support) is strongly supported by the evidence and provides an important explanation for Syria's rebel fragmentation. Vast sums of resources have flowed into Syria from external state and non-state actors. This support has been both fungible and, as time wore on, evenly spread between many different actors. However there is also evidence that the diversification of external support follows, rather than explains, the FSA's failure to monopolize the rebel movement. Thus, the external support hypothesis helps explain why the rebel movement fragmented to such a remarkable degree, but unlike the civilian constituency theory it cannot explain why the rebel movement first fragmented.

While *fungible* external support arrived throughout 2012, it was *unbalanced* (most went to the FSA) and in insufficient quantities to explain the fragmentation of the rebel movement that began to take hold in mid-2012. The external support that did arrive came in coordinated fashion from state sponsors and "a large majority of this money was destined for armed groups affiliated to the FSA—a general trend that would continue throughout much of 2012" (Lister 2016b, 70). Meanwhile, "the sums raised were however incommensurate with needs and expectations" (Hokayem 2013, 73), and for the first year of the conflict, the materiel already available to the FSA within Syria dwarfed that originating from abroad, as "in parallel with a thriving black market, much of the weaponry that fuelled the conflict was available or acquired locally: defectors fled with their arms, regime caches and barracks were raided, corrupt officers sold arsenals, workshops produced ammunitions and rockets" (Hokayem 2013, 84).

Thus, the initial pattern in the 2011 civil war was not substantively dissimilar to that which held during the earlier 1976-1982 rebellion. As discussed above, the Muslim Brotherhood raised

millions of dollars in fungible resources from diverse state and private actors. Crucially, because the group was already cohesive and the hegemonic organization within the Syrian rebel movement, it managed to monopolize these flows. As Paul Staniland (2012b) argues, socially coherent and organizationally robust rebel groups benefit from external support, whatever its origins; while already socially divided and organizationally weak rebel groups may be torn apart by it. The FSA was neither socially coherent nor organizationally robust, which allowed the mobilization (or splintering) of a large number of other rebel organizations that then went in search of their own source of foreign financing. As Hokayem (2013, 84) points out, "the failure of the SNC to mobilise resources and the funding biases of the Syrian diaspora and the Gulf undercut this goal [of imposing central command]. Units nominally under the FSA umbrella developed their own supply networks."

The external hypothesis better explains the extremes of fragmentation reached in 2013, after dozens of homegrown, nationalist salafi, and foreign salafi-jihadist groups had already begun mobilizing. These sought funding from wealthy individuals long active in international Islamist and jihadi networks. This influx of "private finance was unevenly and erratically distributed, based largely on personal relationships rather than along strict organisational lines. As such, early money ended up in the coffers of many different groups" (Lister 2016b, 58). Once the pattern was established, it encouraged opportunistic splintering and independent mobilization – that is, an endogenous vicious cycle of fragmentation and foreign funding.[538] In blog posts,[539] political scientists Wendy Pearlman and Jonah Schulhofer-Wohl emphasized the diversity of external

---

[538] See Weinstein (2007) for more on this dynamic.
[539] I am unaware of any manuscript- or chapter-length treatment of the causes of fragmentation in the Syrian rebel movement prior to this chapter.

sponsors and "[a] hesitant U.S. role" for the Syrian rebel movement's fragmentation (Pearlman 2013).[540] A "bonanza of uncoordinated financing, from an array of states within the region and private individuals" meant that "[p]atrons' competing agendas duplicate themselves within the Syrian struggle" (Pearlman 2013; Schulhofer-Wohl 2014). At the extreme, this process lead to the proliferation of marginal groups matching Ghaith Abdul-Ahad's description (quoted above) of a man with a financier, and his clansmen and kinsmen.

That said, the sequencing presented here does not support the notion that diverse funding sources were responsible for the initial fragmentation of the Syrian rebel movement. Early external support favored the FSA, while later private finance appears to have followed demand from mobilizing Islamist groups even as it helped more groups mobilize. Nor can external support explain why some of the other battlefields favored by international jihadists exhibit far less rebel fragmentation than Syria. This particularly applies to Afghanistan: although the modern Islamist foreign fighter movement originated in and directly descends from the deeply fragmented 1980s Afghan civil war (Hegghammer 2010), the deeply-rooted Taliban, founded by a broad social network Islamic scholars and students, now dominates the rebel movement there. Thus, external support is part, but by no means all, of the explanation for the Syrian rebel movement's fragmentation.

Neither H3 (state repression) nor H5 (ideological disagreements) adequately predicts Syria's fragmentation. The al-Assad regime's response to the 2011 uprising was scripted after its successful suppression of the 1982 uprising: severe and indiscriminate violence. During a protracted counterinsurgency, indiscriminate repression may push rebel groups to "cooperate

---

[540] See also Berti and Paris (2014, 27): "[F]ragmentation simultaneously reflects and enhances the shifting geostrategic dynamics in the Middle East."

under fire," as with the formation of the Joint Command during the 1982 uprising. However, while contemporary Syrian rebel groups often cooperate on military operations and some umbrellas have been formed, the level of overall coordination and institutional integration remains low, with several efforts at constructing cooperative frameworks having failed and been discarded.

Schulhofer-Wohl concludes that severe state repression should have the opposite effect, leading rebel movements to *intentionally* choose fragmentation, as "the armed opposition formed within a strategic environment favoring the creation of autonomous groups with loose, decentralized relationships. The initial extreme military asymmetry favoring the Assad regime meant that a dominant, hierarchical group would have led the opposition to a swift demise." This argument is clearly incorrect on its face (most victorious rebel movements have had a dominant, hierarchical group despite suffering from military asymmetry at conflict onset), and it is conceptually dubious (military decentralization and command hierarchy are two different things, not two different ends of the same spectrum). Nicaragua's FSLN and Colombia's FARC are examples of militarily decentralized groups that nonetheless maintained a hierarchical central command; this was a major element in what made both groups so formidable.) The argument is also undermined by Schulhofer-Wohl's seemingly contradictory argument that, after the regime faced major setbacks, "relative security from the regime removed that principal driver of cooperation between groups: The pressing, common military threat," which suggests that state repression should incetnivize unification.

Meanwhile, there are far fewer ideological differences (H5) among rebel groups than rebel groups: as many as a thousand rebel groups occupy a spectrum from, on one end, a moderate and democratic orientation, to nationalist salafism in the middle, and international salafist-jihadism in the other extreme. However, the differences in the latter two are on emphasis rather than content,

while even the moderate democrats invoke Islamist themes and symbolism. Operational and financial ties cut across organizations on all ends of the spectrum. For example, the self-proclaimed democratic, exiled Muslim Brotherhood plays a central role within the Syrian National Council, the FSA's political leadership, and primarily funds Ahrar al-Sham, a nationalist salafi group with ties to al-Qaeda and persistent operational links to the powerful foreign salafist-jihadi group Jabhat al-Nusra in the past. Meanwhile, Ahrar al-Sham is currently allied *with* the Free Syrian Army *against* the ideologically similar Jabhat al-Nusra (Syrian opposition factions join Ahrar al-Sham 2017; Syrian rebel alliances shatter as former al-Qaeda group attacks FSA n.d.).

In sum, competing hypotheses cannot adequately explain the Syrian rebel movement's fragmentation. The ready availabity of external financing (H4) provides part of the solution, but it can neither explain the movement's initial fragmentation (as private financing only became widely available *afterwards*) nor cross-case variation. Other explanations are less satisfactory: rebel groups neither "cooperated under fire" (H3) or unified around ideologies held in common.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates both the explanatory power of the civilian constituency theory but also reveals some of its limitations. Drawing on Mancur Olson (1965), I emphasize that collective action is difficult and becomes more difficult as a movement grows; like Roger Petersen (2001) and Paul Staniland (2014) I assert that rebel organization has a strong social basis. As such, the extent of Syria's rebel fragmentation cannot be understood without examination of the dissident networks that produce rebel groups and the broad civilian networks in which they may, or may not, be embedded. However, the civilian constituency theory also assumes a simple model of rebellious social structure in which civilians, driven mainly by rising grievances against the regime, pass through various linear stages of mobilization: first, small numbers of dissident

networks form, then they proliferate, and finally broad social networks may mobilize as well. These simplifying assumptions have been useful, but the 2011 Syrian case shows how important the state's role can be in defining social structure and manipulating mobilization.

The distribution of dissident networks and broad social networks, as well as the pace and distribution of mobilization, heavily reflects both *longue durée* sociopolitical developments and state-society interactions – patterns reflected only vaguely by my simplifying assumption that they stem from "levels of grievance." In this dissertation I have understated the role of state policy in shaping networks and have undertheorized its role in mobilizing (or demobilizing) mass discontent. As Bates (2008, 6) notes, "I can find no way of analyzing the origins of insurrection without starting with the behavior of governments."

The similarities and parallels uncovered between the Sandinista Revolution and Syria's Islamist uprising point to another lesson of this chapter. Political scientists all too often treat Islamist guerrilla warfare as a breed apart from insurgencies with different political bents; this tendency is especially pronounced in the terrorism studies subfield. Yet despite some innovations, Islamist rebel groups are waging rather traditional insurgencies, and we underestimate their sophistication and their links to past guerrilla movements both in the Middle East and beyond. If nothing else, Eduardo Contreras' close encounter with Marwan Hadid in the late-sixties Palestinian fedayeen training camps should attune us to the shared genealogy of the two armed revolutionary utopian movements examined in this dissertation.

Like Latin America in the sixties and seventies, the Middle East is passing through its own "guerrilla continent" phase – which means we should be able to glean at least some insights into the Middle East's future from Latin America's past. Timely studies of why rebel and militia groups transition towards postwar criminality (Daly 2016), or become political parties that

446

participate peacefully in elections (Allison 2006), for example, should be read with the contemporary Middle Eastern context in mind. This is rarely done due to the (often well-grounded) stigma in western countries against treating salafist-jihadist actors as legitimate participants in democratic political systems. Yet the history of groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah and even the Taliban shows that such transformations may be possible.

8. CONCLUSION

Overview

In this dissertation I have developed and tested the civilian constituency theory, an original theory of rebel movement fragmentation. Rebel movements fragment, I argue, when a single rebel group is unable to monopolize it. This may occur because 1) a first-moving rebel group cannot or does not attempt to gain the loyalty of a potential civilian constituency (i.e. it has a "roving" *rebel type*), or 2) because rising *grievances* against the state mobilize a civilian constituency large enough to sustain multiple rebel groups. Where either (or both) of these factors are found, civilian dissident networks are likely to mobilize competing rebel groups, or support rebel splinter groups. On the other hand, high grievances may cause broad civilian networks to mobilize. These networks, which cut across a rebel movement's entire constituency, can push rebel groups into umbrella groups, unifying the movement. Thus, grievances are held to produce small but unified movements when low, fragmented movements at intermediate levels, and large movements unified by umbrella groups when high.

In Chapter 3, I tested this account in a large-*n* cross-national regression analysis, whose results supported the "civilian constituency theory": rebel movements comprised of "stationary" rather than "roving" rebel groups were more likely to be unified, while those where economic and ethnic grievances were intermediate, rather than low or high, were more likely to be fragmented. In Chapters 4 through 7, I conducted a series of case studies of rebel movements in Nicaragua and Syria. In Chapter 5, I delineated one mechanism by which rising grievances cause rebel movements to fragment, the commander constituency change mechanism. I showed how, through

the late 1960s and early 1970s in Nicaragua, a series of focusing events mobilized new civilian dissident networks. Recruits from these mobilizing dissident networks flooded into the FSLN, Nicaragua's dominant rebel group, and their loyalty elevated new rebel leaders. The leadership disputes between incumbent leaders and new challengers tore the FSLN into three splinter groups.

The civilian constituency theory and the commander constituency change mechanism provide a microfoundational account of rebel fragmentation – that is, I have built the account from the individual-level upwards. I first model the choices, constraints, and incentives that *individuals* have, and how their choices aggregate across levels of analysis. In order to do this, I began with the psychological: grievances cause emotions – anger, moral judgement, desire for revenge – that mobilize individuals to oppose the regime, first as dissidents and ultimately as rebels. Such individuals cluster into *networks* that may in turn support rebel groups with materiel and recruits. The extent of civilian mobilization, and the capacity of existing rebel groups to incorporate them, in turn determine whether a rebel movement will fragment or unify. Because this account models each relevant level of analysis (psychological, individual, network and group, movement) and how they interact, it can help us better understand the impact of other factors that scholars have proposed as important for civil war microprocesses.

For example, in Chapters 5 and 7 I referred to Staniland's (2014) hypothesis ("cooperation under fire") that indiscriminate state violence causes rebel factions to work together as "there is no way to shirk organizational tasks: noncooperation will push a faction into the crosshairs of the state regardless of what it does." Through the lens of the civilian constituency theory, this hypothesis gained a more complete causal mechanism: indiscriminate state violence helps mobilize high-threshold broad social networks, because noncombatants are not immune from state violence. Broad social networks in turn push and incentivize disparate rebel factions to cooperate.

Similarly, in light of the commander constituency change mechanism, Tamm's (2016) outstanding account of how external support provokes rebel internal coups and organizational splits is incomplete without a discussion of how funds and weapons help rebel leaders increase their true measure of power: the allegiance of rank-and-file militants and new recruits.[541] This in turn allows us to ask: under what conditions are rank-and-file militants or recruits more likely to shift their loyalties to a leader who can pay or arm them better than the incumbent? And thus: what types of rebel groups are more likely to fragment when they receive external support?

Policy implications

Beyond contributing to the academic literature on rebel fragmentation, the civilian constituency theory proffers concrete policy implications for international interventions in civil war. This is especially useful when the international community intends to intervene in favor of a rebel movement and seeks to avoid costly rebel fragmentation and infighting – a goal that is all the more difficult as most forms of external support have been found to exacerbate rebel fragmentation. The Syrian Arab Spring rebellion is the paradigmatic example of this dilemma: international efforts aimed at forging a broad unified rebel front failed, and may well have been counterproductive. In Chapter 7, I identified two major contributors to rebel fragmentation that might be amended with better policy from international intervenors.

First, the international community could have encouraged more aggressive recruitment by the Free Syrian Army. Courting international support, the first-moving FSA avoided recruiting from the vast reserves of available civilian dissidents, prefering to rely nearly exclusive on their

---

[541] Tamm (2016, 3) acknowledges this in a footnote: "Control over military resources implies not only materiel but also personnel, in the sense of commanding the loyalty of troops who put that materiel to use."

core constituency of defecting Syrian Arab Army deserters. The FSA's intention was to prevent their infiltration by Islamic extremists, anathema to Western sponsors, yet this policy backfired. As predicted by the civilian constituency theory, when excluded from joining the FSA's ranks, civilian dissidents founded and joined independent rebel groups. Had the Western community encouraged the FSA to install a policy of selective but aggressive recruitment of civilian dissidents, the group may have been able to prevent many of its competitors from emerging or growing strong.[542]

Second, the international community could have supported nationalist salafi groups such as Ahrar al-Sham. The civilian constituency theory argues that broad social networks help rebel groups unite in umbrella groups. In the 1976-1982 Syrian Islamist rebellion, the Muslim Brotherhood had played that role, and though the organization had long since been dismantled, some of its constituent networks remained. These networks helped Ahrar al-Sham become the largest national salafi rebel group in Syria, and forge an umbrella group uniting nearly a third of the Syrian rebel movement, the Syrian Islamist Front. Ahrar al-Sham promotes a conservative but by no means radical Islamist ideology, cooperates closely with the internationally-backed FSA, and has ittermittently courted American support (C. Lister 2015). Nonetheless, Western sponsors have left Ahrar al-Sham out of programs to aid Syrian rebels (though the US has also resisted labeling the group a Foreign Terrorist Organization). By empowering only secular actors in a rebel movement whose underlying social networks are predominantly religious, the Western community has done little to create the social preconditions for further rebel unification.

---

[542] A selective but aggressive recruitment policy is by no means impossible. Islamist groups such as Ahrar al-Sham and Jabhat al-Nusra have held to policies requiring "vouching" by two current members or by local imams (C. R. Lister 2016). Both groups have grown nearly as large as the FSA, while largely avoiding the reputation for predatory behavior that plagues many FSA units.

Broader theoretical and empirical contributions

This dissertation makes a contribution to four theoretical and empirical issues in political science: the relation between rebel and social movements, the role of power relations within loosely-policed organizations, the consequences of low-information environments on political behavior, and the construction of network datasets of clandestine organizations. First, I have presented a model of rebel fragmentation in civil war that assumes that rebel movements sometimes emerge with and develop in tandem with social movements. In my account, rebel anti-regime activity is one type within a range of anti-regime activities, and rebel organizations are embedded within a broader civil society that may, or may not, reach high levels of anti-regime mobilization. While my model of anti-regime mobilization is exceedingly simple, putting rebel movements within the context of civil society as a whole still makes an important advance on the work of scholars who limit their consideration to each individual rebel group's "social base" (Staniland (2012b)). More to the point, my incorporation, however modestly, of research on social movements for the study of rebel movements points towards a promising dialogue between two expansive literatures. I have shown here that, in at least some critical ways, rebel movement outcomes resemble those of social movements. For example, my finding that deep grievances spur the formation of rebel umbrella groups mirrors a key finding from Van Dyke and Soule's (2002) classic study that "[l]ocal threats inspire within-movement coalition events, while larger threats that affect multiple constituencies or broadly defined identities inspire cross-movement coalition formation." My use of focusing events to predict waves of rebel recruitments suggests that rebel mobilization may be linked in critical ways to "protest cycles," a well-studied phenomenon among social movement scholars (Snow and Benford 1992; Tarrow 1991). We may find, with Chang (2008), that state repression leads rebel groups to develop more robust alliances and institutions

even as it suppresses visible signals of rebel strength and activity. With Almeida (2003) we may

gain an appreciation for how the *temporal sequencing* of repression and opportunity leave durable

effects on rebel organizations' viability, strength, and success. Seeing rebel movements, in some

contexts, as embedded in broader social movements invites us to examine when the two

phenomena express similar processes, and when, why, and how violence transforms these

processes.

Second, I have extended the concept of power relations to the internal dynamics of rebel

organizations. When studying the behavior of rebel groups, scholars usually treat them as unitary.

This has consequences for the type of answers scholars have developed for a range of important

questions. For example, numerous studies have sought to determine a rational basis for violence

against civilians and for terrorism, although this behavior more often than not counterproductive

for a given rebel group's overarching goals. Some scholars, disaggregating rebel movements into

distinct groups, have advanced explanations based in the "dual contest" that rebels fight with the

state on the one hand and competing rebel groups on the other hand. But this dissertation points

the way to a third contest: the struggle inside of rebel groups between leaders and their lieutenants

for supremacy over the group. This third contest may well help to explain much behavior that

otherwise seems irrational. In the FSLN's leadership disputes, for example, one emerging faction's

decision to carry out highly visible hostage-taking operations was as much a product of their

internal struggle with the incumbent leadership as of the group's struggle with the state.[543] The

mass support the FSLN received in the operation's aftermath had not actually been part of their

calculations; it caught even the operation's planners by surprise. Similarly, the Fighting

Vanguard's terroristic assault on a Baathist officer training school was evidently as much the

---

[543] This refers to the December 1974 raid on Chema Castillo's house. For more details, see Chapter 5.

product of internal power struggles as it was calculated to further the group's overall goals. While both rebel groups likely gained support in the long run, the immediate consequence of each operation – withering state repression – nearly destroyed the still-weak rebel groups before they could take advantage of increasing civilian mobilization. As scholars continue to investigate the sources of a wide array of rebel group behaviors, they must take into account the pressures and incentives of this "third contest."

More generally, this dissertation has laid out the concept and dynamics of "leadership disputes" within a potentially broad range of political organizations. When I began writing Chapter 5, I was surprised by my inability to locate a definition for "leadership dispute" (I chose to define it as "a credible attempt to revise the formal distribution of power within a rebel group"). Similarly, I was unable to locate a substantial body of literature on leadership disputes, leadership struggles, or power struggles within loosely-regulated organizations.[544] Yet disputes of this sort are clearly one of the most common political events in human affairs, to the extent that readers of this dissertation may well have taken sides in a recognizable leadership dispute, whether in their local PTA meetings, religious communities, or political science departments. They may also have arrived at the commonsense observation that personal loyalties determine the outcome of such struggles as much, if not more, than the ostensible issues under dispute, and that homophily – "birds of a feather flock together" – in turn help structure the distribution of loyalties. These are, as I describe in Chapter 5, the same basic building blocks of leadership disputes in rebel organizations. As one of my insightful informants put it, "revolutionary organizations are no

---

[544] I do not, by any means, discard the possibility that such a literature does exist beyond my area of specialty, particularly in the expansive network analysis literature.

different" from other human organizations,[545] and it is my hope that the theory presented here finds application well outside of the conflict processes subfield.

Third, irregular warfare takes place in a low-information environment. This observation is not new to this dissertation: Kalyvas (2006) and Weinstein (2007) have written now-classic works on how rebel groups' pursuit of information shapes their patterns of selective violence and recruitment, while more recently Shesterinina (2016) has produced a powerful account of how actors at diverse levels of analysis overcome information problems during the mobilization process. However, scholars have rarely considered whether the low-information context extends to rebel groups' internal processes, and if so, how it mediates them. This dissertation answers the first question in the affirmative, showing that not only rank-and-file militants but also central rebel leaders had limited knowledge of the activities and intentions of those outside their most immediate circle of contacts. It then shows how limited information constrains the choices and allegiances of rebel group members, while producing miscalculations that lead to conflict between rebel elites even where they may seek to avoid them. The low-information context helps explain rebel fragmentation, which is clearly a suboptimal outcome for most rebel groups and rebel movements. But (recalling my discussion of internal competition and terrorism above) low information may likewise be taken as a starting point for many interrelated theories of the sources of rebel group behavior.

In order to demonstrate the dynamics of decision-making in a low-information environment, this dissertation relied on an extraordinarily source of information: an unprecedented network dataset of a rebel organization, the FSLN, over fifteen years of conflict. This dataset represents one of the main empirical contributions of this dissertation. While comprehensive

---

[545] Author interview on 12/12/2016 in Managua with male former FSLN commander, TP faction, currently a lawyer.

network datasets of the internal structure of numerous organizations (businesses, karate clubs, social movements) exist in great quantities, I am unaware of an analogous dataset covering a rebel organization. This lacuna stems, fundamentally, from the problem of irregular warfare as a low-information environment discussed above. That I could, laboriously, construct such a dataset during my fieldwork comes down to a felicity of case selection: the FSLN's small size for most of its existence, its eventual victory, the subsequent labors of historians of the anti-Somocista movement (most of whom had participated in the struggle and few of whom have been widely read outside of Nicaragua), and the exceptional intellectual quality of so many of the idealistic students, Christians, and campesinos who joined its ranks has led to an abundance of efforts to preserve its historical memory, especially in the face of a resurgent FSLN government in Nicaragua that has retained its name but few of its ideals. All of these factors lead to the continued accumulation of detailed knowledge about the leaders and rank-and-file members of the FSLN – and their experiences – over the last forty years. By far the most important sources of data used in the dataset and for process tracing were published only in the last decade or so.[546] These accounts, and their aggregation into the nodes of network graphs scattered like so many pointillist dots on the canvas of the Revolution, were crucial in overcoming the "ego-centric" limitations of the perceptions of individual participants. In this way, such an approach was necessary for producing the theoretical account in this dissertation.

Finally, this dissertation demonstrates that a formal network approach is not impossible for examining the internal dynamics of rebel groups. I am aware of many other scholarly works-in-progress using innovative methods to construct network datasets of civil war actors (see, for

---

[546] Above all, Monica Baltodano's (2010) probing interviews, Humberto Ortega's comprehensive, yet not entirely trustworthy history, and forthcoming memoires such as that of Leticia Herrera (2013) and Salvador Loza (2009).

example, Gade et al. (2017) and Klausen (2015)), though not of the internal structure of rebel groups. There are some cases where an abundance of documentation exists: I could easily imagine a similar project succeeding for the Irish Republican Army and its offshoots. Scholars might also mine data from demobilization processes and other post-conflict efforts to register the identities of combatants. I myself spent weeks attempting to track down the records of a pension program, for *Héroes y Mártires*, granted by the FSLN government during the first few years of the 1980s, before the Contra war overwhelmed their finances and governing capacity. These records would have included biographical narratives and testimonials of participation by 6,000 FSLN combatants. Sadly for both social science and for the survivors of combat and their families, these records were most likely lost decades ago. Yet I hope that records such as these do exist in other cases, and may enable other scholars to build far more extensive network datasets of rebel organizations.

Relatedly, this dissertation demonstrates the value of historical cases for the study of internal conflict and irregular war. Political science as a discipline is often guilty of presentism – valuing research on ongoing cases over historical ones. Without any doubt, the question of "rebel fragmentation" itself surged forward in conflict studies over the last five years as a consequence of the world's focus on the fragmented Syrian rebellion. Yet though the question may be pressing, the data necessary to answer the question were only available, as noted above, owing to an accumulation of documentation over the course of forty years. Similarly, some of the most cutting-edge research from scholars such as Laia Balcells (2010, 2012) and Theodore McLauchlin (2014) has analyzed highly granular data from the 1936-1939 Spanish civil war. Even where an abundance of data is available from contemporary cases, the perspective and context necessary to interpret those data may not be. Meanwhile, historical cases may be of vital importance for intuiting dynamics only glimpsed dimly through the veil of contemporary news accounts. My own analysis

of Syria in Chapter 7 would not have been possible, or convincing, without the preceding research in Nicaragua.

In sum, this dissertation opens new ground by removing boundaries between literatures and levels of analysis that are all too often studied in isolation. Above all, this means that my theoretical approach began with individual behavior aggregated over levels of analaysis in order to reach a movement-level outcome. It also included mining the literature on social movements for insight into the operation of rebel movements, and introducing concepts from international relations (relative power) to the interior of rebel groups. Finally, my approach required me to seek out whatever data were necessary to demonstrate causality, no matter how obscure (the network structure of a clandestine rebel group, interview data overturning the public, bowdlerized story of rebel leadership disputes). It then necessitated the use of whatever method best suited the analysis of those data (cross-national regressions, process tracing, formal network analysis, case comparison). These diverse sources of theory, data, and methods have combined to produce a coherent account of rebel movement fragmentation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"30,000 Flee Clashes between Jihadists, Rebels in Syria." 2016. *Yahoo News!* https://www.yahoo.com/news/30-000-flee-fighting-between-jihadists-rebels-north-074131902.html (July 27, 2017).

al Abd, Tareq. 2014. "After Takeover by IS, Deir Ez-Zor Residents Fear next Tragedy." *Al-Monitor*. http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/security/2014/08/syria-deir-ez-zor-living-conditions.html (August 2, 2017).

Abdul-Ahad, Ghaith. 2013. "How to Start a Battalion (in Five Easy Lessons)." *London Review of Books*: 13–14.

Abuza, Zachary. 2006. "A Breakdown of Southern Thailand's Insurgent Groups." *Terrorism Monitor* 4(17). http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=893 (July 2, 2014).

Adcock, Robert, and David Collier. 2001. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *American Political Science Review* 95(03): 529–46.

Adler, Emanuel, and Michael N Barnett. 2002. *Security Communities*. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press.

"African Concord." 1988. *Concord Press of Nigeria* 2(28–39): 18.

Aissaoui, Rabah. 2012. "Fratricidal War: The Conflict between the Mouvement National Algérien (MNA) and the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) in France during the Algerian War (1954–1962)." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 39(2): 227–40.

Aivo, Gérard. 2013. "Le statut de combattant dans les conflits armés non internationaux: étude critique de droit international humanitaire." Bruylant.

Akcinaroglu, Seden. 2012. "Rebel Interdependencies and Civil War Outcomes." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56(5): 879–903.

Albrecht, Holger, and Dorothy Ohl. 2016. "Exit, Resistance, Loyalty: Military Behavior during Unrest in Authoritarian Regimes." *Perspectives on Politics* 14(1): 38–52.

Alegría, Claribel, and D. J Flakoll. 1982. *Nicaragua, la revolución sandinista: una crónica política, 1855-1979*. México, D.F.: Ediciones Era.

Alexander, Robert J. 2008. *A History of Organized Labor in Panama and Central America*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Alhaj, Abdulrahman. 2010. *State and Community: The Political Aspirations of Religious Groups in Syria 2000-2010*. London, UK: Strategic Research and Communication Centre.

Allison, Michael E. 2006. "The Transition from Armed Opposition to Electoral Opposition in Central America." *Latin American Politics and Society* 48(4): 137–62.

Allison, Michael E., and Alberto Martín Alvarez. 2012. "Unity and Disunity in the FMLN." *Latin American Politics and Society* 54(4): 89–118.

Almeida, Paul D. 2003. "Opportunity Organizations and Threat-Induced Contention: Protest Waves in Authoritarian Settings." *American Journal of Sociology* 109(2): 345–400.

Althoff, Andrea. 2014. *Divided by Faith and Ethnicity Religious Pluralism and the Problem of Race in Guatemala.* Boston: De Gruyter. http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=1394790 (May 16, 2015).

Ameringer, Charles D. 1992. *Political Parties of the Americas, 1980s to 1990s: Canada, Latin America and the West Indies*. Westport (Conn.); London: Greenwood Press.

al-Anani, Khalil. 2007. "What Happened to Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood?" *Al Jazeera*. http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/02/happened-egypt-muslim-brotherhood-170212130839987.html (June 2, 2017).

Anderson, Sean, and Stephen Sloan. 2002. *Historical Dictionary of Terrorism*. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press.

Andrew, Christopher M, and Vasili Mitrokhin. 2007. *The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World*. New York: Basic Books.

"Arakan Research Centre: Burma's Western Border as Reported by the Diplomatic Correspondence." http://arakanresearchcentre.blogspot.com/2011/11/burmas-western-border-as-reported-by.html (December 16, 2015).

Arce, Bayardo. 1980. *El papel de las fuerzas motrices, antes y después del triunfo.* Managua: Secretaría Nacional de Propaganda y Educación Política del F.S.L.N.

Arceneaux, Kevin, and Robert M. Stein. 2006. "Who Is Held Responsible When Disaster Strikes? The Attribution of Responsibility for a Natural Disaster in an Urban Election." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 28(1): 43–53.

Arias, Pilar. 1988. *Nicaragua, Revolución: Relatos de Combatientes Del Frente Sandinísta*. México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores.

Arjona, Ana, and Stathis N. Kalyvas. 2009. "Rebelling against Rebellion Comparing Insurgent and Counter-Insurgent Recruitment."." In *Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity Workshop: Mobilisation for Political Violence What Do We Know*, , 436–455. http://www.kent.ac.uk/politics/carc/reading%20group/Arjona%20Kalyvas%20Mobilisation%20for%20Poltiical%20Violence.pdf (October 12, 2012).

Asia Yearbook, 1983. 1983. Far Eastern Economic Review Ltd.

Associated Press. 2017. "US-Backed Coalition Tightens Noose on Raqqa." *The Telegraph*. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/06/29/us-backed-coalition-tightens-noose-raqqa/ (August 2, 2017).

Astorga, Nora. 1988. "Nora Astorga: El Orgullo de Ser Nicaragüense." *Revista Envío*. http://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/559 (July 29, 2017).

Atlas, Pierre M., and Roy Licklider. 1999. "Conflict among Former Allies after Civil War Settlement: Sudan, Zimbabwe, Chad, and Lebanon." *Journal of Peace Research* 36(1): 35–54.

Augustine of Hippo. 1962. *The City of God*. Catholic University of America Press.

Author unknown. 2008. "Nicaragua, 1972: El Terremoto, El Revolución." University of North Carolina at Asheville. http://toto.lib.unca.edu/sr_papers/history_sr/srhistory_2008/post.pdf (March 21, 2017).

Azevedo, Mario Joaquim. 1998. *Roots of Violence: A History of War in Chad*. Australia: Gordon and Breach.

Bakke, Kristin M., Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, and Lee J. M. Seymour. 2012. "A Plague of Initials: Fragmentation, Cohesion, and Infighting in Civil Wars." *Perspectives on Politics* 10(02): 265–83.

Balcells, Laia. 2010. "Rivalry and Revenge: Violence against Civilians in Conventional Civil Wars1." *International Studies Quarterly* 54(2): 291–313.

———. 2012a. "The Consequences of Victimization on Political Identities Evidence from Spain." *Politics & Society* 40(3): 311–47.

———. 2012b. "The Consequences of Victimization on Political Identities Evidence from Spain." *Politics & Society* 40(3): 311–47.

Balcells, Laia, and Stathis N. Kalyvas. 2014. "Does Warfare Matter? Severity, Duration, and Outcomes of Civil Wars." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*: 0022002714547903.

Baltodano, Mónica. 2010a. *Memorias de la lucha sandinista. Tomo I, De la forja de la vanguardia a la montaña*. Managua, Nicaragua: Instituto de Historia de Nicaragua y Centroamérica de la Universidad Centroaméricana, IHNCA-UCA.

———. 2010b. *Memorias de la lucha sandinista. Tomo II, El Crisol de las insurreciones: Las Segovias, Managua y León*. Managua, Nicaragua: Instituto de Historia de Nicaragua y Centroamérica de la Universidad Centroaméricana, IHNCA-UCA.

———. 2010c. *Memorias de la lucha sandinista. Tomo III, El Camino a la unidad y al triunfo: Chinandega, Frente Sur, Masaya y la Toma del Búnker*. Managua, Nicaragua: Instituto de Historia de Nicaragua y Centroamérica de la Universidad Centroaméricana, IHNCA-UCA.

———. 2010d. *Memorias de la lucha sandinista. Tomo IV, Rebeldía e insurreción en el Departamento de Carazo*. Managua, Nicaragua: Instituto de Historia de Nicaragua y Centroamérica de la Universidad Centroaméricana, IHNCA-UCA.

Barbosa Miranda, Francisco. 2010. *Historia militar de Nicaragua: antes del siglo XV al XXI*. Managua, Nicaragua: Hispamer.

Barnard, Anne, and Rick Gladstone. 2014. "Rebel Infighting Spreads to an Eastern Syrian City." *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/07/world/middleeast/rebel-infighting-expands-to-eastern-Syrian-city.html (July 27, 2017).

Barrios de Chamorro, Violeta. 1996. *Memorias de mi gobierno, 1990-1996*. Managua, Nicaragua: Gobierno de la República de Nicaragua, Dirección de Communicación Social de la Presidencia. http://books.google.com/books?id=PENqAAAAMAAJ (April 5, 2017).

Bartusevičius, Henrikas. 2014. "The Inequality–conflict Nexus Re-Examined Income, Education and Popular Rebellions." *Journal of Peace Research* 51(1): 35–50.

Batatu, Hanna. 1999. *Syria's Peasantry, the Descendants of Its Lesser Rural Notables, and Their Politics*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Bates, Robert H. 2008. *When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late-Century Africa*. Cambridge University Press.

BBC NEWS. 2004. "Syrian Police Clash with Bombers." *BBC NEWS*. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3664811.stm (May 12, 2017).

Beach, Derek, and Rasmus Brun Pedersen. 2016. *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Beirut, Fazel Hawramy Kareem Shaheen in. 2015. "Life under Isis Rule in Raqqa and Mosul: 'We'Re Living in a Giant Prison.'" *The Guardian*. http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/09/life-under-isis-raqqa-mosul-giant-prison-syria-iraq (August 2, 2017).

Belli, Gioconda. 2002. *The country under my skin: a memoir of love and war*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Bennett, Andrew. 2010. "Process Tracing and Causal Inference." http://philsci-archive.pitt.edu/8872/ (September 15, 2014).

Bennett, Andrew, and Jeffrey T Checkel. 2015. *Process Training: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*.

Bercovitch, Jacob, Judith Fretter, and Jacob Bercovitch. 2004. *Regional Guide to International Conflict and Management from 1945 to 2003*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=419523 (December 17, 2015).

Bergholt, Drago, and Päivi Lujala. 2012. "Climate-Related Natural Disasters, Economic Growth, and Armed Civil Conflict." *Journal of Peace Research* 49(1): 147–62.

Berman, Eli. 2009. *Radical, Religious, and Violent the New Economics of Terrorism*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=291789 (September 15, 2014).

Berman, Eli, Michael Callen, Joseph H. Felter, and Jacob N. Shapiro. 2011. "Do Working Men Rebel? Insurgency and Unemployment in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Philippines." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55(4): 496–528.

Berrebi, Claude, and Jordan Ostwald. 2011. "Earthquakes, Hurricanes, and Terrorism: Do Natural Disasters Incite Terror?" *Public Choice* 149(3–4): 383–403.

Berti, Benedetta, and Jonathan Paris. 2014. "Beyond Sectarianism: Geopolitics, Fragmentation, and the Syrian Civil War." *Strategic Assessment* 16(4): 21–34.

Bitácora Marxista-Leninista. 2015. "El MAP-ML En Su Contexto de Nacimiento y Crecimiento; Equipo de Bitácora (M-L), 2015 | Diario Octubre." https://diario-octubre.com/2015/10/29/el-map-ml-en-su-contexto-de-nacimiento-y-crecimiento-equipo-de-bitacora-m-l-2015/ (January 17, 2017).

Black, George. 1985. *Triumph of the People: The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua*. London; Westport, Conn.: Zed Press ; U.S. distributor, Lawrence Hill & Co.

Blandón, Jesús Miguel. 2011. *Entre Sandino y Fonseca: la lucha de los pueblos de Nicaragua, Centroamérica y el Caribe contra las dictaduras y las intervenciones USA, 1934-1961*. Madrid: Fragua.

———. 2013. *Carlos Fonseca, sacrificado: ¿quiénes le enviaron a la muerte?*

Bleaney, Michael, and Arcangelo Dimico. 2011. "How Different Are the Correlates of Onset and Continuation of Civil Wars?" *Journal of Peace Research* 48(2): 145–55.

Booth, John A. 1985. *The End of the Beginning: The Nicaragua Revolution*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Borge Martínez, Tomás. 1980. "Historia Político-Militar del F.S.L.N." *Encuentro: Revista Académica de la Universidad Centroamericana* (15): 39–46.

Borge, Tomás. 1984. *Carlos, the Dawn Is No Longer beyond Our Reach: The Prison Journals of Tomas Borge Remembering Carlos Fonseca, Founder of the FSLN.* Vancouver, Canada: New Star Books.

———. 1992. *The Patient Impatience: From Boyhood to Guerilla: A Personal Narrative of Nicaragua's Struggle for Liberation*. Willimantic, CT; East Haven, CT: Curbstone Press ; Distributed in the U.S. by INBOOK.

———. 2006. *Sandinistas Speak: [Speeches, Writings, and Interviews with Leaders of Nicaragua's Revolution*. New York; Montreal: Pathfinder.

Bornstein, Brian H., Lesley M. Liebel, and Nikki C. Scarberry. 1998. "Repeated Testing in Eyewitness Memory: A Means to Improve Recall of a Negative Emotional Event." *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 12(2): 119–31.

Bradley, Margaret M. 1994. "Emotional Memory: A Dimensional Analysis." In *Emotions: Essays on Emotion Theory*, eds. Tephanie Van Goozen, Nanne Van de Poll, and Joseph Sergeant. Hillsdale, NJ: Psychology Press, 97–134. http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=H0TrAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA97&dq=bradley+emotional+memory&ots=58CuyQ_9FK&sig=w-D-goaOvD2hdP9DIJRYj4FYdq8 (September 15, 2014).

Brown, Michael F, and Eduardo Fernández. 1993. *War of Shadows the Struggle for Utopia in the Peruvian Amazon*. Berkeley: University of California Press. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.03606 (December 16, 2015).

Brown, Timothy C. 2000. *When the AK-47s Fall Silent: Revolutionaries, Guerrillas, and the Dangers of Peace.* Chicago: Hoover Institution Press. http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=1370804 (February 3, 2017).

Bueno De Mesquita, Ethan. 2010. "Regime Change and Revolutionary Entrepreneurs." *American Political Science Review* 104(03): 446–66.

Buhaug, Halvard, Lars-Erik Cederman, and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. 2013. "Square Pegs in Round Holes: Inequalities, Grievances, and Civil War." *International Studies Quarterly*: 1–14.

Buhaug, Halvard, and Scott Gates. 2002. "The Geography of Civil War." *Journal of Peace Research* 39(4): 417–33.

Cabezas, Omar. 1982. *La montaña es algo más que una inmensa estepa verde*. México, D.F.: Siglo Veintiuno Editores.

———. 1988. *Canción de amor para los hombres*. Managua, Nicaragua: Editorial Nueva Nicaragua.

Capoccia, Giovanni, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2010. "The Historical Turn in Democratization Studies: A New Research Agenda for   Europe and Beyond." *Comparative Political Studies* 43(8–9): 931–68.

Carrié, Shawn, and Bilge Nesibe Kotan. 2016. "What's Happening in Aleppo?" *TRT World*. https://medium.com/trt-world/what-is-aleppo-syria-explained-749bf1596591 (July 27, 2017).

Casanova Fuertes, Rafael. 2013a. *Bordes ocultos: el entretejido de nuestra historia : ensayos y artículos sobre la historia de Nicaragua*.

———. 2013b. *Bordes ocultos: el entretejido de nuestra historia : ensayos y artículos sobre la historia de Nicaragua*.

Cederman, Lars-Erik, Halvard Buhaug, and Jan Ketil Rød. 2009. "Ethno-Nationalist Dyads and Civil War A GIS-Based Analysis." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(4): 496–525.

Cederman, Lars-Erik, and Luc Girardin. 2007. "Beyond Fractionalization: Mapping Ethnicity onto Nationalist Insurgencies." *American Political Science Review* 101(01): 173–85.

Cederman, Lars-Erik, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Halvard Buhaug. 2013. *Inequality, Grievances, and Civil War*.

Cederman, Lars-Erik, Nils B. Weidmann, and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. 2011. "Horizontal Inequalities and Ethnonationalist Civil War: A Global Comparison." *American Political Science Review* 105(03): 478–95.

Cederman, Lars-Erik, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min. 2010. "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel?: New Data and Analysis." *World Politics* 62(1): 87–119.

Celso, Anthony N. 2017. "Hama's Ominous Shadow and the Stalled Jihadist War in Syria." *Mediterranean Quarterly* 28(1): 82–98.

CEN. 1978. "DOCUMENTOS CEN 1978." http://www.cen-nicaragua.org/magisterio/1980-1989/DOCUMENTOS%20CEN%201986.docx.

Chang, Paul Y. 2008. "Unintended Consequences of Repression: Alliance Formation in South Korea's Democracy Movement (1970–1979)." *Social Forces* 87(2): 651–77.

Chenoweth, Erica, and Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham. 2013. "Understanding Nonviolent Resistance An Introduction." *Journal of Peace Research* 50(3): 271–76.

Childs, Matt D. 1995. "An Historical Critique of the Emergence and Evolution of Ernesto Che Guevara's Foco Theory." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 27(3): 593–624.

Christia, Fotini. 2012. *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars*. Cambridge University Press.

Christian, Shirley. 1986. *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family*. New York: Vintage Books.

Ciment, James. 2011. *World Terrorism: An Encyclopedia of Political Violence from Ancient Times to the Post-9/11 Era*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Clark, Victoria. 2010. *Yemen: Dancing on the Heads of Snakes*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Cline, Lawrence E. 2000. "The Prospects of the Shia Insurgency Movement in Iraq." *Journal of Conflict Studies* 20(2). http://journals.hil.unb.ca/index.php/JCS/article/view/4311 (April 21, 2015).

Collelo, Thomas, D.C.) American University (Washington, and Foreign Area Studies. 1991. *Angola: A Country Study*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress : For sale by the Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O.

Collier, Paul, and Anke Hoeffler. 1998. "On Economic Causes of Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers* 50(4): 563–73.

———. 2004. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers* 56(4): 563–95.

Collins, Roger. 2010. *Early Medieval Europe, 300-1000*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

"Cómo nació Juventud Patriótica Nicaragüense." 2009. *El Nuevo Diario*. http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/opinion/64206-nacio-juventud-patriotica-nicaraguense/ (January 15, 2017).

Cooper, Tom, Albert Grandolini, and Arnaud Delalande. 2015. *Libyan Air Wars: Part 1: 1973-1985*.

Cotet, Anca M., and Kevin K. Tsui. 2013. "Oil and Conflict: What Does the Cross Country Evidence Really Show?" *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics* 5(1): 49–80.

Crenshaw, Marsha. "Mapping Militant Organizations: Pakistan." http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/maps/view/pakistan_un (June 5, 2015).

Crenshaw, Martha, ed. 1995. *Terrorism in Context*. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Cunningham, David E. 2006. "Veto Players and Civil War Duration." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(4): 875–892.

Cunningham, David E., K. Gleditsch, and Idean Salehyan. 2009a. "Non-State Actor Data." http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~ksg/eacd.html.

Cunningham, David E., Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Idean Salehyan. 2009b. "It Takes Two A Dyadic Analysis of Civil War Duration and Outcome." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(4): 570–97.

Cunningham, Kathleen Gallagher. 2011. "Divide and Conquer or Divide and Concede: How Do States Respond to Internally Divided Separatists?" *American Political Science Review* 105(02): 275–97.

Cunningham, Kathleen Gallagher, Kristin M. Bakke, and Lee J. M. Seymour. 2012. "Shirts Today, Skins Tomorrow Dual Contests and the Effects of Fragmentation in Self-Determination Disputes." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56(1): 67–93.

Daly, Sarah Zukerman. 2012. "Organizational Legacies of Violence Conditions Favoring Insurgency Onset in Colombia, 1964–1984." *Journal of Peace Research* 49(3): 473–91.

———. 2016. *Organized Violence after Civil War: The Geography of Recruitment in Latin America*. New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press.

Dawi, Akmal. 2014. "Despite Massive Taliban Death Toll No Drop in Insurgency." *VOA*. https://www.voanews.com/a/despite-massive-taliban-death-toll-no-drop-in-insurgency/1866009.html (August 1, 2017).

Dearden, Lizzie. 2016. "More Turkish Tanks Cross into Syria as Operation Enters 'New Phase.'" *The Independent*. http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syrian-war-more-turkish-tanks-cross-border-into-al-rai-as-operation-against-isis-and-kurds-enters-a7224271.html (July 27, 2017).

Department Of State. The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs. 2012. *Chapter 6 Foreign Terrorist Organizations*. Department Of State. The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs. Report. http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2011/195553.htm (December 16, 2015).

Díaz Lacayo, Adolfo. 2010. *Nicaragua, gobiernos, gobernantes y genealogías*. Managua? Adolfo Díaz Lacayo. http://books.google.com/books?id=QHlIAQAAIAAJ (April 3, 2017).

Dowd, Caitriona. 2015. "Actor Proliferation and the Fragmentation of Violent Groups in Conflict." *Research & Politics* 2(4): 2053168015607891.

Downton, James V. 1973. *Rebel Leadership: Commitment and Charisma in the Revolutionary Process*. New York; London: Free Press ; Collier Macmillan.

Driscoll, Jesse. 2015. *Warlords and Coalition Politics in Post-Soviet States*.

Duque Estrada Sacasa, Esteban. 2014. *Nicaragua: ¡insurrección! 1977-1979*.

van Dyke, Nella, and Sarah A. Soule. 2002. "Structural Social Change and the Mobilizing Effect of Threat: Explaining Levels of Patriot and Militia Organizing in the United States." *Social Problems* 49(4): 497–520.

Eck, Kristine. 2010. "Recruiting Rebels: Indoctrination and Political Education in Nepal." In *The Maoist Insurgency in Nepal Revolution in the Twenty-First Century.*, eds. Mahendra Lawoti and Anup Kumar Pahari. Hoboken: Taylor & Francis.

———. 2014. "Coercion in Rebel Recruitment." *Security Studies* 23(2): 364–98.

Emily K. Gade, Michael Gabbay, Zane Kelly, and Mohammed Hafez. 2017. "Ideology, Militant Networks and Violence in Syria." *Working paper*.

Envío. 1984. "Nicaragua's Political Parties and Movements (Part I)." *Revista Envío* 38. http://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/3957 (January 15, 2017).

Etzioni, Amitai. 1968. *The Active Society: A Theory of Societal and Political Processes*. Collier-Macmillan.

Euipo Envío. 1984. "Title Unknown." *Revista Envío* (40).

Everingham, Mark. 1996. *Revolution and the Multiclass Coalition in Nicaragua*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Fadel, Leith. 2016. "Civilians Rise up against ISIS Rule in Raqqa City: Government." *AMN - Al-Masdar News | □□□□ □□□□□□*. https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/civilians-rise-isis-rule-raqqa-city-government/ (August 2, 2017).

Faksh, Mahmud A. 1984. "The Alawi Community of Syria: A New Dominant Political Force." *Middle Eastern Studies* 20(2): 133–53.

Fearon, James D. 1995. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization* 49(3): 379–414.

———. 2004. "Why Do Some Civil Wars Last So Much Longer than Others?" *Journal of Peace Research* 41(3): 275–301.

———. 2005. "Primary Commodity Exports and Civil War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(4): 483–507.

Fearon, James D., and David D. Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 97(01): 75–90.

Ferrero Blanco, María Dolores. 2012. *La Nicaragua de los Somoza: 1936-1979*. Managua; Huelva: Instituto de Historia de Nicaragua y Centroamérica de la Universidad Centroamericana ; Universidad de Huelva.

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. 1984. *The Russian Revolution, 1917-1932*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Fjelde, Hanne, and Desirée Nilsson. 2012. "Rebels against Rebels Explaining Violence between Rebel Groups." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56(4): 604–28.

Florquin, Nicolas, and Eric G Berman. 2005. *Armed and Aimless: Armed Groups, Guns, and Human Security in the ECOWAS Region*. Geneva: Small Arms Survey.

Fonseca Amador, Carlos. 1976. *El último documento de Carlos Fonseca: nota sobre algunos problemas de hoy*. Place of publication not identified: publisher not identified. http://books.google.com/books?id=NOhpAAAAMAAJ (February 2, 2017).

———. 1981. *Un nicaragüense en Moscú*. Managua, Nicaragua: Departamento de Propaganda y Educación Política del FSLN.

———. 1982. *Obras*. Managua, Nicaragua: Editorial Nueva Nicaragua.

———. 1985a. *Obras*. ed. Instituto de Estudio del Sandinismo. Managua, Nicaragua: Editorial Nueva Nicaragua. http://books.google.com/books?id=Ed5pAAAAMAAJ (March 8, 2017).

———. 1985b. *Viva sandino*. Managua: Ed. Nueva Nicaragua.

Foroohar, Manzar. 1989. *The Catholic Church and Social Change in Nicaragua*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=7362 (February 3, 2015).

Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional. 1980. *Ricardo Morales Avilés: datos biográficos.* Managua, Nicaragua: Secretaría Nacional de Propaganda y Educación Política del F.S.L.N.

Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (Nicaragua), and Secretaria Nacional de Propaganda y Educación Política. 1980. *Carlos Roberto Huembes: datos biograficos*. Managua: Silvio Mayorga.

Fried, Jonathan L, Marvin E Gettleman, Deborah Levenson-Estrada, and Nancy Peckenham. 1983. *Guatemala in Rebellion: Unfinished History*. New York: Grove Press.

Furtado, Christina S. 2007. "Inter-Rebel Group Dynamics: Cooperation or Competition the Case of South Asia."

Gamson, William A. 1975. *The Strategy of Social Protest*. 1st ed. Dorsey Pr.

Ganesan, N, Ramses Amer, and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. 2010. *International Relations in Southeast Asia: Between Bilateralism and Multilateralism*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Gates, Scott. 2002. "Recruitment and Allegiance The Microfoundations of Rebellion." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46(1): 111–30.

Gelman, Andrew. 2008. "Scaling Regression Inputs by Dividing by Two Standard Deviations." *Statistics in Medicine* 27(15): 2865–73.

George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. MIT Press.

Gerring, John. 2006. *Case Study Research Principles and Practices.* Leiden: Cambridge University Press.

Gleditsch, Nils Petter. 2012. "Whither the Weather? Climate Change and Conflict." *Journal of Peace Research* 49(1): 3–9.

Goodwin, Jeff. 2001. *No Other Way out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991*.

Goodwyn, Lawrence. 1991. *Breaking the Barrier: The Rise of Solidarity in Poland*. New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press.

Gott, Richard. 1971. *Guerrilla Movements in Latin America.* Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.

Gould, Jeffrey L. 1990. *To Lead as Equals: Rural Protest and Political Consciousness in Chinandega, Nicaragua, 1912-1979.* Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina.

Granovetter, Mark S. 1973. "The Strength of Weak Ties." *American Journal of Sociology* 78(6): 1360–80.

———. 1978. "Threshold Models of Collective Behavior." *American Journal of Sociology* 83(6): 1420–43.

Granovetter, Mark S., and Roland Soong. 1983. "Threshold Models of Diffusion and Collective Behavior." *The Journal of Mathematical Sociology* 9(3): 165–79.

Green, Amelia Hoover. 2011. "Repertoires of Violence Against Noncombatants: The Role of Armed Group Institutions and Ideologies." Yale University.

Gubler, Joshua R., and Joel Sawat Selway. 2012. "Horizontal Inequality, Crosscutting Cleavages, and Civil War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56(2): 206–32.

Guevara López, Onofre. 2002. *Sea moderado tu sueño*. Managua: Fondo Ed. Cira.

———. 2008. *Cien años de movimiento social en Nicaragua relato cronológico*. Managua: IHNCA.

"Guide to the Syrian Rebels." 2013. *BBC News*. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-24403003 (July 2, 2014).

Gurr, Ted Robert. 1970. *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

al-Hakkar, Firas. 2013. "The Mysterious Fall of Raqqa, Syria's Kandahar." *Al Akhbar English*. http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/mysterious-fall-raqqa-syria%E2%80%99s-kandahar-i (July 26, 2017).

Hale, Charles R. 1996. *Resistance and Contradiction: Miskitu Indians and the Nicaraguan State, 1894-1987*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford Univ. Press.

Harbom, L., E. Melander, and P. Wallensteen. 2008. "Dyadic Dimensions of Armed Conflict, 1946--2007." *Journal of Peace Research* 45(5): 697–710.

Harbom, Lotta, Erik Melander, and Peter Wallensteen. 2008. "Dyadic Dimensions of Armed Conflict, 1946—2007." *Journal of Peace Research* 45(5): 697–710.

Hegghammer, Thomas. 2010. "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and the Globalization of Jihad." *International Security* 35(3): 53–94.

Helbardt, Sascha. 2011. "Deciphering Southern Thailand's Violence: Organisation and Insurgent Practices of BRN-Coordinate."

Hellmund, Paula Fernández. 2013. "La fractura del movimiento revolucionario: tendencias dentro del Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (1972-1979)." *Cuadernos de Marte* 0(4): 150–85.

Hendrix, Cullen S. 2010. "Measuring State Capacity: Theoretical and Empirical Implications for the Study of Civil Conflict." *Journal of Peace Research* 47(3): 273–85.

Hernández, Plutarco S. 1982. *El FSLN por dentro: relatos de un combatiente*. San José, Costa Rica: publisher not identified.

Herodotus, and Robert B Strassler. 2009. *The landmark Herodotus: the histories*. New York: Anchor Books.

Herrera, Leticia, Alberto González Casado, Maria Antònia Sabater Montserrat, and Maria Pau Trayner Vilanova. 2013. *Guerillera, mujer y comandante de la revolución sandinista: memorias de Leticia Herrera*.

Heyck, Denis Lynn Daly. 1990. *Life Stories of the Nicaraguan Revolution*. New York: Routledge.

Hodges, Donald C. 1986. *Intellectual Foundations of the Nicaraguan Revolution*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Hokayem, Emile. 2013. *Syria's Uprising and the Fracturing of the Levant*.

Homer. 2001. *The Iliad*. ed. Bernard MacGregor Walker Knox. New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books.

Honwana, Alcinda. 2013. *Youth and Revolution in Tunisia*. London; New York: Zed Books, in association with International African Institute, Royal African Society, World Peace Foundation.

Horowitz, Donald L. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Horowitz, Irving Louis. 1970. *Cuban Communism.* [Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co.

Horton, Lynn. 1998. *Peasants in Arms War and Peace in the Mountains of Nicaragua, 1979-1994*. Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=67466 (February 3, 2015).

"How Did Raqqa Fall to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria?| 2014 ." حكاية ما انحكت. *SyriaUntold |* 　　　　　 　　 　　　　. http://www.syriauntold.com/en/2014/01/how-did-raqqa-fall-to-the-islamic-state-of-iraq-and-syria/ (August 2, 2017).

Hubbard, Ben. 2013. "Activists: Syrian Regime Bombs Rebel-Held City." *USA TODAY*. https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/03/10/syrians-bomb-northern-raqqa/1976777/ (August 2, 2017).

Human Rights Watch. 2007. "No One Is Safe: Insurgent Attacks on Civilians in Thailand's Southern Border Provinces." 19(13). https://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/thailand0807/index.htm.

Humphreys, Macartan. 2005. "Natural Resources, Conflict, and Conflict Resolution Uncovering the Mechanisms." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(4): 508–37.

Humphreys, Macartan, and Jeremy M. Weinstein. 2008. "Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War." *American Journal of Political Science* 52(2): 436–455.

Ikelegbe, Augustine. 2001. "Civil Society, Oil and Conflict in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria: Ramifications of Civil Society for a Regional Resource Struggle." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 39(03). http://www.journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0022278X01003676 (June 4, 2016).

Inc, Time. 1967. *LIFE*. Time Inc.

"Inside Raqqa, the Capital of ISIS." 2015. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/11/21/world/middleeast/inside-raqqa-capital-of-isis.html (July 26, 2017).

Instituto de Estudio del Sandinismo. 1985. *Carlos: el eslabón vital : cronología básica de Carlos Fonseca, jefe de la Revolución, 1936-1976.* Managua: Instituto de Estudio del Sandinismo. http://books.google.com/books?id=ruNpAAAAMAAJ (April 5, 2017).

Isachenkov, Vladimir. 2016. "Christian Hamlet in Syria Bears Scars of Fierce Fighting." *Business Insider.* http://www.businessinsider.com/ap-christian-hamlet-in-syria-bears-scars-of-fierce-fighting-2016-3 (July 27, 2017).

Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2008. "The Popular Resistance Committees (PRC) Terrorist Organization 2006-2007." http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Palestinian/Pages/The%20Popular%20Resistance%20Committees%20Terrorist%20Organization%202006-2007.aspx.

James, W. Martin. 1992. *A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990*. New Brunswick, N.J., U.S.A.: Transaction Publishers.

Judge, Timothy A., and Ronald F. Piccolo. 2004. "Transformational and Transactional Leadership: A Meta-Analytic Test of Their Relative Validity." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 89(5): 755–68.

Justino, Patricia. 2009. "Poverty and Violent Conflict: A Micro-Level Perspective on the Causes and Duration of Warfare." *Journal of Peace Research* 46(3): 315–33.

Kajjo, Sirwan. 2014. "The Fight for Raqqa." *Diwan: Middle East Insights from Carnegie*. https://vpn.nacs.uci.edu/+CSCO+00756767633A2F2F706E6561727476722D7A72702E6 26574++/diwan/55782?lang=en (August 2, 2017).

Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2003. "The Ontology of 'Political Violence': Action and Identity in Civil Wars." *Perspectives on Politics* 1(3): 475–94.

———. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge University Press.

———. 2007. "Book Review: Weinstein, J. M. (2007). Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press." *Comparative Political Studies* 40(9): 1146–51.

———. 2008. "Ethnic Defection in Civil War." *Comparative Political Studies* 41(8): 1043–68.

Kalyvas, Stathis N., and Laia Balcells. 2010. "International System and Technologies of Rebellion: How the End of the Cold War Shaped Internal Conflict." *American Political Science Review* 104(03): 415–29.

Kalyvas, Stathis N., and Matthew Adam Kocher. 2007. "How 'Free' Is Free Riding in Civil Wars?: Violence, Insurgency, and the Collective Action Problem." *World Politics* 59(02): 177–216.

Kates, Robert W. et al. 1973. "Human Impact of the Managua Earthquake." *Science* 182(4116): 981–90.

Kenny, Paul D. 2010. "Structural Integrity and Cohesion in Insurgent Organizations: Evidence from Protracted Conflicts in Ireland and Burma1." *International Studies Review* 12(4): 533–555.

King, Anthony. 2006. "The Word of Command: Communication and Cohesion in the Military." *Armed Forces & Society* 32(4): 493–512.

King, Robert. 2012. "Interviews with Syrian Army Defectors." *Vice*. https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/interviews-with-syrian-army-defectors-0002345-v19n11 (June 3, 2017).

Klausen, Jytte. 2015. "Tweeting the Jihad: Social Media Networks of Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38(1): 1–22.

Koubi, Vally, and Tobias Böhmelt. 2014. "Grievances, Economic Wealth, and Civil Conflict." *Journal of Peace Research* 51(1): 19–33.

Kruijt, Dirk. 2013. *Guerrillas: War and Peace in Central America.* London: Zed Books. http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=4708509 (April 2, 2017).

Kuhn, Patrick M., and Nils B. Weidmann. 2013. "Unequal We Fight: The Impact of Economic Inequality Within Ethnic Groups on Conflict Initiation." *Working paper*.

https://www.princeton.edu/politics/about/file-repository/public/KuhnWeidmann_PrincetonIRTalk.pdf (May 28, 2013).

Kuran, Timur. 1989. "Sparks and Prairie Fires: A Theory of Unanticipated Political Revolution." *Public Choice* 61(1): 41–74.

"La Crónica Del Asesinato de Pedro Joaquín Chamorro." 2017. *La Prensa*. http://www.laprensa.com.ni/2017/01/10/nacionales/2161049-el-asesinato-de-pedro-joaquin-chamorro (April 3, 2017).

"La desaparición de las FARN." 2010. *El Nuevo Diario*. http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/opinion/77437-desaparicion-farn/ (March 8, 2017).

Laakso, Markku, and Rein Taagepera. 1979. "'Effective' Number of Parties A Measure with Application to West Europe." *Comparative Political Studies* 12(1): 3–27.

Lacina, Bethany, and Nils Petter Gleditsch. 2005. "Monitoring Trends in Global Combat: A New Dataset of Battle Deaths." *European Journal of Population / Revue européenne de Démographie* 21(2–3): 145–66.

Landis, Joshua, and Joe Pace. 2007. "The Syrian Opposition." *The Washington Quarterly* 30(1): 45–68.

"Las FARN de Nicaragua: un acontecimiento casi olvidado." 2009. *El Nuevo Diario*. http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/opinion/61644-farn-nicaragua-acontecimiento-casi-olvidado/ (March 8, 2017).

Lawson, Fred H. 1982. "Social Bases for the Hama Revolt." *Middle East Research* 110. http://www.merip.org/mer/mer110/social-bases-hama-revolt (May 5, 2017).

Le Lous, Fabrice. 2016. "El Origen Del Poder de Daniel Ortega." *La Prensa*. http://www.laprensa.com.ni/2016/07/17/suplemento/la-prensa-domingo/2068840-el-origen-del-poder-de-ortega (January 25, 2017).

Lefèvre, Raphaël. 2013. *Ashes of Hama: The Muslim Brotherhood in Syria*.

Lenin, Vladimir Il′ich. 1970. *V.I. Lenin's What Is to Be Done?* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

"Lessons from Raqqa: From Demanding Freedom to Creative State-Building|حكاية ما انحكت." 2013. *SyriaUntold | حكاية ما انحكت*. http://www.syriauntold.com/en/2013/05/lessons-from-raqqa-from-demanding-freedom-to-creative-state-building/ (August 2, 2017).

Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan Way. 2002. "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 13(2): 51–65.

Levitt, Steven D., and Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh. 2000. "An Economic Analysis of a Drug-Selling Gang's Finances." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 115(3): 755–89.

Lia, Brynjar. 2016. "The Islamist Uprising in Syria, 1976–82: The History and Legacy of a Failed Revolt." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 43(4): 541–59.

Lieberman, Evan S. 2005. "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research." *American Political Science Review* 99(03): 435–52.

Lintner, Bertil. 1994. *Burma in Revolt: Opium and Insurgency since 1948*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Lister, Charles. 2015. "Syrian Islamists Reach out to the U.S., but Serious Issues Remain." *Brookings*. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2015/07/14/syrian-islamists-reach-out-to-the-u-s-but-serious-issues-remain/.

Lister, Charles R. 2016a. *The Free Syrian Army: A Decentralized Insurgent Brand*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.

———. 2016b. *The Syrian Jihad: Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State and the Evolution of an Insurgency*.

Littell, Jonathan. 2015. *Syrian Notebooks: Inside the Homs Uprising, January 16-February 2, 2012*. London: Verso.

Lounsbery, Marie Olson. 2016. "Foreign Military Intervention, Power Dynamics, and Rebel Group Cohesion." *Journal of Global Security Studies*: ogw004.

Lounsbery, Marie Olson, and Alethia H. Cook. 2011. "Rebellion, Mediation, and Group Change An Empirical Investigation of Competing Hypotheses." *Journal of Peace Research* 48(1): 73–84.

Loza, Salvador, and Mario Rizo. 2009. *Mística y coraje: testimonio del guerrillero Salvador Loza*. Managua, Nicaragua: Amerrisque.

Lujala, Päivi. 2010. "The Spoils of Nature: Armed Civil Conflict and Rebel Access to Natural Resources." *Journal of Peace Research* 47(1): 15–28.

Lund, Aron. 2011. *The Ghosts of Hama: The Bitter Legacy of Syria's Failed 1979-1982 Revolution*. Stockholm, Sweden: Swedish International Liberal Centre.

———. 2012. *Divided They Stand: An Overview of Syria's Political Opposition Factions*. Brussels, Belgium: Foundation for European Progressive Studies.

———. 2013. *Syria's Salafi Insurgents: The Rise of the Syrian Islamic Front*. Stockholm, Sweden: Swedish Institute of International Affairs.

Makara, Michael. 2013. "Coup-Proofing, Military Defection, and the Arab Spring." *Democracy and Security* 9(4): 334–59.

Mamosta, Afarin. 2017. "Today Has Been a Busy Day for the SDF, as They Received Thousands of Local Civillians Fleeing from Raqqa City to the Safety of SDF Areas.Pic.Twitter.Com/5Rxg2zHIJF." *@AfarinMamosta*. https://twitter.com/AfarinMamosta/status/888443032563011585/video/1.

Mampilly, Zachariah Cherian. 2011. *Rebel Rulers: Insurgent Governance and Civilian Life during War*. Cornell University Press.

Matinuddin, Kamal. 1999. *The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-1997*. Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press.

McAdam, Doug. 1986. "Recruitment to High-Risk Activism: The Case of Freedom Summer." *American Journal of Sociology* 92(1): 64–90.

McCarthy, John D., and Mayer N. Zald. 1977. "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory." *American Journal of Sociology* 82(6): 1212–41.

McDoom, Omar Shahabudin. 2013. "Antisocial Capital A Profile of Rwandan Genocide Perpetrators' Social Networks." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*: 0022002713484282.

McLauchlin, Theodore. 2010. "Loyalty Strategies and Military Defection in Rebellion." *Comparative Politics* 42(3): 333–50.

———. 2014. "Desertion, Terrain, and Control of the Home Front in Civil Wars." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*: 0022002714547901.

McLauchlin, Theodore, and Wendy Pearlman. 2012a. "Out-Group Conflict, In-Group Unity? Exploring the Effect of Repression on Intramovement Cooperation." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56(1): 41–66.

———. 2012b. "Out-Group Conflict, In-Group Unity? Exploring the Effect of Repression on Intramovement Cooperation." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56(1): 41–66.

Meyer, David S. 2004. "Protest and Political Opportunities." *Annual Review of Sociology* 30(1): 125–45.

———. 2006. *The Politics of Protest: Social Movements in America*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Migdal, Joel S. 1988. *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

MINED. 1980. *La Educación en el primer año de la Revolución Popular Sandinista*. Managua: Ministerio de Educación.

Minorities at Risk. 2010. "Chronology for Southerners in Chad." http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/chronology.asp?groupId=48302.

Mironova, Vera, Mrie Loubna, and Sam Whitt. 2014. "The Motivations of Syrian Islamist Fighters." *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*. https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-motivations-of-syrian-islamist-fighters (June 3, 2017).

Mkandawire, Thandika. 2002. "The Terrible Toll of Post-Colonial in Africa: Towards an Explanation of the Violence against the Peasantry." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 40(02): 181–215.

Monroy García, Juan José. 1997. *Tendencias ideológico-políticas del Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) 1975-1990*. México: Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México.

Mosinger, Eric S. 2017. "Brothers or Others in Arms? Civilian Constituencies and Rebel Fragmentation in Civil War." *Journal of Peace Research*: 0022343316675907.

Mosley, Layna, ed. 2013. *Interview Research in Political Science*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Mossman, James. 1961. *Rebels in Paradise; Indonesia's Civil War.* London: Cape.

Moyano, María José. 1995. *Argentina's Lost Patrol: Armed Struggle, 1969-1979*. New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press.

Munck, Gerardo L., and Jay Verkuilen. 2002. "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy Evaluating Alternative Indices." *Comparative Political Studies* 35(1): 5–34.

Narayan Swamy, M. R. 1994. *Tigers of Lanka, from Boys to Guerrillas*. Delhi: Konark Publishers.

Nardulli, Peter F., Buddy Peyton, and Joseph Bajjalieh. 2015. "Climate Change and Civil Unrest The Impact of Rapid-Onset Disasters." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59(2): 310–35.

National Foreign Assessment Center. 1979. "The Kurdish Problem in Perspective." http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/89801/DOC_0000626727.pdf.

Nel, Philip, and Marjolein Righarts. 2008. "Natural Disasters and the Risk of Violent Civil Conflict." *International Studies Quarterly* 52(1): 159–85.

Newman, Mark E. J. 2015. *Networks: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

Nolan, David. 1984. *The Ideology of the Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan Revolution*. Coral Gables, Fla. (P.O. Box 248123, Coral Gables 33124): Institute of Interamerican Studies, Graduate School of International Studies, University of Miami.

Norton, Ben. 2016. "U.S.-Backed Syrian Rebels Committing War Crimes, Torture, Abductions; Imposing Harsh Sharia Law: Report." *Salon*.

http://www.salon.com/2016/07/11/u_s_backed_syrian_rebels_committing_war_crimes_t orture_abductions_imposing_harsh_sharia_law_report/ (July 27, 2017).

Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

———. 1993. "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development." *The American Political Science Review* 87(3): 567–76.

Omelicheva, Mariya Y. 2011. "Natural Disasters: Triggers of Political Instability?" *International Interactions* 37(4): 441–65.

Ortega Saavedra, Humberto. 2004. *La epopeya de la insurrección*. Managua: Lea Grupo Editorial.

Østby, Gudrun. 2008. "Polarization, Horizontal Inequalities and Violent Civil Conflict." *Journal of Peace Research* 45(2): 143–62.

Paige, Jeffrey M. 1978. *Agrarian Revolution*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Pargeter, Alison. 2013. *The Muslim Brotherhood: From Opposition to Power.* London, UK: Saqi Books.

Parkinson, Sarah Elizabeth. 2013. "Organizing Rebellion: Rethinking High-Risk Mobilization and Social Networks in War." *American Political Science Review* 107(03): 418–32.

Pearlman, Wendy. 2013. "Understanding Fragmentation in the Syrian Revolt – Project on Middle East Political Science." https://pomeps.org/2014/02/12/understanding-fragmentation-in-the-syrian-revolt/ (May 13, 2017).

"Pedro Joaquín Chamorro: Vida y Muerte de Un Mártir." 2017. *La Prensa*. http://www.laprensa.com.ni/2017/01/08/suplemento/la-prensa-domingo/2161094-vida-y-muerte-de-pedro-joaquin-chamorro (March 19, 2017).

Penketh, Anne. 2004. "Peace Shattered in Syria as Terrorists Attack UN Building." *The Independent*. http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/peace-shattered-in-syria-as-terrorists-attack-un-building-561530.html (May 12, 2017).

Petersen, Roger. 2001. *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe*. Cambridge University Press.

———. 2002. *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*. Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Pettersson, Therese, and Lotta Themnér. 2011. "Pillars of Strength: External Support to Warring Parties." http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:476131 (December 8, 2014).

Pettersson, Therése, and Peter Wallensteen. 2015. "Armed Conflicts, 1946–2014." *Journal of Peace Research* 52(4): 536–50.

Pierret, Thomas. 2013. "Syrian Regime Loses Last Credible Ally among the Sunni Ulama." *Syria Comment*. http://www.joshualandis.com/blog/syrian-regime-loses-last-credible-ally-among-the-sunni-ulama-by-thomas-pierret/ (May 12, 2017).

Pierson, Paul. 2003. "Big, Slow-Moving, and... Invisible." In *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, eds. James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer. Cambridge University Press, 177–207. https://books.google.com.ni/books?hl=en&lr=&id=oT86uvC8KBEC&oi=fnd&pg=PA177&dq=big,+slow-moving,+and+invisible&ots=rUs_WlhOxN&sig=WumQM9HyqV3BmAczC19tsRn9E4U (April 5, 2017).

"Power Shift In Haiti Puts Rights at Risk." 2004. *Washington Post*. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A36889-2004Mar6_2.html.

Prouty, Chris, Eugene Rosenfeld, and Thomas Leiper Kane Collection (Library of Congress. Hebraic Section). 1981. *Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press.

Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Putnam, Robert D, Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Nanetti. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Ramírez, Sergio. 1990. *La marca del Zorro*. Madrid: Mondadori.

———. 2015. *Adiós muchachos*.

Regan, Patrick M. 2002. "Third-Party Interventions and the Duration of Intrastate Conflicts." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46(1): 55–73.

Restrepo, Jorge A., Michael Spagat, and Juan F. Vargas. 2006. "Special Data Feature; The Severity of the Colombian Conflict: Cross-Country Datasets Versus New Micro-Data." *Journal of Peace Research* 43(1): 99–115.

Rivera Quintero, Francisco, and Sergio Ramírez. 1989. *La marca del Zorro: hazañas del comandante Francisco Rivera Quintero*. Managua, Nicaragua: Editorial Nueva Nicaragua.

Robertson, William Glenn, Lawrence A Yates, and U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press. 2003. *Block by Block the Challenges of Urban Operations*. Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press. http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS59226 (December 17, 2015).

Rogers, Everett M. 2005. *Diffusion of Innovations.* 5th ed. New York: Free Press.

Ross, Michael L. 2006. "A Closer Look at Oil, Diamonds, and Civil War." *Annual Review of Political Science* 9(1): 265–300.

Rubin, Barnett R. 2002. *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Ruchwarger, Gary. 1987. *People in Power: Forging a Grassroots Democracy in Nicaragua*. South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin & Garvey Publishers.

Ruhnau, Britta. 2000. "Eigenvector-Centrality—a Node-Centrality?" *Social networks* 22(4): 357–365.

Said, Rodi, and Suleiman Al-Khalidi. 2017. "Syrians Risk All in Flight from Raqqa." *Reuters*. http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-raqqa-idUSKBN17615N.

Sambanis, Nicholas, and Moses Shayo. 2013. "Social Identification and Ethnic Conflict." *American Political Science Review* 107(02): 294–325.

Sanín, Francisco Gutiérrez, and Elisabeth Jean Wood. 2014. "Ideology in Civil War Instrumental Adoption and Beyond." *Journal of Peace Research* 51(2): 213–26.

Sarbahi, Anoop K. 2014. "Insurgent-Population Ties and the Variation in the Trajectory of Peripheral Civil Wars." *Comparative Political Studies*: 0010414013512602.

Sawyer, Katherine, Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, and William Reed. 2015. "The Role of External Support in Civil War Termination." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*: 0022002715600761.

Ṣāyigh, Yazīd. 1997. *Armed Struggle and the Search for State the Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press. http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=431243 (December 16, 2015).

Schmid, Alex P et al. 1988. *Political Terrorism a New Guide to Actors and Authors, Data Bases, and Literature*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers. http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=3410938 (December 16, 2015).

Schulhofer-Wohl, Jonah. 2014. "How the U.S. Fragmented Syria's Rebels." *The Washington Post*. http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/09/22/how-the-u-s-fragmented-syrias-rebels/ (April 9, 2015).

Scott, James C. 1976. *The Moral Economy of the Peasant Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=523602 (September 15, 2014).

Seawright, Jason. 2016. *Multi-Method Social Science: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools*.

Seekings, Jeremy. 2000. *The UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa, 1983-1991*. Cape Town; Oxford; Athens: David Philip ; James Currey ; Ohio University Press.

Selser, Gregorio, Seminario Permanente sobre Latino América, Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional, and Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores. 1979. *Nicaragua, elementos históricos, estratégicos y tácticos de la revolución*. México, D.F.: Seminario Permanente sobre Latino América.

Seymour, Lee J. M. 2014. "Why Factions Switch Sides in Civil Wars: Rivalry, Patronage, and Realignment in Sudan." *International Security* 39(2): 92–131.

Seymour, Lee J. M., Kristin M. Bakke, and Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham. 2015. "E Pluribus Unum, Ex Uno Plures Competition, Violence, and Fragmentation in Ethnopolitical Movements." *Journal of Peace Research*: 0022343315605571.

Seymour, Lee J. M., Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, and Kristin M. Bakke. 2014. "E Pluribus Unum, Ex Uno Plures: Correlates and Causes of Fragmentation in Ethnopolitical Movements." In Chicago.

Shesterinina, Anastasia. 2016. "Collective Threat Framing and Mobilization in Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 110(3): 411–27.

Shils, Edward A., and Morris Janowitz. 1948. "Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 12(2): 280–315.

al-Shishani, Murad Batal. 2013. "'Obliged to Unite under One Banner': A Profile of Syria's Jaysh Al-Muhajireen Wa'l-Ansar." *Terrorism Monitor* 11(8). https://jamestown.org/program/obliged-to-unite-under-one-banner-a-profile-of-syrias-jaysh-al-muhajireen-wal-ansar/ (June 2, 2017).

Shwe Lu Maung. 1989. *Burma, Nationalism and Ideology: An Analysis of Society, Culture, and Politics*. Dhaka: University Press.

Sidahmed, Abdel Salam, and Alsir Sidahmed. 2004. *Sudan*. New York: Routledge. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=110359 (December 17, 2015).

Siebold, Guy L. 2007. "The Essence of Military Group Cohesion." *Armed Forces & Society* 33(2): 286–95.

Sierakowski, Robert James. 2012. "In the Footsteps of Sandino: Geographies of Revolution and Political Violence in Northern Nicaragua, 1956-1979." *eScholarship*. http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0z4306st (March 14, 2016).

Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*. Cambridge University Press.

Snow, David A, and Robert D Benford. 1992. "Master Frames and Cycles of Protest." *Frontiers in social movement theory / edited by Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller*.

Solaún, Mauricio. 2005. *U.S. Intervention and Regime Change in Nicaragua*. Lincoln, Neb. [u.a.: Univ. of Nebraska Press.

Solórzano, Porfirio R. 1993. *The Nirex Collection: Nicaraguan Revolution Extracts ; Twelve Years, 1978-1990.* Austin, Tex.: Litex.

Somoza, Anastasio. 1981. *Nicaragua Betrayed*. Boston: Western Islands.

al-Souri, Abu Musaab. "Lessons Learned from the Jihad Ordeal in Syria." http://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/lessons-learned-from-the-jihad-ordealin-syria-english-translation.

South Asia Terrorism Portal. "Hizb-Ul-Mujahideen." http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/hizbul_mujahideen.htm (June 5, 2015).

Soysa, Indra De, and Eric Neumayer. 2007. "Resource Wealth and the Risk of Civil War Onset: Results from a New Dataset of Natural Resource Rents, 1970–1999." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 24(3): 201–18.

Spencer, Richard, and David Rose. 2013. "Under the Black Flag of Al-Qaeda, the Syrian City Ruled by Gangs of Extremists." *The Telegraph*. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/10051207/Under-the-black-flag-of-al-Qaeda-the-Syrian-city-ruled-by-gangs-of-extremists.html (July 26, 2017).

Staniland, Paul. 2010. "Cities on Fire: Social Mobilization, State Policy, and Urban Insurgency." *Comparative Political Studies* 43(12): 1623–49.

———. 2012a. "Between a Rock and a Hard Place Insurgent Fratricide, Ethnic Defection, and the Rise of Pro-State Paramilitaries." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56(1): 16–40.

———. 2012b. "Organizing Insurgency: Networks, Resources, and Rebellion in South Asia." *International Security* 37(1): 142–77.

———. 2012c. "States, Insurgents, and Wartime Political Orders." *Perspectives on Politics* 10(02): 243–64.

———. 2014. *Networks of rebellion: explaining insurgent cohesion and collapse*.

Stedman, Stephen John. 1997. "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes." *International Security* 22(2): 5–53.

Stewart, Frances. 2008. *Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: Understanding Group Violence in Multiethnic Societies*. Basingstoke [England]; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Stewart, Katie. 2014. "One Group, Many Factions: An Analysis of Self-Determination Group Fragmentation." In Chicago.

Stewart, Megan. 2015. "Civil War as State-Building: The Determinants of Insurgent Public Goods Provision." In New Orleans.

Suñol, Julio C. 1992. *Insurrección en Nicaragua: la historia no contada*. Caracas: Pomaire-Fuentes.

Sweig, Julia. 2004. *Inside the Cuban Revolution: Fidel Castro and the Urban Underground*. Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press.

Syria Countrywide Conflict Report. 2014. The Carter Center.

"Syria Crisis: Raqqa Governor Held by Rebels 'as City Falls.'" 2013. *BBC News*. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-21666913 (August 2, 2017).

"Syrian Opposition Factions Join Ahrar Al-Sham." 2017. *Al-Jazeera*. http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/01/syrian-opposition-factions-join-ahrar-al-sham-170126133928474.html.

"Syrian Rebel Alliances Shatter as Former Al-Qaeda Group Attacks FSA." *Middle East Eye*. http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/former-al-qaeda-militants-launch-assault-syrian-rebels-attending-peace-talks-484210841 (July 7, 2017).

Tamm, Henning. 2016. "Rebel Leaders, Internal Rivals, and External Resources: How State Sponsors Affect Insurgent Cohesion." *International Studies Quarterly*: sqw033.

Tarrow, Sidney G. 1991. *Struggle, Politics, and Reform: Collective Action, Social Movements, and Cycles of Protest*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Center for International Studies, Cornell University.

Tarrow, Sidney, and Tollefson. 1994. *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics*. Cambridge Univ Press.

Tezcür, Güneş Murat. 2016. "Ordinary People, Extraordinary Risks: Participation in an Ethnic Rebellion." *American Political Science Review* 110(2): 247–64.

Thaler, Kai. 2012. "Ideology and Violence in Civil Wars: Theory and Evidence from Mozambique and Angola." *Civil Wars* 14(4): 546–67.

———. 2017. "When the Rebels Win: Leadership, Preferences, and a Typology of Rebel Organizations." *Working paper*.

The New Arab. 2017. "IS 'Using Entire Raqqa Population as Human Shields.'" *alaraby*. https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/3/30/is-using-entire-raqqa-population-as-human-shields (July 26, 2017).

Thies, Cameron G. 2010. "Of Rulers, Rebels, and Revenue: State Capacity, Civil War Onset, and Primary Commodities." *Journal of Peace Research* 47(3): 321–32.

Tilly, Charles. 1964. *The Vendee.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

———. 1978. *From Mobilization to Revolution*. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co.

———. 1985. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." In *Bringing the State Back In*, eds. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol. Cambridge University Press. http://static.ow.ly/docs/0%20Tilly%2085_5Xr.pdf (April 30, 2013).

Times, an Employee of The New York, and Ben Hubbard. 2014. "In a Syrian City, ISIS Puts Its Vision Into Practice." *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/24/world/middleeast/islamic-state-controls-raqqa-syria.html (August 2, 2017).

Tomson, Chris. 2016a. "Huge Three-Way Battle Unfolds near Al-Bab as All Parties Seize Territory in the Same Day." *AMN - Al-Masdar News | □□□□ □□□□□□*. https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/huge-three-way-battle-unfolds-near-al-bab-parties-seize-territory-day/ (August 2, 2017).

———. 2016b. "ISIS Retakes Town near Al-Bab during Deadly Ambush on Turkish-Backed Rebels." *AMN - Al-Masdar News | □□□□ □□□□□□*. https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/isis-retakes-town-near-al-bab-deadly-ambush-turkish-backed-rebels/ (August 2, 2017).

Torres Jiménez, Hugo. 2005. *Rumbo norte: historia de un sobreviviente*. Managua: Hispamer.

Toumaj, Amir. 2016. "Pro-Government Palestinian Militia Fights in Aleppo." *FDD's Long War Journal*. http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/09/pro-government-palestinian-militia-fights-in-aleppo.php (August 2, 2017).

UN Secretary-General. 2004. "Report of the Secretary-General on Burundi." http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Burundi%20S2004210.pdf.

United States, Department of State, and Office of Public Affairs. 1988. *Nicaraguan Biographies: A Resource Book.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of State, Bureau of Public Affairs.

Valentino, Benjamin, Paul Huth, and Dylan Balch-Lindsay. 2004. "'Draining the Sea': Mass Killing and Guerrilla Warfare." *International Organization* 58(02).

Vilas, Carlos M. 1985. "El Sujeto Social de La Insurreccion Popular: La Revolucion Sandinista." *Latin American Research Review* 20(1): 119–47.

Vogt, Manuel et al. 2015. "Integrating Data on Ethnicity, Geography, and Conflict The Ethnic Power Relations Data Set Family." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59(7): 1327–42.

Volpini, Federico. 1987. *Desde Managua ...* Esplugues de Llobregat: Plaza & Janes.

Walker, Jonathan. 2014. *Aden Insurgency: The Savage War in Yeman 1962-67.* http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=1931675 (December 16, 2015).

Walshe, Peter. 1971. *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: The African National Congress, 1912-1952.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Walter, Barbara F. 2006. "Building Reputation: Why Governments Fight Some Separatists but Not Others." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(2): 313–330.

Warren, T. Camber, and Kevin K. Troy. 2014. "Explaining Violent Intra-Ethnic Conflict Group Fragmentation in the Shadow of State Power." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*: 0022002713515400.

Wedeen, Lisa. 1999. *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Weinstein, Jeremy M. 2005. "Resources and the Information Problem in Rebel Recruitment." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(4): 598–624.

———. 2007. *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*. Cambridge University Press.

Weismann, Itzchak. 2010. "Democratic Fundamentalism? The Practice and Discourse of the Muslim Brothers Movement in Syria." *The Muslim World* 100(1): 1–16.

Weyland, Kurt. 2010. "The Diffusion of Regime Contention in European Democratization, 1830-1940." *Comparative Political Studies* 43(8–9): 1148–76.

Wheelock, Jaime. 1975. *Imperialismo y dictadura: crisis de una formación social*. México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores.

———. 1979. *Frente Sandinista: diciembre victorioso*. Managua? Secretaría Nacional de Propaganda y Educación Política, F.S.L.N.

Whewell, Tim. 2013. "Syrian Activists Flee Abuse in Al-Qaeda-Run Raqqa." *BBC News*. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-24926584 (July 26, 2017).

White, Jeffrey. 2011. "Asad's Armed Opposition: The Free Syrian Army." http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/asads-armed-opposition-the-free-syrian-army (June 2, 2017).

Wickham-Crowley, Timothy P. 1991a. *Exploring Revolution: Essays on Latin American Insurgency and Revolutionary Theory*. M.E. Sharpe.

Wickham-Crowley, Timothy P. 1991b. *Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America: A Comparative Study of Insurgents and Regimes since 1956*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

vanOyen Witvliet, Charlotte. 1997. "Traumatic Intrusive Imagery as an Emotional Memory Phenomenon: A Review of Research and Explanatory Information Processing Theories." *Clinical Psychology Review* 17(5): 509–36.

Woldemariam, Michael. 2016. "Battlefield Outcomes and Rebel Cohesion: Lessons From the Eritrean Independence War." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 28(1): 135–56.

Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2003. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wood, Reed M. 2010a. "Competing for Control: Conflict Power Dynamics, Civilian Loyalties and Violence in Civil War." University of North Carolina. http://www.public.asu.edu/~rmwood4/Wood_dis.pdf (November 28, 2013).

———. 2010b. "Rebel Capability and Strategic Violence against Civilians." *Journal of Peace Research* 47(5): 601–14.

Wood, Reed M., and Jacob D. Kathman. 2015. "Competing for the Crown: Inter-Rebel Competition and Civilian Targeting in Civil War." *Political Research Quarterly* 68(1): 167–179.

Zaks, Sherry. 2017. "Relationships Among Rivals (RAR): A Framework for Analyzing Contending Hypotheses in Process Tracing." *Political Analysis*: 1–19.

Zimmermann, Matilde. 2000. *Sandinista: Carlos Fonseca and the Nicaraguan Revolution*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Zisser, Eyal. 2005. "Syria, the Ba'th Regime and the Islamic Movement: Stepping on a New Path?" *The Muslim World* 95(1): 43–65.