Working Paper Series

No. 17-06

From nascent insurrections to full-blown insurgencies: Why some militant groups engage in sustained armed conflicts, a quantitative approach'

Michael Shkolnik, Ph.D. Candidate

December 11, 2017

Norman Paterson School of International Affairs (NPSIA) – Carleton University

The Canadian Network for Research on Terrorism, Security, and Society TSAS is supported as a national strategic initiative funded by SSHRC and Public Safety Canada, along with the following departments of the federal government:

- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Canadian Security Intelligence Service
- Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada
- Correctional Services Canada
- Defence Research and Development Canada
- Global Affairs Canada
- Security Intelligence Review Committee
- Office of the Communications Security Establishment Commissioner

TSAS also receives financial support from several Canadian universities, including the University of Waterloo.

Views expressed in this manuscript are those of the author(s) alone.
For more information, contact the Lorne Dawson, Department of Sociology and Legal Studies, University of Waterloo (ldawson@uwaterloo.ca).

Report Submitted to the Canadian Network for Research on Terrorism, Security and Society

Address correspondence to Michael Shkolnik, michaelshkolnik77@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

In October 2014, the Sinai-based militant group Ansar Beit al-Maqdis conducted a sophisticated, multi-pronged attack targeting two Egyptian military positions and killing 31 soldiers. A month later, that group pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group in Syria/Iraq and escalated its level violence, solidifying itself as an unprecedented threat to Egyptian national security.[1] The dramatic and rapid rise of the Islamic State (IS) and its affiliates shocked many observers around the world. By waging a successful military campaign in 2014, the militant organization was able to gain control of significant territory in Syria and Iraq, consolidate new power bases in region, attract an unprecedented number of foreign fighters, and coordinate large-scale attacks around the world. Data on terrorism and civil wars point to a sharp increase in militant activity worldwide in recent years – both in terms of casualties from terrorist attacks and battle-related deaths during armed conflicts.[2] It is puzzling why some initially weak militant groups, who face immense difficulties in garnering material resources and support, are able to eventually engage in sustained violent operations and confront more powerful militaries. Many more militant groups rarely survive their most vulnerable first year, let alone pose a serious threat. Why do some militant groups engage in sustained armed conflicts while other groups do not? Using a resource mobilization framework, I conduct quantitative regression analysis on 246 prominent militant groups from 1970-2007 and find that, in general, religious militant organizations operating in less competitive environments are associated with a higher likelihood of engaging in sustained armed conflicts.[3] Challenging conventional wisdom, groups with relatively less centralized command and control are slightly more likely to engage in sustained armed conflict than the most hierarchically structured

---

[1] David D. Kirkpatrick, "31 Egyptian Soldiers Are Killed As Militants Attack in Sinai," *New York Times*, 24 Oct. 2014, Retrieved from: https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/25/world/middleeast/militants-kill-at-least-26-egyptian-soldiers-in-sinai-peninsula-attack.html For more on the rise of Wilayat Sinai, the Islamic State's affiliate in the Sinai Peninsula please see Omar Ashour, "Sinai's Stubborn Insurgency: Why Egypt Can't Win," *Foreign Affairs,* 8 Nov. 2015, Retrieved from: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/egypt/2015-11-08/sinais-stubborn-insurgency.

[2] See Institute for Economics and Peace (2016), Global Terrorism Index 2016: Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism, Retrieved from: http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2016.2.pdf and Therése Pettersson and Peter Wallensteen, "Armed Conflicts, 1946-2014," *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 4 (2015): 536-550, 537.

[3] The prominent militant groups under study and their characteristics are identified in Joshua Kilberg, "Organizing for Destruction: How Organizational Structure Affects Terrorist Group Behaviour," Doctoral Dissertation, 2011, Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada.

organizations. Overall, my model shows that organizational characteristics are better predictors of sustained armed conflicts than measures of group capabilities, diverging from current explanations of insurgency onset or outcomes. Posing a serious challenge to a regime is not necessarily a function of how powerful or capable a group may seem – it's about the external competitive environment and internal capacity to effectively mobilize resources and sustain armed hostilities against regime forces.

There is no shortage of literature on full-fledged civil wars or powerful insurgent groups such as Hezbollah or the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Data limitations are inherent when seeking to study militant groups that fall into the dustbin of history. Yet policymakers and researchers can learn a great deal about armed conflict by understanding the trajectories of militant groups that emerge under similar conditions, but fail to wage sustained campaigns of attrition. Understanding this phenomenon is critical since groups that are capable of launching sustained guerrilla or military operations gain more influence, recruitment, and fundraising capabilities while further weakening the target state. The Islamic State's attacks on Iraqi police and military targets, for example, diminished government resources and deterred recruitment into the state's already fragile security apparatuses, creating more power vacuums that enabled the insurgent group to pursue its early strategic objectives.[4] As the Islamic State loses its core territorial stronghold in Syria and Iraq, this question is particularly important for strategic planners trying to assess which militant groups may emerge as serious threats in future insurgencies. It is far more difficult for states to defeat a full-fledged insurgency than prevent a nascent insurrection from flourishing.

The paper proceeds as follows. The first section offers definitions and briefly reviews literature related to terrorism incidence, civil war onset, and insurgency mobilization. The second section presents the quantitative methodology and regression results. Final sections offer a discussion of the findings followed by implications for scholarship and policy. While this paper does not uncover clear causal sequences, the quantitative analysis offers empirical associations that differentiate between militant groups that wage sustained battles of attrition and those that do not.

[4] Will McCants, *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State,* New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015, 80-81. By launching a sustained armed conflict, organizations also improve their coercive bargaining power vis-à-vis the state.

DEFINITIONS

The broader scholarly literature tends to treat civil war, terrorism, and insurgency as analytically distinct phenomenon, despite representing interrelated forms of political violence. Hoffman (2006) argues that *terrorists* do not "function in the open as armed units, generally do not attempt to seize or hold territory, deliberately avoid engaging enemy military forces in combat, are constrained both numerically and logistically from undertaking concerted mass political mobilization efforts, and exercise no direct control or governance over a populace at either the local or the national level."[5] According to this popular perspective, the term *terrorist* generally conveys a more clandestine violent actor than the more overt and multi-faceted *insurgent*.[6] Other scholars explicitly differentiate violent non-state actors based on either group size, territorial control, or adopted strategies.[7] However, these defining factors often represent quite variable distinctions.[8] For this paper, I argue it is best to differentiate between the most threatening militant groups based on those groups that engage in sustained battles of attrition against target regime forces, and those that do not.

Militant Group

[5] Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism,* 35.

[6] Daniel Byman (2008) estimates that roughly half of the groups designated as Foreign Terrorist Organizations by the U.S. State Department are also insurgent organizations. The CIA broadly defines insurgency as "a protracted political-military activity directed toward completely or partially controlling the resources of a country through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organizations. Insurgent activity—including guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and political mobilization, for example, propaganda, recruitment, front and covert party organization, and international activity—is designed to weaken government control and legitimacy while increasing insurgent control and legitimacy." See Central Intelligence Agency, *Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency,* Washington D.C. nd, 2009, 2. Other scholars of insurgency have also relied on this definition including, Seth Jones (2008) and Daniel Byman (2008). See Daniel Byman, "Understanding Proto-Insurgencies," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 31, no. 2 (2008): 165-200; and Seth G. Jones, "The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency: State Failure and Jihad," *International Security* 32, no. 4 (2008): 7-40. For some prominent scholars, the term insurgency denotes a technology of rebellion. According to Fearon and Latin (2003), insurgency is consists of "small, lightly armed bands practicing guerrilla warfare from rural base areas." James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 1 (2003): 75-90, 79.

[7] La Calle & Sanchez-Cuenca (2012) distinguish militants based on territorial control, coding *insurgents* as groups that hold territory and *terrorists* as groups that do not. Most *insurgent* groups, however, do not emerge and immediately control territory and the authors acknowledge that analyzing group transitions are overlooked. See Luis De la Calle and Ignacio Sanchez-Cuenca, "Rebels without a Territory: An Analysis of Nonterritorial
Conflicts in the World, 1970–1997," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56, no. 4 (2012): 580-603. Other perspectives emphasize group size or guerrilla hit-and-run tactics as defining characteristics distinguishing between *terrorist* and *insurgent* groups. Byman (2008) seeks to address overlapping concepts by analyzing "*proto-insurgencies*": groups that aim to "gain the size necessary to more effectively achieve its goals and use tools such as political mobilization and guerrilla warfare as well as terrorism." See Byman, "Understanding Proto-Insurgencies," 5.

[8] James Khalil, "Know Your Enemy: On the Futility of Distinguishing Between Terrorists and Insurgents," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 35, no. 5 (2013): 419-430.

To avoid fueling conceptual ambiguities, actor-centric concepts including *guerrilla, rebel, terrorist,* and *insurgent* will solely be referred to as *militant* – a less pejorative term defined here – unless I specifically explore a particular literature or reference an author that relies on a given term or concept. I define militant group - my unit of analysis - as a collective, non-state organization with a designated name that engages in the use of illegal violence to achieve a "political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation."[9] Since my universe of cases derive from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), I adopt the GTD's broad definition of *terrorism* as this project's conception of militant violence. While *economic* goals, *religious* views, or *social* transformations may motivate some groups to engage in particular acts or operations, the ultimate objectives of the militant groups under study are inherently *political*. Many definitions specifically reference that targets of *terrorism* are primarily soft targets or civilians.[10] It is important to clarify that the GTD's definition encompasses incidents that may not be traditionally viewed as terrorist attacks by some, including civil war related violence and classic guerrilla hit-and-run attacks targeting military convoys for example. Since most prominent militant groups tend to include both civilian and military targets within their attack profiles, this broad definition is appropriate for analyzing why some groups engage in sustained armed conflicts.[11]

Armed Conflict

Brown (2001) specifies that civil wars involve violent conflicts that are sustained for a period of time involving belligerents with group identities and organizational capacities.[12] Scholars often code civil wars if an organized armed conflict within a state reaches a certain lethality threshold – mainly 1000 battle-related deaths.[13] While thresholds may seem arbitrary, it is often important to

---

[9] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), Global Terrorism Database (GTD) Codebook: Inclusion Criteria and Variables (2016), https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/downloads/Codebook.pdf, 9. Most prominent militant groups rely on non-violent methods as well; however, my base-line definition binds my unit of analysis to organized groups that engage in political violence to help achieve their objectives.

[10] Some definitions consider incidents an act of terrorism if it was intended to send a psychological message to a wider audience beyond the immediate victim of the violence. Alex P. Schmid, "Frameworks for Conceptualizing Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16, no.2 (2004): 197-221.

[11] See Byman, "Understanding Proto-Insurgencies." And Ariel Merari, "Terrorism as Strategy of Insurgency," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 5, no. 4 (1993): 213-251

[12] Michael E. Brown, "Ethnic and Internal Conflicts: Causes and Implications," in *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict,* eds. Chester A. Crocker and Fen Osler Hampson with Pamela R. Aall, Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001, 212.

[13] Nicholas Sambanis, "What Is Civil War? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48, no. 6 (2004): 814-858; Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, and Dominic Rohner, "Beyond Greed and

distinguish between various levels of conflict intensity. To avoid discounting lower-intensity conflicts, the more fine-grained UCDP armed conflict data is adopted here, defining armed conflict as: "a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year."[14] Engagement in armed conflict often parallels militant strategies of attrition, whereby militant groups seek to signal credibility and resolve by degrading and destroying regime targets.[15]

LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORY

Motivation and Opportunity

Daniel Byman (2008) outlines the main factors that help small terrorist and guerrilla groups evolve into-full blown insurgent organizations.[16] To facilitate this transition, a group must first establish a salient identity related to a popular cause that resonates with constituents beyond the founding group members. Exploiting or fuelling grievances among a particular population is critical for groups to mobilize for an insurgency.[17] From a conflict escalation perspective, the *grievance* school of thought suggests that civil war erupts when states engage in repression and enflame grievances, leading to higher levels of rebellion among dissidents who seek to address past injustices.[18] Some

---

Grievance: Feasibility and Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 61, no. 1 (2009): 1-27. Kalyvas (2006) ignores numerical thresholds and considers civil wars to be "armed combat within the boundaries of a recognized sovereign entity between parties subject to a common authority at the outset of the hostilities." Kalyvas, Stathis N. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
2006, 5.

[14] Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), Definition of Armed Conflict, 2016, Retrieved from http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/definitions/#Top_of_page. A sustained armed conflict, for this project's purposes, entails violent hostilities at this threshold to be maintained for a minimum of five consecutive years. Full-fledged insurgencies have an average duration of 7-10 years, depending on estimates. See Ben Connable and Martin C. Libicki, *How Insurgencies End*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2010 and Seth G. Jones, *Waging Insurgent Warfare*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. Setting a benchmark of five years for this study clearly differentiates between militant groups that participate in relatively significant campaigns of attrition from those that only engage in armed conflicts for a couple years or are crushed early.

[15] Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism," *International Security* 31, no. 1 (2006): 49-79.

[16] See Byman, "Understanding Proto-Insurgencies."

[17] Both terrorism and civil war literature point to the role of grievances and relative deprivation arguments. Ted R. Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970. Crenshaw (1981) argues that militant groups often form and engage in violence after social movements fail to achieve their objectives through peaceful means and discrimination is unaddressed. See Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism," *Comparative Politics* 13, no. 4 (1981): 379-399.

[18] Christian Davenport, David A. Armstrong II, and Mark I. Lichbach, "From Mountains to Movements: Dissent, Repression and Escalation to Civil War," Presented to the annual International Studies Association Conference, San Diego, 2006. While prominent large-n studies find no relationship between macro-level ethnicity indicators and civil war onset, notable research suggests ethnic grievances are positively related to civil war outbreak, see Lars-Erik Cederman, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min, "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis," *World Politics* 62, no. 1 (2010): 87-119.

militant groups should be more capable of capitalizing on grievances than others – particularly religious and ethno-nationalist groups that can draw on resources from a well-defined constituency. Religiously motivated groups in particular tend to be more lethal and maintain indivisible objectives, making negotiated settlements improbable.[19] Other scholars emphasize economic motivations, arguing that militants escalate violence to capture resources to redistribute wealth and fuel armed conflict.[20] While civil wars are often associated with less developed countries, there is emerging consensus that economic conditions – at both the individual and country levels of analysis – are poor predictors of terrorism incidence.[21] Thinking beyond motivations, militant groups seeking to challenge states need a permissive environment to mobilize resources and cultivate a safe haven or base of operations.

Challenging motivational arguments, Fearon & Laitin (2003) posit that conditions favouring insurgency development best predict the outbreak of armed conflict. Opportunity in the form of weak states, rough terrain, and poor counterinsurgency allow rebels to gain safe havens and escalate violence.[22] Safe havens enable militant groups to re-organize, increase fundraising

---

[19] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism,* 2006. Eli Berman, *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism,* MIT Press: Cambridge, 2009. Monica Duffy Toft, "Getting Religion? The Puzzling Case of Islam and Civil War," *International Security* 31, no. 4 (2007): 97-131.

[20] Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 56, no. 4 (2004): 563-595. Mark I. Lichbach, "What makes Rational Peasants Revolutionary? Dilemma, Paradox, and Irony in Peasant Collective Action," *World Politics* 46, no. 3 (1994): 383-418. Related economic models of conflict often take into account the expected and opportunity costs for rebellion, in addition to the perceived strength of the target regime. See Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis, "How Much War Will We See?: Explaining the Prevalence of Civil War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46, no. 3 (2002): 307-334.

[21] Though Piazza (2011) finds that there is no direct relationship between poor economic conditions and terrorism, he argues that minority economic discrimination better explains patterns of terrorism compared to other types of discrimination. James A. Piazza, "Poverty, Minority Economic Discrimination, and Domestic Terrorism," *Journal of Peace Research* 38, no. 3 (2011): 339-353. Other important research suggests that unemployment rates may have a negative relationship with militant violence in key insurgencies including Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Philippines. See Eli Berman, Michael Callen, Joseph Felter, and Jacob Shapiro. "Do Working Men Rebel? Insurgency and Unemployment in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Philippines," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55, no. 4 (2011): 496-528. Other scholars have explored potential economic incentives for individuals to engage in terrorist activity and join militant organizations. See Walter Enders and Todd Sandler, *The Political Economy of Terrorism,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006; Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy M. Weinstein, "Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War," *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 2 (2008): 436-455. In some contexts, militant operatives – such as Palestinian terrorists and suicide bombers – tend to actually hail from relatively higher socio-economic and education levels than their peers. See Claude Berrebi, "Evidence About the Link Between Education Poverty and Terrorism Among Palestinians," *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy* 13 no. 1 (2007): 1-36.

[22] Fearon and Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War"; Zeynep Taydas, Dursun Peksen & Patrick James, "Why Do Civil Wars Occur? Understanding the Importance of Institutional Quality," Civil Wars 12, no. 3 (2010): 195-217. Helge Holtermann, "How Can Weak Insurgent Groups Grow? Insights from Nepal." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 0 (2014): 1-22. Stewart Patrick, "'Failed' States and Global Security: Empirical Questions and Policy Dilemmas." *International Studies Review* 9, no. 4 (2007): 644-662.

opportunities, train operatives, and build capable military forces.[23] Regions that host sympathetic ethnic or religious communities offer important comparative advantages for militant groups seeking opportunities for expansion and refuge from counterinsurgent forces.[24] For some scholars, militant safe havens emerge as a direct function of state capacity and the level of economic development, influencing rebel strategies.[25] According to these perspectives, poor states provide militant groups with the opportunity to seize territory and engage in rural guerrilla warfare, while states with intermediate levels of development force militant groups to operate clandestinely.[26] While early quantitative literature laid the groundwork for a better understanding of why some countries were more prone to civil war, country level indicators are limited in explaining why some militant groups engage in sustained armed conflicts while other similar groups do not. Even Fearon and Laitin, who largely use structural indicators to explain civil war onset, indirectly reference the importance of pre-civil war activity by referring to "nascent" and "active" rebels in the lead up to civil war outbreak.[27] Civil wars do not erupt in vacuums. It is important to analyze conflict dynamics from the militant group-level of analysis prior to large-scale violent confrontations.

Resources and Militant Mobilization

Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) – a dominant framework in the literature on social movements – helps differentiate militant groups based on their capacity to generate resources, develop cohesive organizational structures, and mobilize people towards achieving the group's objectives.[28] Low-level acts of terrorism, whether at the individual or small-cell level, do not

---

[23] Luis de la Calle and Ignacio Sanchez-Cuenza, "Rebels Without a Territory." There are three broad types of safe haven. Internal sanctuary within the borders of the country where the insurgency primarily occurs, external voluntary sanctuary which tends to be offered by a willing neighbouring country or non-state actor, and external involuntary sanctuary in a neighbouring country or territory where safe haven is provided without official permission from the host state. Ben Connable and Martin C. Libicki, *How Insurgencies End*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2010, Appendix.

[24] Rem Korteweg, "Black Holes: On Terrorist Sanctuaries and Governmental Weakness," *Civil War* 10, no. 1 (2008): 60-71. Toft (2005) demonstrates that ethnically homogenous regions are more likely to mobilize for conflict that less concentrated, heterogeneous regions. See Monica Duffy Toft, *The Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identity, Interests, and the Indivisibility of Territory*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

[25] Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*.; Calle and Sanchez-Cuenza, "Rebels Without a Territory." Cristiana Brafman Kittner, "The Role of Safe Havens in Islamist Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19, no. 3 (2007): 307-329.

[26] Most insurgencies, however, are characterized by dynamic, overlapping strategies and some tend to have both rural and urban components simultaneously. See David Kilcullen, "Counter-insurgency Redux," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 48, no. 4 (2006): 111-130.

[27] Fearon and Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," 80.

[28] John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial

require significant resources. But organized militant groups need to mobilize sufficient resources and steady financial influxes if they want to successfully engage in sustained violent campaigns.[29] Financial influxes, however, do not necessarily translate into more violence as militant organizations may allocate resources to enhance social service provision and improve the group's influence.[30] Scholars tend to emphasize the importance of two types of militant resources: both legal and illicit financial activities (i.e. drug trade; weapons/human smuggling; controlling lootable resources) and external support (i.e. states, diasporas, and refugee communities).[31] Yet considerable debate remains. Reliance on material resources might enhance militant organization and operations or point to a militant *resource curse*, whereby resource flows can facilitate predatory behaviour or group fragmentation. State sponsorship, for example, has been cited as one of the most critical factors explaining militant group success, while other scholars have shown that external patrons can cause major problems for their clients.[32] For Staniland (2012), the strength of pre-existing social networks help explain the formation of durable and integrated institutions that determine whether resource influxes enhance or hinder militant group cohesion.[33] Most militant groups, however, generally maintain poor resource profiles and tend to secure critical sources of resources after solidifying coercive and organizational capacity.[34]

Theory," *The American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 6 (1977): 1212-1241.; Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution,* Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1978.; J. Craig Jenkins, "Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements." *Annual Review of Sociology* 9 (1983): 527-553.
Critics rightly point out that RMT overlooks micro-level decision making processes and alliance formations. But the broader RMT theoretical framework is appropriate for a large-n analysis of militant groups at the organizational level of analysis.

[29] Enders and Sandler, *The Political Economy of Terrorism*.

[30] Timothy Wittig, *Understanding Terrorist Finance,* UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

[31] Michael L. Ross, "How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War? Evidence from Thirteen Cases." *International Organization* 58, no. 1 (2004): 35-67. Jeremy W. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007; Idean Salehyan and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, "Refugees and the Spread of Civil War," *International Organization* 60, no. 2 (2006): 335-366.

[32] Daniel Byman, Peter Chalk, Bruce Hoffman, William Rosenau, and David Brannan, *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001. Also see Connable, Ben and Martin C. Libicki. *How Insurgencies End.* Santa Monica, RAND Corporation, 2010. The study finds that the withdrawal of outside state support diminishes an insurgent group's ability to wage violent campaigns and contributes to the increased likelihood that a group is defeated. For discussions on the potential negative impacts of state sponsorship see: Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman, *The Dynamics of Coercion: American Foreign Policy and the Limits of Military Might,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002 and Carter, David B., "A Blessing or a Curse? State Support for Terrorist Groups." *International Organization* 66, no. 1 (2012): 129-151.

[33] Paul Staniland, "Organizing Insurgency: Networks, Resources, and Rebellion in South Asia," *International Security* 37, no. 1 (2012): 142-177.

[34] Janet I. Lewis. 2012. "How Rebellion Begins: Insurgent Group Formation and Viability in Uganda." Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 27.

Organizational Structure

Militant organizations seeking to challenge states need to develop robust organizational structures to coordinate operational plans and withstand government responses. Research on social movements and militant group structures suggests that centralized and formally structured groups should be more effective at mobilizing resources and achieving broader objectives than more decentralized groups.[35] Militant groups with hierarchical structures are also associated with increased lethality and higher likelihood of ultimately defeating the states they fight.[36] Centralized groups are more capable of allocating resources effectively, reducing principal-agent problems, and keeping lower-ranking members in line with the group's broader objectives. The following hypothesis on organizational structure is derived based on current scholarly debates and resource mobilization arguments:

> **Hypothesis 1:** The more hierarchical a militant group is organized, the more likely it will engage in a sustained armed conflict.

Competitive Environment

Competition for resources and manpower among rival constituent factions and other rebel groups is particularly crucial in the early phases of a violent conflict. Violence serves as an important signal of capabilities and resolve among groups competing for the leadership of a particular constituency – similar to the outbidding logic outlined in the terrorism literature.[37] Recent work highlights the importance of rival relations and internal movement structure to assess militant group success. Some research has shown that internally divided self-determination movements are more likely to illicit concessions from the state, while other scholars argue that unified movements are more likely to achieve strategic success.[38] Stressing the importance of internal distributions of power, Krause

---

[35] Jenkins, "Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements."

[36] Connable and Libicki, *How Insurgencies End;* Victor Asal and R. Karl Rethemeyer, "The Nature of the Beast: Organizational Structures and the Lethality of Terrorist Attacks, *The Journal of Politics* 70, no. 2 (2008): 437-449; Joshua Kilberg, "Organizing for Destruction: How Organizational Structure Affects Terrorist Group Behaviour,"; Paul Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014.

[37] Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror,* New York: Columbia University Press, 2005; Kydd and Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism."

[38] Cunnigham (2013) argues that movements with higher levels of internal divisions are more likely to experience civil war outbreak. According to this perspective, highly divided movements produce more commitment and information problems with the

(2013) argues that movements led by a single hegemonic group are most likely to achieve strategic successes.[39] In the nascent stages of an insurgency, militant groups often have to consolidate rivals – whether by destructive campaigns or alliance formation – before emerging as the dominant organization.[40] Young and Dugan (2012) find that higher levels of militant group competition (based on the number of terrorist groups in a country) reduce the likelihood of group survival.[41] For an initial assessment of competitive environments, the following hypothesis is derived given that a militant group's trajectory is often a function of rival militant groups operating in the host state.

> **Hypothesis 2:** The more militant groups operating in an environment, the less likely a particular militant group will engage in a sustained armed conflict.

Previous studies of insurgencies focus mainly on militant group dynamics during full-fledged civil wars or why some militant groups achieve their ultimate objectives, overlooking militant groups that never engage in sustained armed conflicts in the first place.[42] At an aggregate level of analysis, there appears to be a strategic logic behind the militant activity preceding sustained armed conflict

---

state, reducing the likelihood to achieve a settlement before widespread violence erupts. Kathleen G. Cunnigham, "Actor Fragmentation and Civil War Bargaining: How Internal Divisions Generate Civil Conflict," *American Journal of Political Science* 57, no. 3 (2013): 659-672. On the role of united movements and strategic success see Wendy Pearlman, *Violence, Nonviolence, and the Palestinian National Movement,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

[39] Peter Krause, "The Structure of Success: How the Internal Distribution of Power Drives Armed Group Behavior and National Movement Effectiveness," *International Security* 38, no. 3 (2013/14): 72-116.

[40] Examining the early stages of the Sri Lankan Civil War, Lilja and Hultman (2011) show that rebels target co-ethnic rivals to consolidate dominance over their constituency and target co-ethnic civilians to ensure cooperation against the government. In the pre-armed conflict phase, militants "try to establish social control over a population to become an efficient fighting unit" capable of challenging the regime. See Jannie Lilja and Lisa Hultman, "Intraethnic Dominance and Control: Violence Against Co-Ethnics in the Early Sri Lankan Civil War," *Security Studies,* 20, no. 2 (2011): 171-197, 175.

[41] Joseph K. Young and Laura Dugan, "Survival of the Fittest: Why Terrorist Groups Endure," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 8, no. 2 (2014). Retrieved from: http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/334/html. Philips (2015), on the other hand, argues that competition among militant groups with divergent ideologies or objectives ("*inter-field rivals*") actually enhances militant group longevity. See Brian J. Phillips, "Enemies with Benefits? Violent Rivalry and Terrorist Group Longevity," *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 1 (2015): 62-75.

[42] Terrorism literature overlooks relationships between terrorist attacks and other forms of political violence – mainly insurgency or full-fledged civil war. For example, Cronin (2006) outlines how terrorist groups might end, including transformation toward insurgency, but stops short of analyzing these transitions. Audrey Kurth Cronin, "How al-Qaids Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups," *International Security* 31, no. 1 (2006): 7-48. Terrorism scholars tend to focus on broad economic, ideological, and political explanations for the occurrence of terrorism, the impact of regime type, attack trends, and economic consequences of terrorist attacks –
overlooking relationships between terrorism and armed conflict. Todd Sandler, "The Analytical Study of Terrorism: Taking Stock," *Journal of Peace Research* 51, no. 2 (2014): 257-271. Research concerning insurgency and civil war onset identify similar gaps. In a review of four seminal studies on insurgency, Sidney Tarrow (2007) notes that despite offering important contributions, none of the works examined the "escalation to civil war from nonviolent contention or from less lethal forms of violence." Sidney Tarrow, "Inside Insurgencies: Politics and Violence in an Age of Civil War," *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no. 3 (2007): 587-600, 589.

that warrants further investigation.[43] Byman's (2008) work on "proto-insurgencies" launches a critical discussion, yet stops short of systematically testing the research problem.[44] Preliminary work has attempted to address similar research questions from a global, large-n perspective. Two unpublished quantitative papers that differentiate groups based on battle-related deaths either incorporate pre-9/11 data and limited models (Lai & Larsen 2008) or overlook militant groups that never cross the 25-battlefield death threshold (Aronson et. al 2014), contributing to a broader selection bias prevalent in the literature on political violence.[45] Aronson et. al (2014)'s conference paper sheds light on *how* groups escalate violence to civil war by overcoming collective action problems via resources, but does not incorporate key group characteristics (i.e. group motivation, organizational structure) or the competitive environment. Though organizational structure and militant group relations are beginning to receive more attention from the scholarly community, this is the first quantitative study to my knowledge that empirically tests associations between these factors and militant group engagement in sustained armed conflicts – an underexplored outcome of interest.

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

Data

Using a resource mobilization framework, this study's primary model tests hypotheses using Joshua Kilberg's (2011) dataset featuring militant groups identified in the Global Terrorism Database (GTD)

---

[43] Using geo-spatial techniques, Findley and Young (2012) show that there is considerable temporal and spatial overlap between coded terrorist attacks and civil war. The observed concentrations of terrorist attacks occurring during the pre-civil war phase are likely to be concentrated in the same geographic areas later characterized by civil war. Michael G. Findley and Joseph K. Young, "Terrorism and Civil War: A Spatial and Temporal Approach To a Conceptual Problem," *Perspectives on Politics* 10, no. 2 (2012): 285-305, 286.

[44] Notable scholars attempting to address this puzzle include Charles Mahoney and Janet Lewis. Mahoney (2011) argues that militant groups adopting opposing strategies to the target state (i.e. 'hearts & minds' strategy; enemy-centric; punishment strategy) were more likely to gain the necessary size to succeed past the proto-insurgency stage. See Charles W. Mahoney, "Hearts and Minds or Blood and Guts? Strategy, Terrorism, and the Growth of Proto-Insurgencies," Doctoral Dissertation, 2011, University of California, Los Angeles. Retrieved from http://gradworks.umi.com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/35/01/3501968.html. Analyzing why some rebel groups evolve into viable threats, Janet Lewis (2011) finds that rebel success depends largely on ethnic group concentrations and the perceptions of civilians in the area where a group initially emerges. As opposed to group size or lethality, Lewis adopts are far more stringent criteria for success – whether a rebel group maintains at least 200 members and is capable of controlling a piece of territory for at least 3 months, even if they fail to register a single attack. Lewis' micro-level approach entailed ethnographic fieldwork in Uganda to help explain viability among the most incipient rebel groups in that country.

[45] Brian Lai and Kelsey Larsen, "Examining the Escalation of Terrorist Violence to Civil War," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, 2008; Jacob Aronson, Paul Huth, Mark Lichbach and Kiyoung Chang, "Collective Action, Insurgency, and Sustained Escalation," Paper Presented at IR/CIDCM Workshop, University of Maryland, 2014.

that committed at least 10 attacks and survived a minimum of one year, between 1970 and 2007. The unit of analysis is the militant group and the number of observations for the base model is 228 – down from 246 after including control variables to the base model.[46] Roughly 70% of all terrorist groups in the GTD do not survive longer than one year, yet the remaining number of groups account for 94% of attributed attacks.[47] This research proposal focuses on analyzing viable militant groups that have already survived the earliest and most vulnerable phase of their existence and demonstrate the capacity to conduct more than a few attacks. The question is why do some of these prominent groups engage in sustained armed conflicts?

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is *Sustained Armed Conflict* and is coded 1 if a group in Kilberg's dataset is identified in the UCDP Armed Conflict Dataset – featuring conflicts characterized by a minimum of 25 battle-related deaths in a given year for at least five consecutive years.[48] The UCDP Armed Conflict Dataset is the most fine-grained global dataset in civil war research, but some conflicts in the data feature broad labels for non-state belligerents, such as *Kashmiri insurgents,* due to coding and data limitations. Secondary academic sources and other prominent datasets on civil war and insurgency were consulted to corroborate and compliment initial coding efforts. Of the 246 militant groups under study, I code 77 (~31%) that engage in sustain armed conflicts according to my criteria.

[46] While many quantitative studies use group-year or country-year panel data, most data on group characteristics and state-level variables are largely time invariant (group ideology, organizational structure, mountainous terrain) or exhibit very gradual temporal variation (i.e. GDP per capita or regime type) and therefore limited in explaining variation year to year. Group ideologies or structures may evolve over the lifespan of a particular group, but much of the existing data relies on coding these variables in a particular snapshot in time. Relying on a group-level unit of analysis is appropriate for this study, which seeks to differentiate between militant groups based on engagement in sustained armed conflicts.

[47] Gary LaFree, Laura Dugan, and Erin Miller, *Putting Terrorism in Context: Lessons from the Global Terrorism Database*, New York: Routledge, 2015. This observation is based on the GTD's data from 1970 to the end of 2012.

[48] Therése Pettersson and Peter Wallensteen, "Armed Conflicts, 1946-2014." *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 4 (2015): 536-550; UCDP Dataset 2016.

Independent Variables

Motivation: Ideology, Objectives

Militant group ideology is delineated according to four categories: religious, nationalist, left-wing and right-wing. While overlapping philosophies often motivate prominent groups, the primary ideology is used for this study.[49] Hamas, for example, relies on both nationalist (Palestinian) and religious (Sunni Islamist) ideological orientations, but is coded as a nationalist group since the group's main motivation is statehood.[50] Related to ideology, a group's stated ultimate objectives should also influence its willingness and capacity to mobilize resources for sustained campaigns of attrition. Group objectives are divided according to five types: whether a group has goals focused on territorial control, regime change, social revolution, policy change, or maintaining the status quo. Previous analyses of insurgencies justifiably focus on only groups seeking territorial control (i.e. secession) or regime change, but some groups without these overt objectives can still attempt to spark armed conflicts and should not be dismissed.[51]

Organizational Structure

Kilberg (2012) codes four different types of organizational structures: bureaucracy, hub-spoke, all-channel, and market – in descending order of centralization.[52] Bureaucratic structures are the most hierarchical, with clear command and control mechanisms emanating from a well-defined leadership to lower-level units, and distinct divisions with particular specializations. Hezbollah's organizational structure is a well-known example of a bureaucracy with centralized command and clear specialized

---

[49] Data on group ideology and objectives are collected from Kilberg (2011) and Seth G. Jones and Martin C. Libicki, *How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering al Qa'ida,* RAND, Santa Monica, 2008.

[50] Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence*, Columbia University Press: New York, 2000.

[51] For example, the Weather Underground, a 1970s era terrorist group seeking to battle the American state from within, published a manifesto that clearly suggests it employs targeted violence in a bid to mobilize society against the state. According to its strategy: "At this early state in the armed and clandestine struggle, our forms of combat and confrontation are few and precise…By beginning the armed struggle, the awareness of its necessity will be furthered…Bernardine Dohrn, Billy Ayers, Jeff Jones, and Celia Sojourn "Prairie Fire: The Politics of
Revolutionary Anti-Imperialism: Political Statement of the Weather Underground," 1974, 1-153, 3. Quoted in
Findley and Young, "Terrorism and Civil War," 285. While rare, other militant groups primarily focused on maintaining the status quo (i.e. RENAMO, Rwanda Patriotic Front) or changing a broader policy (i.e. African National Congress) have also engaged in armed conflicts.

[52] Joshua Kilberg, "A Basic Model Explaining Terrorist Group Organizational Structure," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 35, no. 11 (2012): 810-830.

units, including a political and media wing, a division focused on guerrilla/conventional military operations, and an external terrorist operations unit devoted to striking Jewish and Israeli targets abroad.[53] Like bureaucratic structures, hub-spoke structures have a leader and various units or cells with particular roles or functions, but lack centralized command and control. Without a clear hierarchy, each node of the hub-spoke structure must report to the central leader to coordinate operations. Examples include Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) in Peru and Lashkar-e-Taiba, where units or cells associated with this type of structure tend to have more independence and discretion to prepare and conduct attacks. All-channel structures have a leader but maintain minimal hierarchy, if any, and no explicit functional differentiation among the group's constituent parts. The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and Abu Sayyaf based in the Philippines are examples of all-channel structures. Finally, market structures are the most decentralized, with virtually no clear leadership or command and control.

Competitive Environment

To assess the competitive environment hypothesis, I use Young and Findley (2012)'s data featuring the "total number of primary terrorist groups that operated in an organisation's primary country in a given year."[54] Less prominent groups that remain outside my sample are included in this count, since active militant groups that fall short of ten attacks still influence the competitive environment. Since my data is cross-sectional (as opposed to group-year panel data), I use the average number of groups operating for the entire lifespan of a particular group that never reaches the threshold of sustained armed conflict. For groups that engage in sustained armed conflicts, I rely on the precise number of active groups operating during the year a particular militant group reaches the threshold of armed conflict, where possible.[55] This distinction should help better explain whether more competitive environments influence the probability that a group engages in a sustained armed conflict, when they do.

---

[53] Matthew Levitt, *Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God,* Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2013.

[54] Findley & Dugan, "Survival of the Fittest: Why Terrorist Groups Endure." The authors code this variable from active militant groups in the GTD and use this proxy to assess militant group longevity.

[55] Results hold for estimations including the average number of militant groups in the lifespan of militant groups engaged in sustained armed conflicts as well.

Control Variables

Group Capabilities

Several proxies for militant group capabilities are included here to account for rival plausible explanations. One measure of capabilities is reflected in the percentage of multiple and coordinated attacks a group conducts out of total attacks in its first year (*Multiple Attacks)*. Dummy variables are used to denote whether a militant group has a state sponsor (whether a foreign country provides finances, capabilities, weapons, or safe-haven) and if a group conducts at least one attack in more than one country (*State Sponsorship; Transnational)* (Kilberg 2011, GTD). Groups that strike a higher proportion of hard targets, such as military installations or convoys, in their first year should also be more capable of engaging in sustained armed conflicts than groups primarily or solely attacking soft targets (i.e. civilians, public places). The variable *Hard Targets* is also extracted from the GTD.

State-level Attributes

State-level controls that may correlate with the model's main independent variables are also included. Quantitative literature on civil war tends to proxy state capacity with measures of GDP, which has also been used to proxy counter-terrorism capabilities or societal development. While the negative relationship between GDP per capita and civil war onset is well established, there is emerging consensus that economic conditions are poor predictors of terrorist activity outside of armed conflict. It is expected that lower rates of GDP per capita (extracted from Penn World Tables 2009) are expected to be associated with a higher likelihood of sustained armed conflict. Scholars also continue to debate the impact of regime type on conflict dynamics including terrorism incidence, militant group survival, and civil war onset. Various measures of democracy, regime type, and regime durability are also included as controls (Freedom House, Polity IV). Following previous research, a measure of ethnic fractionalization – the probability that two people randomly selected from society are members of different ethnic groups – is taken from Fearon & Laitin (2003) data.[56]

[56] Other state-level controls from civil war literature include whether the host state's territory is contiguous, the extent to which a state relies on oil exports and other primary commodities, country-level religious fractionalization, population size, and the size of a state's Muslim population. Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, and Dominic Rohner, "Beyond Greed and Grievance: Feasibility and Civil War,"; Fearon, James D. and David D. Laitin. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,"; Findley & Dugan, "Survival of the Fittest: Why Terrorist Groups Endure." None of these controls are statistically significant in any model specification and are omitted here.

Data Limitations

Most variables – including proxies for state capacity or economic development, regime type, percent of multiple/coordinated attacks or hard targets, and group ideologies - are all measured in the first year a militant group appears in the GTD. Some scholars treat a group's emergence in a dataset as the first year of their existence, but this is often inaccurate. It is important to note that many notable militant groups are often first identified in the GTD around the time they also begin engaging in sustained armed conflicts. These data limitations are understandable, given the difficulties in tracking a group's early attack profile immediately after their emergence or first violent attack. For example, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was founded in 1976 and civil war in Sri Lanka began in 1983. Virtually none of LTTE's attacks were explicitly registered in the GTD from 1976-1983, though qualitative literature on the organization's history point to significant violent activity against various targets during this early period. Similar issues arise when I analyze early attack profiles of prominent insurgent groups including the main Basque militant group, ETA, in Spain and the PKK in Turkey. Nevertheless, relying on these indicators from a group's "first year" helps alleviate issues related to endogeneity and standardizes a baseline for the analysis of factors that may impact a group's willingness and/or ability to engage in a sustain armed conflict. This study, however, does not seek or claim to uncover clear causal mechanisms, acknowledging the limitations of most large-n research on political violence. The purpose of this quantitative analysis is to identify group and environmental-level associations that help explain differences between militant groups that engage in sustained armed conflicts and those groups that do not. Since the dependent variable is binary, a probit regression analysis is used to test the main independent variables.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Probit Analysis: Determinants of Sustained Armed Conflict (Marginal Effect)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Group Objectives			
Territorial Control	0.435** (0.1396)	0.539** (0.1684)	0.467** (0.1425)
Regime Change / Social Revolution	0.219* (0.1035)	0.339** (0.1309)	0.251** (0.1035)
Group Ideology			
Religious	0.303* (0.1231)	0.337** (0.1268)	0.261** (0.1212)
Nationalist	-0.060 (0.0852)	-0.047 (0.0985)	-0.060 (0.0875)
Competitive Environment			
Number of Groups	-0.017*** (0.005)		
Single Group		0.715*** (0.1008)	
> Five Groups			-0.236*** (0.0728)
Organizational Structure			
Bureaucracy	0.418** (0.1272)	0.378** (0.1359)	0.378** (0.1277)
Hub-Spoke	0.481** (0.1608)	0.438* (0.1705)	0.462** (0.1605)
All-Channel	0.268+ (0.1585)	0.281+ (0.1642)	0.233 (0.1537)
Group Capabilities			
State Sponsorship	0.024 (0.0688)	-0.0002 (0.746)	0.007 (0.0678)
Transnational	0.054 (0.0821)	0.086 (0.0946)	0.047 (0.0824)
Hard Targets	-0.007 (0.0045)	-0.007 (0.0055)	-0.007 (0.0046)
Multiple Attacks	-0.009+ (0.0054)	-0.007 (0.0045)	-0.010+ (0.0057)
State-Level Controls			
Ethnic Fractionalization	0.484*** (0.1136)	0.479*** (0.1283)	0.459*** (0.1158)
Democracy	-0.018** (0.008)	-0.019* (0.0088)	-0.018* (0.0081)
Pseudo R^2	0.3476	0.4278	0.3632
N	222	228	228

+ p<0.1; * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

The dependent variable is *Sustained Armed Conflict. A* DProbit estimating technique is used. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. Coefficients for each model represent the marginal effect of the particular variable, holding all other variables constant.

FINDINGS

Independent Variables

Motivation: Ideology/Objectives

Scholars suggests that groups with salient identities, particularly ethno-nationalist or religious motivations, should be more capable of mobilizing resources and more likely to achieve strategic objectives than left-wing or right-wing militant organizations.[57] Empirical results from the quantitative analysis partially supports these insights. The results show that groups with primarily religious motivations are about 34% more likely to engage in sustained armed conflicts than other ideologically motivated militant groups, holding other factors constant. This result is particularly interesting considering notable quantitative work finds that religious groups never achieve their ultimate objectives, given their tendency towards maximalist goals and non-negotiable demands. It is important to note that all but one of the religious groups that engage in sustained armed conflicts are Islamic militant organizations.[58] It is highly unlikely that a Salafi-jihadist organization, for example, will establish a Shari'a based theocracy or a global Caliphate. But religious groups tend to fare better than others in garnering the necessary resources to launch campaigns of sustained attrition. Surprisingly, the *Nationalist* measure lacks statistical significance. However, this unexpected result could be reflected in the findings concerning group objectives.

Previous research suggests that groups seeking narrow goals, like secession are more capable of achieving their ultimate objectives than groups seeking maximalist goals like toppling a regime or taking over an entire country. This study shows that groups seeking territorial control and groups fighting for regime change/social revolution are about 53% and 34%, respectively, more likely to engage in sustained armed conflicts than other goal-oriented groups, keeping other variables constant. The results seem to contradict findings on group ideology, considering that nationalist

---

[57] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism,* 2006; Seth G. Jones and Martin C. Libicki, *How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering al Qa'ida.*

[58] The non-Islamic religious group that engaged in armed conflict in my sample is Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army. Over the last few decades, religious militant groups – mostly of Islamic persuasion – are responsible for far more attacks and casualties than other types of militant groups worldwide. Berman, *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism.* Most religious civil wars since 1940 involve belligerents that identify with Islam and religious civil wars are characterized by far higher rates of lethality than other types of civil wars. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism,* 2006. Eli Berman, *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism,* Toft, "Getting Religion? The Puzzling Case of Islam and Civil War."

groups tend to have territorial objectives like secession, while religious groups tend to have broader goals like social revolution or regime change. Group objectives likely follow ideological orientations and therefore both factors, to some extent, reinforce a group's ability to mobilize resources and challenge the state. Organizations with religious ideologies and maximalist objectives face a much tougher path to overall victory than groups with more limited aims, but are still quite capable in mobilizing sufficient resources and support to engage in a campaign of sustained attrition.[59] A more nuanced story emerges when looking beyond motivations and analyzing the role of organizational structure.

Organizational Structure

Findings concerning organizational structure do not support hypothesis 1 – that suggests more hierarchically structured militant groups are associated with an increased likelihood of engagement in sustained armed conflicts. Using market structure as the base and holding other variables constant, hub-spoke groups are 44% more likely to engage in sustained armed conflicts, while the most hierarchical groups (*Bureaucrac*y) are about 38% more likely.[60] This finding challenges conventional wisdom and previous research. Even groups without a centralized command and control apparatus can pose a serious challenge to target states, as long as they have a leader and functional differentiation within the organization. Much of the insurgency literature strongly suggests that more centralized and hierarchical structures are strongly associated with militant group lethality and ultimate success. But this study shows that, irrespective of centralized hierarchies, groups with well-defined specializations and relatively more autonomy among lower-level cells or units could pose a similar threat to the states they fight as groups with highly centralized commands. Lacking high-levels of centralization, hub-spoke structured groups may be less willing or able to credibly commit to enforce an agreement with the state prior to full-fledged armed conflict. States may also find it more difficult to infiltrate and disrupt hub-spoke structured militant groups. Stifling a relatively less connected and more independent unit of a hub-spoke structure might not significantly impede the broader organization. It is important to note that most religious groups (*Religious* has the most

[59] As expected, groups seeking to maintain the status quo or change a particular policy are negatively associated with sustained armed conflict.

[60] The *All-Channel* variable had the weakest statistical significance and is only 28% more likely to engage in sustained armed conflicts than market groups.

statistically significant and positive association with armed conflict, compared to other ideologies) tend to also have a hub-spoke structure.[61]

Competitive Environment

Supporting hypothesis 2, findings show that that the more number of militant groups in a state, the less likely a particular militant group will engage in a sustained armed conflict. A particular militant group is 2% less likely to engage in sustained armed conflict for every additional militant group present in a competitive environment. When disaggregating the *Number of Groups* variable, results show that nascent insurrections featuring one prominent militant group are most likely to experience a sustained challenge between a particular militant group and the state. The *Single Group* variable is the most statistically significant and the largest, positive association across all models. Results suggest that a nascent insurrection featuring one primary militant group is about 72% more likely to engage in a sustained campaign of attrition than militant groups operating in more competitive environments. Findings from model 3 suggest that a militant group operating in an environment with five or more primary militant groups is 24% less likely to engage in sustained armed conflict, holding all other variables constant.

In their study on group longevity, Findley and Young (2012) code a group as "top dog" in a given year if that group is the primary active group in the state and commits the most attacks in a given year compared to other groups.[62] Where possible, I further classify whether militant groups that engage in sustained armed conflicts are also the "top dog" in their environment around the time a sustained armed conflict is launched. I find that the overwhelming majority (90%) of groups that engage in sustained armed conflicts are also the "top dog" militant group in their environment when the group successfully challenges the target state.[63] This is an important finding worth further exploration. Of course, in reality, the most active group does not necessarily mean it is the most

[61] As expected, a very low number (3 out 41; or ~7%) of militant groups organized in the most decentralized, market structure engage in sustained armed conflicts. The data suggests that having a market structure (no clear leader, functional differentiation, or centralized command) is a nearly sufficient condition that a group will not engage in sustained armed conflict.

[62] Young and Dugan, "Survival of the Fittest: Why Terrorist Groups Endure."

[63] About 90% of the 54 militant groups that engage in armed conflict are the *Top Dog* at the time they initially engage in sustained armed conflict. I excluded militant groups from India and Myanmar for this part of the comparative analysis since both countries were facing diverse and simultaneous insurgencies throughout the time period and it was difficult to confirm which groups were *Top Dogs* in their respective conflicts.

powerful. But at this stage of the analysis, being the most active militant group in a particular environment is a crude, yet intuitive, proxy for groups that dominate their constituencies before going on to challenge the regime. This proxy for constituency dominance further approximates reality when a particular militant group maintains its *Top Dog* status throughout the initial stages of the armed conflict. For example, the PKK and LTTE emerged in the mid-1970s and dedicated most of their attacks against rival Kurdish and Tamil groups, respectively, until challenging regime forces in an armed conflict in in the mid-1980s. Both groups are the *Top Dog* groups in their respective environments throughout the early years of full-fledged armed conflict. This observation suggests that militant groups in competitive environments often engage in some form of rival consolidation prior to engaging in campaigns of sustained attrition against the target state.[64]

Rival Explanations (Control Variables)

Group Capabilities

Results for proxies of group capabilities suggest that higher levels of capabilities are not associated with an increased likelihood of engagement in sustained armed conflicts. *State sponsorship* lack statistical significance across all model specifications. This does not mean support from an external patron is not important. Though state sponsorship is often cited as a critical factor explaining militant group's ultimate success against the state they fight, it is likely less important than organizational factors in explaining engagements in armed conflicts. For some groups, external patrons with different priorities may derail their client's trajectories, while other groups with weak institutions may fragment following influxes of resource flows. States also provide support to militant groups that intend on remaining clandestine. In terms of operational targets, variables *Hard Targets* and *Transnational* lack statistical significance across both models. In the first and third models, *Multiple Attacks* actually has a negative association, but weak statistical significance.

Groups that have conducted attacks outside their primary state are no more likely to engage in sustained armed conflicts with their host regime. It may be the case that some groups seeking to

[64] A positive-on-outcome (also known as Mill's method-of-agreement) comparative analysis of all militant groups that engage in sustained armed conflicts in my universe of cases suggests that no single theoretically relevant causal factor can be deemed an individually necessary condition. But compared to other factors, my results suggest that being the *Top Dog* is an *almost* necessary condition for engagement in sustained armed conflict. This finding motivates subsequent theory-building and the focus of detailed case studies to compliment my quantitative analysis and address the limitations of large-n research.

launch domestic insurgencies are less inclined to divert resources to strike targets outside the primary state and attract unnecessary interventions. Militant groups seeking to pose a serious challenge may be focused on internal challenges in their nascent stages, such as building organizational capacity and targeting constituent rivals for dominance before facing the regime in a sustained armed conflict. Groups that rely on strategies of provocation or attrition - in the of form ambitious attacks or strikes on fortified targets - before developing the capacity to withstand government responses will likely fail.[65] Irrespective of the precise logics underpinning these broader findings, this study shows that organizational characteristics and the competitive environment are better predictors of engagement in armed conflict than traditional proxies of group capabilities.[66]

State-Level Attributes

Regression analysis using GDP per capita as a proxy for state capacity all came up negative and statistically significant: the higher the level of state capacity (or counter-terrorism effectiveness or level of economic development – however one chooses to primarily interpret the proxy) the less likely a particular militant group will engage in a sustained armed conflict. Since GDP per capita and regime type tend to be closely related, some models (not shown here) relied on only one control at a time. Across several model specifications, co-efficients associated with all key measures of democracy and regime durability scores are negative and statistically significant. More democratic, politically free, and stable regimes are more likely to reduce a militant group's willingness and/or ability to

[65] Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism," *International Security* 31, no. 1 (2006): 49-79. Provocation involves militants seeking to spark a wider conflict by using the state's strength against itself, provoking a disproportionate response that may drive passive civilians into the hands of militant groups. As a weapon of the weak, provocative terrorist strategies can help a group improve its organizational capacity and mobilize the necessary resources to eventually challenge the state from a stronger position. Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism," *Comparative Politics* 13, no. 4 (1981): 379-399. Indiscriminate and harsh state responses are often cited as the most important factors that encourage insurgencies to flourish. Kelly M. Greenhill and Paul Staniland, "Ten Ways to Lose at Counterinsurgency," *Civil Wars* 9, no. 4 (2007): 402-419; Elisabeth Jean Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003. On the other hand, provoking an indiscriminate state response may be counterproductive if militants are incapable of providing protection to civilians under regime attack. A militant group's organizational capacity to withstand and exploit government repression may serve as a necessary intervening variable connecting provocative strategies and successful mobilization. See Stathis N. Kalyvas and Matthew Adam Kocher, "How "Free" Is Free Riding in Civil Wars? Violence, Insurgency, and the Collective Action Problem," *World Politics* 59, no. 2 (2007): 177-216, 190.

[66] A group's peak size should also reflect strength and capabilities. A group's maximum membership levels (*Peak Size)* are based on Jones and Libicki (2008) data, coded as 1 if a group's peak size features 0-99 operatives, 2 (100-999), 3 (1000-9999), and 4 (10000+). Peak size may be one of the most important variable explaining why some militant groups ultimately defeat the states they fight, but was omitted from this model for reasons of endogeneity since a group most likely reaches its maximum membership after its first year. Nevertheless, models including a measure of peak size (not reported here) show that a militant group's engagement in sustained armed conflict does not depend on a group's size. As Fearon & Laitin (2003) note, it may only require a few hundred committed fighters to launch an insurgency.

engage in a sustained armed conflict. It may be the case that democracies tend to also be more capable and inclusive states that prevent or deter the emergence of sustained armed conflicts, forcing groups to remain clandestine and engage in low-level terrorist attacks. These results are consistent with similar findings in the literature. Much of the cross-national quantitative literature argues that *greed*-based indicators tend to better explain civil war onset than variables that traditionally proxy *grievance*.[67] This study, however, finds that countries with higher levels of ethnic fractionalization are associated with an increased likelihood of sustained armed conflict. While this paper has not coded for ethnic fractionalization scores of particular regions where prominent militant groups emerge or escalate violent operations, results suggest that analyzing conflict from a group-level of analysis may challenge some findings from previous cross-national studies.[68] Though important, state and regime-level attributes cannot explain variation among different militant groups operating in the same state. Empirical assessments of key factors related to armed conflict feasibility contribute to ongoing debates and serve as relevant controls that emphasize the importance of internal characteristics and competitive environments.

Implications for Theory

This study produces important implications for theory and scholarship, by examining an underexplored outcome of interest and addressing a selection bias prevalent across literatures on political violence. Violent intra-state conflicts characterized by lower-levels of violence tend to remain dormant and should not be dismissed from analyses.[69] Current theories of civil war onset and insurgency are limited in explaining this paper's puzzle. Overall findings show that key variables explaining insurgency outcomes are not necessarily important factors in helping to explain which militant groups engage in insurgencies while other groups do not. It is therefore important to study analytically distinct phases of armed conflict and differentiate between various militant group objectives (i.e. tactical, organizational, strategic) when evaluating success. There is no single theory that can explain particular militant group trajectories and counterinsurgency campaigns require

[67] Christian Davenport, David A. Armstrong II, and Mark I. Lichbach, "From Mountains to Movements: Dissent, Repression and Escalation to Civil War," Presented to the annual International Studies Association Conference, San Diego, 2006.

[68] Janet Lewis (2012) finds that Ugandan rebel groups emerging in ethnically homogenous areas of the country are more likely to become viable organizations than groups emerging in relatively diverse areas.

[69] Shivaji Mukherjee, "Why are the Longest Insurgencies Low Violence? Politician Motivations, Sons of the Soil, and Civil War Duration," *Civil Wars* 16, no. 2 (2014): 172-207.

context specific analysis. However this paper offers an overarching and generalizable model, rooted in resource mobilization arguments, to help explain why some militant organizations engage in sustained campaigns of attrition – whether a group achieves its ultimate objectives or not.

CONCLUDING REMARKS & POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Taking rival plausible explanations into account, group characteristics (i.e. motivation and organizational structure) and competitive environments are better determinants of sustained armed conflicts than traditional measures of group capabilities (i.e. state sponsorship, hard target/multiple strikes). While rarely achieving ultimate goals, religiously motivated militant organizations are more likely to engage in sustained campaigns of attrition than other militant groups. Posing a serious challenge to a regime is not necessarily a function of how powerful or capable a group may seem – it's about the competitive environment and internal capacity required to effectively mobilize resources and develop the capacity to endure armed hostilities against regime forces. Organizational structure matters, but highly centralized and hierarchical groups are not necessarily the most threatening in this regard.

This paper's findings also have implications for policy. This study's broader findings suggest that states should divert limited resources to disrupt organizational consolidation and find ways to exploit competitive environments, instead of solely focusing on degrading group capabilities. From an organizational perspective, hub-spoke groups pose a greater threat when it comes to sustained campaigns of attrition than centralized bureaucracy groups. This nuance suggests that eroding or disrupting a group's command and control apparatus may be counterproductive. As long as a group maintains a clear leader and functional differentiation among its units or cells, a group can still pose a serious threat to the target regime. Pressuring groups to de-centralize from bureaucracies to hub-spoke structures may encourage escalations from more autonomous units or cells – but pushing groups to an all-channel structure could produce more desirable results. From a counterterrorism perspective, these findings suggest that targeting units with specialized roles or experts (i.e. bomb makers) that are hard to replace may be a more effective strategy than solely focusing on disrupting centralized chains of command. Counterterrorism experts have long acknowledged the dilemmas militant groups face between maintaining security and efficiency while consolidating their internal

organizational structures.[70] Yet groups also face trade-offs between efficiency and organizational autonomy when engaging with rival militant groups.

Previous research shows that in a full-fledged war, governments are more likely to defeat a single-group insurgency compared to a multi-group insurgency.[71] But a nascent insurrection characterized by one primary militant group is a strong predictor for whether that group engages in a sustained campaign of attrition in the first place. This study also finds that the vast majority of militant groups engaged in sustained armed conflicts were the most active group in their environment around the time the group emerged as a serious challenge to the target state. There are several potential pathways that could lead to such a result. Prominent groups might successfully consolidate rival groups through destructive competition or through the efforts of a powerful external actor, for example. Groups might also decide to stove-pipe their efforts against the state or cooperate to varying degrees – through some type of alliance or the formation of an umbrella structure under a single command.[72] Transitions between different forms of militant group relations could also help explain when some capable militant groups decide to engage in sustained attrition. These nuances should be especially important for strategic planners seeking to sow rifts not only within militant organizations, but between them as well, while taking potential unintended consequences into consideration. It is far easier for states to prevent a nascent insurrection from developing than defeating a matured militant organization or full-fledged insurgency.

[70] Jacob N. Shapiro, *The Terrorist's Dilemma: Managing Violent Covert Organizations,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.

[71] Seth G. Jones, *Waging Insurgent Warfare*.

[72] Assaf Moghadam, *Nexus of Global Jihad: Understanding Cooperation Among Terrorist Actors*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2017.

WORKS CITED

Aronson, Jacob, Paul Huth, Mark Lichbach and Kiyoung Chang. 2014. "Collective Action, Insurgency, and Sustained Escalation." Paper Presented at IR/CIDCM Workshop, University of Maryland.

Asal, Victor and R. Karl Rethemeyer. 2008. "The Nature of the Beast: Organizational Structures and the Lethality of Terrorist Attacks." *The Journal of Politics* 70, no. 2: 437-449.

Ashour, Omar. "Sinai's Stubborn Insurgency: Why Egypt Can't Win," 2015. *Foreign Affairs.* Retrieved from: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/egypt/2015-11-08/sinais-stubborn-insurgency.

Berman, Eli. 2009. *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Berman, Eli. Michael Callen, Joseph Felter, and Jacob Shapiro. 2011. "Do Working Men Rebel? Insurgency and Unemployment in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Philippines." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55, no. 4: 496-528.

Berrebi, Claude. 2007. "Evidence About the Link Between Education Poverty and Terrorism Among Palestinians." *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy* 13 no. 1: 1-36.

Bloom, Mia. 2005. *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Brown, Michael E. 2001. "Ethnic and Internal Conflicts: Causes and Implications," in *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict,* eds. Chester A. Crocker and Fen Osler Hampson with Pamela R. Aall, Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Byman, Daniel, Peter Chalk, Bruce Hoffman, William Rosenau, and David Brannan. 2001. *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

Byman, Daniel and Matthew Waxman. 2002. *The Dynamics of Coercion: American Foreign Policy and the Limits of Military Might,* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Byman, Daniel. 2008. "Understanding Proto-Insurgencies." *Journal of Strategic Studies* 31, no. 2: 165-200.

Carter, David B. 2012. "A Blessing or a Curse? State Support for Terrorist Groups." *International Organization* 66, no. 1: 129-151.

Cederman, Lars-Erik, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min. 2010. "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis." *World Politics* 62, no. 1: 87-119.

Collier, Paul and Anke Hoeffler. 2004. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers* 56, no. 4: 563-595.

Collier, Paul, Anke Hoeffler, and Dominic Rohner. 2009. "Beyond Greed and Grievance: Feasibility and Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers* 61, no. 1: 1-27.

Connable, Ben and Martin C. Libicki. 2010. *How Insurgencies End*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

Crenshaw, Martha. 1981. "The Causes of Terrorism." *Comparative Politics* 13, no. 4: 379-399.

Cronin, Audrey Kurth. 2006. "How al-Qaids Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups." *International Security* 31, no. 1: 7-48.

Cunnigham, Kathleen G. 2013. "Actor Fragmentation and Civil War Bargaining: How Internal Divisions Generate Civil Conflict." *American Journal of Political Science* 57, no. 3: 659-672.

Davenport, Christian, David A. Armstrong II, and Mark I. Lichbach. 2006. "From Mountains to Movements: Dissent, Repression and Escalation to Civil War." Presented to the annual International Studies Association Conference, San Diego.

De la Calle, Luis and Ignacio Sanchez-Cuenca. 2012. "Rebels without a Territory: An Analysis of Nonterritorial Conflicts in the World, 1970–1997." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56, no. 4: 580-603.

Elbadawi, Ibrahim and Nicholas Sambanis. 2002. "How Much War Will We See?: Explaining the Prevalence of Civil War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46, no. 3: 307-334.

Enders, Walter and Todd Sandler. 2006. *The Political Economy of Terrorism,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fearon, James D. and David D. Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 1: 75-90.

Findley, Michael G. and Joseph K. Young. 2012. "Terrorism and Civil War: A Spatial and Temporal Approach To a Conceptual Problem." *Perspectives on Politics* 10, no. 2: 285-305.

Greenhill, Kelly M. and Paul Staniland. 2007. "Ten Ways to Lose at Counterinsurgency." *Civil Wars* 9, no. 4: 402-419.

Gurr, Ted R. 1970. *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Holtermann, Helge. 2014. "How Can Weak Insurgent Groups Grow? Insights from Nepal." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 0: 1-22.

Humphreys, Macartan and Jeremy M. Weinstein. 2008. "Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War." *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 2: 436-455.

Institute for Economics and Peace, *Global Terrorism Index 2016: Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism*. 2016. Retrieved from: http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2016.2.pdf.

Jenkins, J. Craig. 1983. "Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements." *Annual Review of Sociology* 9: 527-553.

Jones, Seth G. 2008. "The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency: State Failure and Jihad." *International Security* 32, no. 4: 7-40.

Seth G. Jones. 2017. *Waging Insurgent Warfare*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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, no. 2: 177-216.

Khalil, James. 2013. "Know Your Enemy: On the Futility of Distinguishing Between Terrorists and Insurgents," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 35, no. 5: 419-430.

Kilberg, Joshua. 2011. "Organizing for Destruction: How Organizational Structure Affects Terrorist Group Behaviour." Doctoral Dissertation. Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada.

Kilberg, Joshua. 2012. "A Basic Model Explaining Terrorist Group Organizational Structure." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 35, no. 11: 810-830.

Kilcullen, David. 2006. "Counter-insurgency Redux." *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 48, no. 4: 111-130.

Kirkpatrick, David D. 2014. "31 Egyptian Soldiers Are Killed As Militants Attack in Sinai." *New York Times*, 24 Oct. 2014. Retrieved from: https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/25/world/middleeast/militants-kill-at-least-26-egyptian-soldiers-in-sinai-peninsula-attack.html.

Kittner, Cristiana C. Brafman. 2007. "The Role of Safe Havens in Islamist Terrorism." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19, no. 3: 307-329.

Korteweg, Rem. 2008. "Black Holes: On Terrorist Sanctuaries and Governmental Weakness." *Civil Wars* 10, no.1: 60-71.

Krause, Peter. 2014. "The Structure of Success: How the Internal Distribution of Power Drives Armed Group Behavior and National Movement Effectiveness," *International Security* 38, no. 3: 72-116.

Kydd, Andrew H. and Barbara F. Walter. 2006. "The Strategies of Terrorism," *International Security* 31, no. 1: 49-79.

LaFree, Gary, Laura Dugan, and Erin Miller. 2015. *Putting Terrorism in Context: Lessons from the Global Terrorism Database*, New York: Routledge.

Lai, Brian and Kelsey Larsen. 2008. "Examining the Escalation of Terrorist Violence to Civil War." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago.

Lewis, Janet I. Lewis. 2012. "How Rebellion Begins: Insurgent Group Formation and Viability in Uganda." Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University.

Levitt, Matthew. 2013. *Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God,* Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

Lichbach, Mark I. 1994. "What makes Rational Peasants Revolutionary? Dilemma, Paradox, and Irony in Peasant Collective Action," *World Politics* 46, no. 3: 383-418

Lilja, Jannie and Lisa Hultman. 2011. "Intraethnic Dominance and Control: Violence Against Co-Ethnics in the Early Sri Lankan Civil War." *Security Studies,* 20, no. 2: 171-197.

Mahoney, Charles W. 2011. "Hearts and Minds or Blood and Guts? Strategy, Terrorism, and the Growth of Proto-Insurgencies." Doctoral Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles. Retrieved from http://gradworks.umi.com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/35/01/3501968.html.

McCants, Will. 2015. *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State.* New York: St. Martin's Press.

McCarthy, John D. and Mayer N. Zald. 1977. "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory." *The American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 6: 1212-1241.

Merari, Ariel. 1993. "Terrorism as Strategy of Insurgency." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 5, no. 4: 213-251

Mishal, Shaul and Avraham Sela. 2000. *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence*. Columbia University Press: New York.

Moghadam, Assaf. 2017. *Nexus of Global Jihad: Understanding Cooperation Among Terrorist Actors*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Mukherjee, Shivaji. 2014. "Why are the Longest Insurgencies Low Violence? Politician Motivations, Sons of the Soil, and Civil War Duration." *Civil Wars* 16, no. 2: 172-207.

National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). 2016. Global Terrorism Database (GTD) Codebook: Inclusion Criteria and Variables, https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/downloads/Codebook.pdf.

Patrick, Stewart. 2007. "'Failed' States and Global Security: Empirical Questions and Policy Dilemmas." *International Studies Review* 9, no. 4: 644-662.

Pearlman, Wendy. 2011. *Violence, Nonviolence, and the Palestinian National Movement.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pettersson, Therése and Peter Wallensteen. 2015. "Armed Conflicts, 1946-2014." *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 4: 536-550, 537.

Phillips, Brian J. 2015. "Enemies with Benefits? Violent Rivalry and Terrorist Group Longevity." *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 1: 62-75.

Piazza, James A. 2011. "Poverty, Minority Economic Discrimination, and Domestic Terrorism." *Journal of Peace Research* 38, no. 3: 339-353.

Ross, Michael L. 2004. "How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War? Evidence from Thirteen Cases." *International Organization* 58, no. 1: 35-67.

Salehyan, Idean and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. 2006. "Refugees and the Spread of Civil War," *International Organization* 60, no. 2: 335-366.

Sambanis, Nicholas. 2004. "What Is Civil War? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48, no. 6: 814-858

Sandler, Todd. 2014. "The Analytical Study of Terrorism: Taking Stock," *Journal of Peace Research* 51, no. 2: 257-271

Schmid, Alex P. 2004. "Frameworks for Conceptualizing Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16, no. 2: 197-221.

Shapiro, Jacob N. 2013. *The Terrorist's Dilemma: Managing Violent Covert Organizations.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Staniland, Paul. 2012. "Organizing Insurgency: Networks, Resources, and Rebellion in South Asia." *International Security* 37, no. 1: 142-177.

Staniland, Paul. 2014. *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Taydas, Zeynep, Dursun Peksen & Patrick James. 2010. "Why Do Civil Wars Occur? Understanding the Importance of Institutional Quality." Civil Wars 12, no. 3: 195-217.

Tarrow, Sidney. 2007. "Inside Insurgencies: Politics and Violence in an Age of Civil War," *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no. 3: 587-600.

Tilly, Charles. 1978. *From Mobilization to Revolution,* Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.

Toft, Monica Duffy. 2005. *The Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identity, Interests, and the Indivisibility of Territory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Toft, Monica Duffy. 2007. "Getting Religion? The Puzzling Case of Islam and Civil War," *International Security* 31, no. 4: 97-131.

Weinstein, Jeremy M. 2007. *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wittig, Timothy. 2011. *Understanding Terrorist Finance,* UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2003. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Young, Joseph K. and Laura Dugan. 2014 "Survival of the Fittest: Why Terrorist Groups Endure," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 8, no. 2. Retrieved from: http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/334/html.